

TRANSLATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

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MINI-PROLOGUE

The first part of this volume, dear reader, is a compilation of updated articles that eventually led to my book, “A General Theory of Interlingual Mediation”. If you have read it, you would be revisiting the main tenets. If not, then you would have a general view of my theory of translation (both written, oral and in sign language) as a sub-type of interlingual mediation. Since the pieces overlapped rather helplessly, I have tried to expunge them from repetitions, and warned the reader when I have not quite managed to. Nostalgia *oblige*, I have also included my first serious piece, “Contesting Peter Newmark.” The second part is devoted to the teaching and practice of translation. I intend to follow up this volume with one on the teaching and practice of Interpretation. See you there, I hope.

A SOCIO-HISTORIC VIEW OF INTERLINGUAL MEDIATION¹

“Translation Studies exists not because of any philosophical agreement (or agreement to disagree), and not because postmodern conceptions [of meaning have undermined the special status of ‘original’ (i.e., non-translational) language productions, but because TS corresponds to an increasingly important occupation and segment of the economy, with the associated training institutions” (Mossop 2001:159).

Interlingual mediation as an expert activity

A necessary distinction: Natural vs expert translation

This *caveat* is, I think, worth restating: Every normal, average human being with some knowledge of two or more languages can translate (i.e., understand an *LP* verbalised in one language and more or less re-verbalise it in another). Again, in that respect I have no quarrel, for instance, with Harris (1992) or, especially, Toury (1995:241-7). Does it mean, however, that, besides his presumed ability to speak, sing, run or kick as anybody else, any bilingual, even the most fluent, can translate competently? If both are subspecies of mediated interlingual intercultural communication, what then distinguishes truly expert translation from natural or even amateur-let alone incompetent-translation?

Translational ability and translation expertise²

According to the view I propound,

- a) language is but the organising device for speech;
- b) speech is, in turn, the substance out of which is made the text or utterance verbalising meaning meant;
- c) such text or utterance is therefore not the object but the vehicle of communication; and
- d) The effectiveness of the latter -whether monolingual or not- can only be gauged with reference, not to any similarity in the vehicle of such meaning meant but to relevant identity between meaning meant and understood.

It is within this general framework that we have to consider the problem of sameness, equivalence or identity. I, for one, take it as axiomatic that e) we cannot and should not expect total identity between meaning meant and understood, so that f) we will always look at a partial identity; it is therefore the next task to g) determine the criteria that define relevance at each level for each specific case. Only now do h) the specific technical devices and choices come into play. (All too many self-made or badly trained translators operate at this last level only, failing to understand that it is not here that their task ends - here it begins.)

In this new light, translating becomes a) re-assessing all the factors that inform meaning meant, b) assessing from scratch all the factors that presumably will inform a relevantly identical meaning understood in the mind of the intended addressee of the

¹This article was rejected at the time (2003) by the intended publisher.

²I am indebted to the terminological distinction to Birgitta Englund-Dimitrova's presentation at the Stockholm Symposium on Language Processing and Interpreting (21-22 February 1997).

translation, and on that basis c) producing an adequate re-verbalisation. The mediator must thus bring into play a thorough communicative competence that, while encompassing linguistic and rhetorical ability goes far beyond it. That is his expertise: truly competent translation is expertly mediated interlingual communication. The translator's task and responsibility as mediator, then, is to help achieve, or at least promote as adequate a relevant identity between meaning originally meant and finally understood as possible in the circumstances.

After this summary of the communicative essence of interlingual mediation and the distinctive attributes of expert mediation, may I now proceed to analyse its present existence.

The new conditions of existence

A change in demand

Over the last fifty years tremendous changes have taken place on the planet that have affected translation practice and theory. The scientific and technical revolution -and, more recently, the revolution in informatics- has produced, together with the globalisation of the world economy, both a textification of economic activity and a re-oralisation of culture, so that translation has begun to be seen as directly and crucially linked to economic production³. On the political side, the birth of the new post-war world order and its corollary, the dismantling of the former colonial empires, gave rise to numerous specialised international organisations with several official languages, whereby translation came to be seen also as directly and crucially linked to global politics. Many multinational states, on their part, have become officially multilingual, and this has in turn multiplied the demand for translation. These new needs derived from economic development and its commercial, political, legal, religious, mediatic and institutional offshoots have produced an overwhelming demand for the translation of new kinds of pragmatic texts (written, oral or mixed) into all economically relevant languages. As a result, more and more texts are translated into more and more languages (if not so much from more and more languages, the least economically developed being net importers of translations too). Even the Bible has lost its sanctity as an immutable and mysterious original and given rise to politically functional approaches such as dynamic equivalence (which has produced, together with conservative translations, the most liberal-the so-called *Liberation Bible*-a radical reinterpretation, not only of the text, but of the motivations and intentions of the Almighty herself). Another important new feature is the emergence of translation of pseudo-literary texts (i.e., heaps of paperback best-sellers, alleged biographies of enduring and nonce celebrities, kitchen or bedroom philosophy, and the like) as a lucrative business.

A change in practice⁴

The explosion in demand has had as its first decisive consequence the birth of interlingual mediation as a profession. Concomitantly, new features have emerged that affect market, production, practice, training and theoretical thinking; to wit:

³See, in particular, Sager (1995) and O'Hagan and Ashworth (2002).

⁴An interesting fact that I am not addressing here is the feminisation of the profession, as witnessed, among other things, by the overwhelming percentage of women among translation students.

- a) The translation of industry- and commerce-related pragmatic texts as the main economic translational activity;
- b) The concomitant disappearance of literary translation as the main, most prestigious and better remunerated translational endeavour (indeed, the translation of literary works has multiplied exponentially — if not comparably, but most of it is now the realm of publishing business and could be thus assimilated to the translation of pragmatic texts);
- c) The appearance, as noted above, of Bible translation (or, rather, mostly re-translation from English) into economically peripheral languages as an autonomous and well-financed specialised practice;
- d) The emergence of international organisations requiring multilingual, legal and political translation;
- e) The emergence of simultaneous interpretation, initially at the international political level, but soon spilled over the rest of the market;
- f) The emergence of multimedia translation (subtitling, dubbing, etc.);
- g) The emergence -due to the sudden rise in economic migration and the political empowerment of linguistic minorities- of dialogue interpreting;
- h) The recognition of the cultural specificity of the deaf as a linguistic and cultural minority and the consequent professionalisation of sign language interpreting;
- i) The emergence of machine translation;
- j) The emergence of multimedia translation as a complex mediational activity;
- k) The emergence and academic consolidation of translatology (or, if Anglocrats insist, Translation Studies) in all its branches⁵;
- l) The proliferation of translation schools;
- m) The onset of empirical research on the neurophysiological substrate of translation; and, most crucially, as I hope to show,
- n) The emergence of translation agencies that mediate and thrive between users and producers of translations.

All these features combine to characterise modern translation, whose decisive existential attribute is being yet another commodity produced not for consumption but for sale, whose main feature is efficiency, i.e., providing the highest communicative effectiveness, on time and at the lowest possible cost.

The new practitioners

These changes in demand and practice have also effected changes in the profile of practitioners, among them:

⁵A fact often overlooked is the extraordinary momentum of translation in the former so-called “socialist” countries, where a phenomenal amount of the most variegated literary and political translations into and from most languages were produced as a matter of official cultural and political policy by expertly trained, well remunerated and socially prestigious translators. This could but go hand in hand with an avalanche of theoretical thought, with a very rich array of outstanding contributions. But that parenthesis seems closed, and I presume that those translators and translatoologists are now at the rather merciless mercy of regular and irregular business practices — thus, gone is one of the good things that “real socialism” did indeed produce; and with it, what should have been a brilliant and decisive chapter in the development of translatology is now but a footnote.

- a) The specialisation and differentiation of written and oral interlingual mediation at the upper crusts of professional practice;
- b) the gradual professional, financial and social -but not yet academic- stratification of practitioners from the barely qualified alleged bilingual at the bottom to the highly recognised international conference interpreters at the top — with the reclusive and elusive literary mediator somewhere in the wings;
- c) The disappearance of consecutive conference interpretation from the fore of professional practice;
- d) The emergence of the specialised practitioner (the technical, medical, legal translator; the conference, community, judicial, and media interpreter; the film dubber or subtitler; etc.);
- e) The emergence of sign interpreting as a fully-fledged professional activity;
- f) The emergence of staff translators and interpreters; with, as a corollary,
- g) The proletarianisation of the translator, who ceases to be an independent worker in order to become yet another salaried employee — albeit if at times under the guise of a handsomely paid international civil servant;
- h) The emergence of the polyvalent multimedia and “localising” translator — who becomes, in several ways, more decisively intercultural than interlingual; and
- i) The emergence of the truly expert translator — he who, rather than land in the profession (or be shipwrecked into it), actually chooses it from the start as a *bona fide* academic career and actively helps develop it, so that from now on, as is the case with all other established professions, each generation of practitioners may start at a higher level of knowledge and awareness than the preceding one.

The new concept of equivalence

As a result of this basically quantitative evolution, and especially of the emergence of Bible translation as a missionary rather than theological or philological endeavour, a main qualitative leap takes place in theoretical and practical thinking. Once the sacrosanct, mysterious text *par excellence* had to be tackled “communicatively” rather than “semantically” in order for it to be accepted by, rather than imposed upon, unsophisticated heathens that had never seen a camel, translation was never to be the same again. Functional theories and approaches have carried the day since.

The return to orality

The next crucial leap, I submit, was the emergence of conference interpretation as the most visible and prestigious professional activity — at first more or less as the realm of scions of the better European families, such as Russian emigres who, like their cohort, Nabokov, boasted a “normal tetra-lingual childhood” at the best European schools money could pay for. All of a sudden, translators started doing what they had stopped doing for twenty centuries: talking — if exclusively to the diplomatically high-heeled. Overnight, conference interpreting substituted literary translation as the epitome of socially acknowledged and financially rewarded translational activity. But -alas!- the cruel economic reality needed more than a handful of outstanding aristocratic linguists. It soon ceased putting up with their tirades that competed with or even upstaged those by their users. In came the expedient anonymity of the booth: the interpreter was no longer to be seen and marvelled at — all he was required to provide was an unobtrusive voice.

The irruption of the neurophysiological substrate

The emergence of simultaneous conference interpreting created a qualitatively new breed of mediator. To begin with, it started putting on the new practitioners of translation unprecedented cognitive and psychomotor demands. Abstract linguistic, philological, encyclopaedic and communicative knowledge or competence were no longer enough: now the interpreter was as good as his reflexes and as scholarly as his memory. Comprehension, processing and elocution ceased to be discrete tasks to be tackled separately and more or less at the mediator's leisure. So stressful were these new demands, that few otherwise expert practitioners could handle them, and many a brilliant consecutive interpreter saw himself unceremoniously swept off the podium directly into oblivion. For the first time the first-objectual substrate of translation revealed to what extent, it conditioned its second-objectual communicative essence.

The final blow to “formal equivalence”

The most important feature, however, was that translation reappeared as what it had been in the beginning and forever but a couple of thousand years: face-to-face, dialogic orally mediated interlingual communication (except that it did so in a cognitively and socially rarefied, unnatural environment). The demands of simultaneity stripped it bare of all the distracting trimmings of traditional philological renderings. From a purely linguistic standpoint, it was soon discovered that, often, the form of the original could scarcely be guessed behind the interpreter's rendition, that something other than its words was being carried across — and most successfully at that. This gave rise to a new qualitative leap in the theoretical concept of translation — *la théorie du sens*, whence both García Landa and myself, interpreters that we basically are, initially hail. Yet, as I have said, SI's almost exclusive confinement to high-level diplomatic or, later, technical and business gatherings meant that the intercultural component was very much masked by the interlingual one.

The modern view of translation

To sum up, the evolution of practice has brought about two main novelties in thinking: 1) By doing away with the alleged intangibility of the sacrosanct original and mercilessly dethroning “formal equivalence,” Nida and Seleskovitch put in place in the West the fundamental ingredients for everything that followed. On their secluded side, Soviet thinkers were progressing towards the same outlook: unbeknownst to each other, Schweitzer and Seleskovitch arrived simultaneously at the same conceptual and terminological distinction between meaning (linguistic) and sense (extra-linguistic). 2) Simultaneous interpretation, as we have seen, brought to the fore the neurophysiological substrate, which in turn necessitated and allowed for empirical research and experimentation: Soon enough, both interpreters and natural scientists -and later on translators themselves- started wondering what that substrate was like and how it worked. This boisterous irruption of the physical and its epistemology into a social activity has shaken even more thoroughly the translator's former complacency as a serene bilingual (tending, unfortunately, to obscure at times the communicative, quintessentially social nature of the phenomenon).

The market begets schools; and schools beget interdisciplinarity

It took the market no time to understand that the new demands meant that more truly competent translators were needed than industrialised and, in the case of Arabic -and, to a lesser extent, Spanish- non-industrialised societies could spontaneously produce, which led to the establishment and proliferation of translation and interpretation schools. Already a booming business, translation suddenly became a subject worth pursuing academically; which, as has been noted, led to a welcome spin-off: the development of empirical and even experimental research into the physical components of translational behaviour in general. This of course, could have never happened without translation schools with whose faculty other faculties could cooperate. The emergence of translation as an independent academic pursuit allowed for fluid communication with several relevant fields of study, thus establishing the objective premises that soon emerged at the theoretical level as interdisciplinarity. This in turn gave rise to an ever widening and deepening specialised literature, marked by the mushrooming of journals, newsletters, ever better textbooks, ever more ambitious and comprehensive theoretical works, etc. Hardly a month passes by nowadays without at least one major symposium or conference being held (almost invariably in the industrialised countries of Europe). All this has greatly developed the way we think of, write about and teach translation. As a result, young translators and interpreters graduate from recognised - again, mostly European- schools with a level of competence few if any of their self-made predecessors could boast at their age⁶. (So much so that in certain language combinations, many more young interpreters are churned out than the market of a society plunged into global recession can absorb.)

The horizontal proliferation of translation

At the same time, translation became a significant economic activity with respect to more and more languages. With the sudden rise in the price of oil following the 1973/74 crisis and the enlargement of the European Union, Arabic and a few of the non-main stream European languages that had slumbered in the periphery of global politics became international, whereby simultaneous interpreters started sprouting from all walks of life (already formed and groomed, as it erroneously seemed at that time, like Athena out of Zeus's side). Many of those pioneers knew but a second language, but were the only ones capable of interpreting out of their native tongue, and thus the multi-interpreter two-way booth became a feature of international conference-life, with its tangle of relays and double relays.

Lately, the International Tribunal for Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia has had to find and train interpreters for Serbo-Croatian, whilst the new South Africa has set as her official policy the goal of achieving equality for its eleven major languages (out of 25 spoken in the country!) (Beukes 1996). The task is an incredibly daunting one, and surely a harbinger of

⁶A typical case that in a vertiginous twenty-year nutshell amply illustrates all of the above is Spain: With Franco's death, the return of democracy, her subsequent acceptance by the rest of Europe and membership in the European Union, the rapid economic development undergone as a consequence, and her concomitant larger political profile abroad together with the larger economic and therefore political profile of Catalonia and the Basque country within her, it is not surprising that schools have finally sprouted a-plenty on Iberian soil, blossoming in at least four specialised journals and, of late, a native school of thought: *translemics* (Mayoral Asensio et al. 1988, Rabadán 1991). It took Spain's belated and somewhat crippled incorporation into the industrialised North to stamp the Spanish language onto the translational map (something that the mother countries of Borges and Cortázar, Neruda and Huidobro, García Márquez and De Greiff, Fuentes and Rulfo, Carpentier and Lezama Lima, Darío, Vallejo and Asturias could never manage).

things to come. While on mission in South Africa in 1996, I had the privilege of watching on TV the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and marvelled at those wonderful, presumably improvised, and fiery new colleagues of mine — the interpreters from Afrikaans, Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, and so many other languages I had heard never of. (What will happen, though, when the Tutsi and Hutu victims of genocide in Rwanda get their day in court? Let us never forget that the overwhelming majority of the world's languages remain isolated from each other, and that but for the very few that can be written, translation -let alone simultaneous conference interpretation- is a concept unthinkable in all of the 4,000 or so spoken by mankind on this planet at this very moment.)

The age of dialogue interpreting: the first great dialectic triad completed

With the vertiginous pauperisation of the South and the East and ever-increasing migration within the North, dialogue interpreting has developed into a decisive realm of specialisation. Thus, for instance, several states in the US have constitutionally enshrined the right to judicial interpretation, whilst Australia already provides an emergency telephone service. The emergence of dialogue interpreting as a highly specialised and economically relevant activity has brought out the truly intercultural and dialogic character of mediated interlingual communication. The dialogue interpreter assumes a direct responsibility for the linguistic, cultural and social success of communication that goes well beyond what conference interpreters mediating from their cubicles between polished ambassadors could possibly imagine⁷. Liberated both from the tyranny of the written word and from the anti-natural cognitive and motor demands of SI, it is here that the mediating, dialogical, intercultural role of the interpreter as coordinator, moderator and facilitator has come once again to the fore. Translation has thus completed its first great dialectic cycle from immediate mediated dialogical orality to displaced mediated textuality and back, but at a much higher degree of development. No wonder that so many new and invaluable insights are coming precisely from this new and age-old breed: the dialogue interpreters, especially in those countries where, due to the economic relevance of their craft, coupled with an enlightened social policy, they have acquired a high social and academic status.

Translation becomes non-verbal

A paragraph of its own must be devoted to a qualitatively new development (marking, perhaps, the beginning of the next dialectic triad?): the emergence of sign interpreting as a full equivalent of mediated verbal communication. The theoretical consequences are already visible: by its first-objectual material (the visual rather than phonic substance of its signs), sign language is a very different organisation of language, i.e., man's ability to conceptualise and convey experience through articulated second-degree symbols), realised through its own specific lexis. A crucial theoretical consequence of the emergence of sign language interpreting is that, henceforward, any theory or model of translation must account for the phenomenon despite the passage from gesture to words and vice versa. Even more challenging, to boot, is the incipient practice of tactile language interpreting. Theories and models that hinge on any kind of formal equivalence or similarity, as I said, will have a very hard time explaining these kinds of translation.

⁷See, for instance, Schjoldager (1995) and Wadensjö (1993 & 1995).

Translation as an economic activity

Translation as commodity

We can still go down the existence path and view translation not anymore as communication, but as yet another kind of economic activity subject to the objective laws obtaining in the general exchange of goods and services defined by commodity production, which is not directly governed by the actual needs of consumption but by profit: the production of commodities meant not to be used but to be sold — whether good or bad, healing or killing. For the translator, his translation (if he has been commissioned with it) or his ability to translate (if he is hired as a worker) has but exchange value; and so it does for the agent who buys it from him in order to sell it or its product at a higher price to the end-user. To my knowledge, the sole translato-logists to have approached translation from a somewhat similar standpoint are Pym (1992a and b) and Venuti (1991, 1995 and 1998). In these times that Byron already saw as the “patent age of new inventions for killing bodies and for saving souls, all propagated with the best intentions,” more than ever it makes sense to look at translation as an economic activity (as recently analysed by Sager 1995), and view it as yet another manifestation of economic exchange and power. To speak of cultures in the abstract, as if the translation of the *Popol Vuh* into the European languages and of the Bible into Mayan had been a politically innocent and symmetric translational exchange between different cultures equally curious about each other, is nowadays naive. It does not take much acumen to realise that the ruling classes of the industrialised nations are both the real importers and exporters of translations. It is they who, even in the peripheral countries, many of whose publishing houses they own, decide who, what, when, how, how much and at what price gets translated — or not. It is precisely their needs to export manufactured goods that lie behind the unprecedented mushrooming of pragmatic texts translated from and into most languages. As noted, this fact has had a decisive impact on the birth of pragmatic translation, which, in turn, has given translatology its unprecedented *élan*. So much so that very few translation schools teach literary translation — and then merely as an appendix, and not because it cannot or should not be taught (everything can be taught and every professional activity ought to be), but because it is not at it that their graduates will earn their bread.

The proletarianisation of the translator

The translator has thus become yet another worker, endowed with a special ability to mediate inter-lingually, in search of someone who will buy this ability for a given time or task. Regardless of whether he likes his original, whether he works independently or through an enlightened or obtuse client that always keeps the surplus value, the translator translates in order to eat, pay his rent, and generally live as decently as the market will afford. In this, as every other worker, he will be subject to the general laws of commodity production in a capitalist society; to wit, that he will be paid not for his work but for his ability to work, and roughly what the market considers the monetary equivalent of the amount of work socially required to reproduce such ability. It bears, I think, repeating: except for very few — either bohemian or independently wealthy — practitioners, as any other worker, the translator sells not so much his translation as his ability to produce it: What he is to translate — when, under what conditions, for which purpose, etc., is decided unto him by the client, whose social function is to unite what on the market is separate: the translator and the means of production, or at least his translation and its user. This is seen much more clearly in the case of SI, where

only the client can provide the booths, electronic wherewithal, technicians and even rooms without which the simultaneous interpreter is useless as such. Not only that, the simultaneous interpreter is not paid for his work but for providing his ability to work during a given time: as any other proletarian, he is paid by the hour or the day. Simultaneous interpretation could have never been born without the technological development in the XXth century or without a commodity-producing society: if ever a manifestation of the translational essence was conditioned, nay, determined by economic reality in which it exists (as well as its first-objectual substrate) it is SI.

The omnipresent, all-powerful client

As we have seen, then, the proletarianisation of translation has brought in a crucial newcomer between “author” and “translator,” and “translator” and “addressee” — let alone between cultures: the client. Its emergence on the market has now been captured in most models, together with the fact that a translation can be functionally different from the original, since the client requires a translation for his specific purposes (“give me the gist” asks the lawyer in private, but not in public). The client can show up under different guises: the originator who pays the speaker, the agent who orders the translation, the employer who pays the translator. All too often, the proletarian translator is not even master of his translation's *skopos*: he is saddled with a rigid translation “brief.” The client, in all his diverse avatars, appears always as the proverbial payer of the piper, with the decisive economic power to call any tune and potentially censure or distort translation (very much the same way the economics of private health care can distort therapy, impeding or preventing otherwise perfectly possible and effective treatment) if only by sheer ignorance — by setting communicatively erroneous and/or unrealistic norms (for instance the same lawyer demanding in the courtroom that the judicial interpreter “translate exactly every word” he utters). Not seeing this other fact, a fact as extraordinary and monumental to the existence of modern translation as the fact that translating is talking is to its essence, has, I submit, serious methodological and theoretical implications.

Alienation sets in

The new economic requirements and constraints have further separated translators from ever more anonymous and de-personalised writers and readers. Dictionaries -as, in general, books as we know them- are becoming increasingly obsolete. The heirs of St. Jerome can no longer do with the intimacy of a cell or the leather scent of a library. Time is of the essence, and all manner of sophisticated translation aids are there to save it. Translators, and, to a lesser extent, interpreters, are caught in an informatics revolution affecting their means of production, which, as the rest of such means, are less and less apt to be individually owned. Fewer and fewer translations are done by a single practitioner. Through translation agencies and in large companies and institutions, they are done very much following a regular production line: A series of translators, a series of revisers, a series of terminologists, a series of text processors, etc., with an increasing number of functions carried out electronically or even by the translational equivalent of robots — all of that without the least contact with whomever wrote the original or will evaluate, let alone use the translation, whilst at international gatherings interpreters work anywhere between ten and twenty at a time at a given meeting -and by the scores at a single conference- for delegates sometimes prone to call them “facilities.” To boot, remote translating has already been instituted in many services, and

remote interpreting is around the corner. The mediator has become as much a victim of alienation as the industrial worker.

The insidious arrival of machine translation

At its inception, machine translation was laughed off as a grotesque concoction by computer experts with no knowledge of translation, who assumed that, it being an operation on and between languages, it could be solved by dint of ever more sophisticated algorithms. Sadly, time has proven them right: insofar as interlingual “mechanics” is concerned, machine translation has come more than dangerously close to equal and even surpass mediocre translators. Yes, at its most un-sophisticated, say google translation, it does produce hilarious monstrosities... But it produces them for free and in real time. Provided they are intelligible enough for the purposes in hand, no user will even think of paying -or waiting- for a more palatable text. More sophisticated programmes, of course, produce much better results. Not long ago I witnessed a demonstration of EU economic texts machine-translated from German into English... I was scared out of my wits. True, the machine cannot “think” or “feel” and will never -well, never is perhaps too long a time- be able to “manipulate” texts as required for adaptation or localisation or the translation of (decently written) literature, and that is therefore bound to be applicable only to pragmatic texts. It can be argued –at least for the nonce– that in the case of more “transcendental” pragmatic texts, human intervention will be nevertheless needed at either end. Perhaps. But that leaves too narrow a territory for human translators. Be that as it may, the professional who takes translation to be a purely linguistic operation and limits himself to producing “accurate” renditions of propositional content is pretty much doomed to slide down the way of the erstwhile postilions and, soon enough, train motormen... Alternatively, closer to our realm, typists.

The ambiguously blissful irruption of automatic translation tools

At this time, many devices have appeared that make translation a less cumbersome process. Terminology banks, voice-recognition programmes, the humble speller. They are bound to be fruitful and multiply. As with any other technological advancement improving productivity, they can be used to promote the well-being of those who work, or to do away with those who are no longer needed and, at least in relative terms, increase exploitation of those who are lucky enough to keep their jobs. One thing, however, is clear: Mastery of languages and ability to write elegantly have ceased to be enough. On matter how good a translator, a computer-illiterate mediator –such as my humble self– will soon have no place in the market: A mediocre translation to-day is normally more useful than an impeccable tomorrow. And, in the market, more useful means simply better.

Mediators organise

Meanwhile, on the translators' side of the market, and since the development of business entails the development of its contrary, labour, all manner of national, regional and international professional associations began sprouting and, in the end, networking, more and more concerned with the petty details of the existence of mediators than with lofty musings about the essence of translation. In the early seventies, in view, among other things, of the inordinate incidence of sickness among them, the United Nations interpreters demanded and obtained a special medical study of job-related stress, upon the basis of which the present workload standards were established. As of this writing, moreover, and with a view eventually

to instituting remote interpreting as a regular activity, a similar study is planned in order to determine, among other things, whether the further alienation of the mediators adds to stress and, if so, whether and to what extent workload standards are to be modified. On the private market, the struggle between translators and business has reached unprecedented violence with the all-out offensive of the United States Federal Trade Commission against local and international professional associations that dare uphold minimal working conditions. AIIC waged a protracted, onerous and gallant battle against a Behemoth as overwhelmingly powerful as it is blissfully ignorant of anything remotely connected with mediated interlingual communication. Regardless of whether the battle was worth waging or well fought, it is heartening that there is someone willing and able to fight for the profession: not so long ago, the whole idea would have been unthinkable. Although AIIC initially lost on all grounds, on appeal all the principles regarding working conditions were upheld — a rare victory that cannot but strengthen the profession.

The mediator for himself

As pointed out, it is this *élan* of pragmatic translation that has given rise to professional translation, to translation as a remunerated activity — something people would do in order to pay their rent. Presumably, natural translation has not evolved much with time. Immigrants' children are in all probability not more adept at performing it now than ten or twenty or a thousand years ago. If at all, natural translation must have evolved as much as natural singing; but what a difference on the opera or concert stage! An analogous difference, I submit, is becoming apparent on paper or through the earphones. As is the case with simultaneous interpreters, the first generations of translators were basically self-made. Competence, encyclopaedic and linguistic knowledge varied greatly, and the lack of a significant corpus of texts of the relevant types made intertextuality virtually non-existent and criticism moot. But with ever better and better formed generations of mediators who rather than find themselves exiled in the profession have actually been born into it, with the tremendous development of theoretical and didactical reflection and practice, a new practitioner has emerged that is little by little taking over — at least in the most developed economies: the truly expert mediator. At this new level of dialectic development, the erstwhile-improvised turjuman has become an expert mediator, who exercises his newly discovered expert freedom of choice in a deontologically responsible way.

As submitted above, what basically distinguishes truly expert mediators from the rest of mortals is not so much that they do it professionally (some natural translators may be better than a few unnatural professionals), but that they bring awareness more consciously into play. They, moreover, assume deontological responsibility for their activity and its results, something the natural or amateur mediator cannot possibly do. The truly expert mediator guarantees that his product will be as apt for its intended use as objective conditions allow, i.e., that it will be the best under the circumstances. In order genuinely to achieve such professional level of quality under the circumstances, a mediator tacitly but consciously undertakes to consider all relevant alternative ways of approaching his task, which presupposes a critical analysis of theoretically plausible alternatives. This, in turn entails a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of all relevant theoretical insights and practical techniques in the field, which in turns allows him to help setting and developing ever more adequate (communicatively more effective) professional norms, rather than blindly following those established by naive clients or users - no more and no less than it is the case with any

other established professional activity. That today most professional mediators (especially into the less economically relevant languages) lack such knowledge -i.e., are not communicatively competent, truly expert mediators- is both but a symptom and a consequence of the activity's youth as a profession.

Extrapolating the Marxian concepts, the communicatively naive (even if linguistically competent) mediator would be a mediator *in* himself, while the truly expert mediator would have become a mediator *for* himself — the vanguard, the most enlightened practitioner: One who consciously brings to bear an awareness of the relevant factors, first and foremost that translation is communication -the re-production of meaning between actual human beings who have actual motivations and aims- and not sheer language switching. One who is aware also of the absolute and relative weight to be given to the formal (prosodic, phonic, rhythmic, syntactic and other) features of a verbalisation in each specific case. One who is equipped, moreover, with the relevant specific theoretical and practical wherewithal (who can detect a literary allusion, reproduce a pun, understand and reproduce or modify a certain register, etc.) so as to be able to understand and re-produce all manner of meanings that are intended neither for nor by him but that cannot, in principle, be conveyed successfully unless he operates all the necessary transformations. It is the truly expert mediator who will lead the profession to a new level of self-awareness and self-respect that is bound to strengthen it and its practitioners academically, socially and, one dares hope, financially.

The future

The new millennium

One thing is sure: the third millennium will not resemble the second one. At present, the European Union with its politically understandable but practically unmanageable and communicatively superfluous linguistic demands is about to break the mould. It is evident that simultaneous conference interpretation as we know it at the dawn of the XXIth century, barely fifty years after its birth, is becoming economically an untenable proposition. In order to be efficient in the new millennium, international interpreters must be genuinely polylingual, with an adequate degree of passive or active competence in at least five languages (one of them of limited diffusion), and polyvalent; whilst for the different national markets passive linguistic competence will not be enough. Besides, both they and other mediators must start with a vast and diversified encyclopaedic, technical, legal and political knowledge that they cannot hope to have acquired at any academic institution — and certainly not at a specialised school, such as Law, Medicine or Chemistry. There, they will have become familiar -if uselessly more in depth than a mediator requires- with but one specific specialised domain, rather than the much vaster (and necessarily more superficial) encyclopaedic knowledge -let alone the specialised communicative, i.e., specifically translational, knowledge *and* competence- that they will need in order to cope with the infinite variety of texts, tasks and subjects that will confront them in professional life.

Nowadays perhaps only the best journalists can boast the encyclopaedic (García Landa calls it “philosophic”) knowledge a mediator requires. This kind of mediator cannot possibly be improvised or found in the playground of the most expensive international schools or at the graduation ceremonies of a Liberal Arts or Veterinary school - not in the required numbers or with the required language combinations: it must be formed specifically - and scientifically, like the officer corps in an army. At the most demanding, responsible levels

of practice, the days of the self-taught or more or less speedily churned out interlingual mediator are as counted as those of the self-made jet pilot, journalist, professional football-player or fashion model. Practitioners will have to go on developing: the upper middle-class, more or less self-made mediator craftsman most of us have nowadays in mind when thinking or writing about translation is a rapidly vanishing species, an imminent relic of the past, like the neighbourhood repairman or the family physician. I cannot picture the future further down the line, but something similar must be in store for the interpreter as well: Remote interpreting as a regular *modus interpretandi* is, as I have warned, virtually around the corner, and I shudder at the idea of a huge interpreter-hive, with hundreds of colleagues neatly packed in rows upon rows of cubicles mediating *in absentia* in communication events all over the world, comprehending and re-producing meanings meant by people they will never catch a glimpse of for people they will never see. It sounds frightening, but if it is economically efficient, that is the way it shall tend to be.

Can mediators influence it?

I am deeply convinced that, fortunately, they can. Professional, truly expert mediators, like all other professionals, have two battlefronts: a) with respect to what we may call the profession's academic dignity, and b) with respect to the financial and other relevant conditions of its practice.

The struggle for professional and academic dignity

By professional and academic dignity I mean everything connected with translation's essence and its competent realisation in practice. No matter who hires them for whatever purposes, communicatively competent mediators are, must remain and should be acknowledged as the sole true experts in their field — no less than architects or certified public accountants. As such, they should play, in so far as dialectically possible, a decisive role in consciously helping the evolution of norms as a function of new specific scientific insights; in order effectively to achieve which, in turn, they should at all times actively educate clients and users, dispelling and, if necessary, combatting naive or even retrograde misconceptions of what their task really is. In other words, mediators must strive to defend mediated interlingual/intercultural communication as a fully-fledged profession that, at its most demanding, requires a deep specific procedural and declarative knowledge, both linguistic and communicative, as well as a tremendously diverse encyclopaedic knowledge — which in turn necessitates a degree of academic specialisation comparable to that required of the physician, the opera conductor or the historian. No one else will wage this battle for them. No one else can⁸.

The necessary academic and professional stratification of levels of competence

As with every human endeavour and depending on the nature and purpose of the task in hand, translation requires different degrees of competence (the difference obtaining, for instance, between the neurosurgeon, the general practitioner, the nurse and the paramedic). Such different degrees of competence should be broadly the reflection of different levels of academic training, with eventually a qualitative distinction between the upper and lower

⁸At its Assembly held in Montreal in January 1996, AIIC adopted as a major project that of the definition and recognition of the profession of conference interpreter — a big step indeed. At present, there is a move to push for an international convention protecting the diploma.

levels (again, as in the case of physicians/nurses⁹). A crucial inherent component of this view of translation is its constant conceptual and practical development, as its essence becomes more aptly and comprehensively modelled, with more and more relevant phenomena factored in and its practice more and more effective and efficient. This is a strategic objective that may look remote and chimeric from the aftermath of the second millennium, but that, I am convinced, should be kept in mind henceforward. It requires the establishment, development and strengthening of national, regional and international professional associations, and the fight to make academically verified professional competence mandatory for the relevant levels of practice; to help and ensure that an adequate degree of competence obtains at each level throughout the world and across all languages. A decisive ingredient of this strategic objective is the establishment, development, strengthening and networking of adequate academic institutions (again, eventually throughout the world and across all languages)¹⁰. Here too, if mediators do not wage this battle, no one else will.

The struggle for a just remuneration for an expert job

Let us not forget about the actual existence of mediators themselves. Here, my colleagues hardly need any outside prompting, I hope, to demand a decent pay for an expert job, with due access to the requisite aids to make their practice more effective and ever more competent (including, on the one hand, the ability to pay for the relevant software and hardware, and, on the other, to keep abreast of specialised literature and attend relevant courses and symposia — which is a component, for instance, of the physician's fee). Both endeavours are part of a general, noble and progressive cause: making the activity ever more adequate to its essential purpose, which is helping economic and spiritual development by bringing people and peoples together, and promoting, at the same time, the well-being and social status of its practitioners, researchers and teachers. In this battle, mediators need not be alone, since it is part of a more general struggle — that of every single human being who has nothing to sell but his ability to work.

Conclusion

We can thus elicit four complementary viewpoints of interlingual mediation: First and foremost, its essence as mediated interlingual/intercultural communication and, as such, a subtype, respectively, of interlingual, intercultural and mediated communication in a first instance, of lingual communication in a second instance, and of semiotic communication in the last instance, all of which takes the form of social activities in a field of social relations.

⁹In this connection, I fully agree with Geoffrey Kingscott's view that the economics of mediated interlingual communication already demands many more practitioners than schools can possibly provide and, crucially, of a lesser level of competence than schools theoretically instil. I am presently toying with the concept of the “barefoot mediator,” as an extrapolation of the “barefoot physicians” China trained by the hundreds of thousands in order to provide elementary (but scientifically sound!) care to a population of hundreds of millions who would otherwise have nothing to resort to but witch doctors. Needless to point out, the training of these lower-level practitioners should be in the hands of expert mediators (the way nurses and barefoot physicians are trained by shod Galens).

¹⁰Now the problem is that *translation* is so closely linked to culture through language that it is easier to conceive of a full generation of professionally competent Bantu physicians than of a generation of barely apt Bantu-Swedish *mediators*. But then, the economics of *translation* will allow us to understand that, for the nonce, the latter are not as indispensable as the former.

Next, we can see it as a specific existentially conditioned professional or specialised expert activity, subject to physical and social constraints. In both of these pursuits, interlingual mediation must be approached as what it essentially is — a social object, analysing it with the methods and tools of the social sciences. It so happens, however, that, as language itself, interlingual mediation can be usefully studied as a kind of cerebral activity (the famous black box). We could ask ourselves what happens between meaning and language, and between language and speech, regardless of the social nature of communication. We would also wish to know, among other things, how the simultaneous interpreter manages the overlapping tasks of understanding, processing, assessing relevance, and uttering. For this, of course, we would need the methods and tools of natural sciences, with cognitive and deep psychology sitting uncomfortably between both realms. Lastly, we can look at interlingual mediation as yet another economic activity, and as such subject to the general laws of capitalist commodity production (since, for the historic nonce, there is no other) — the selling of a specific individual ability that is put to specific use under the specific (explicit or tacit) instructions or requirements of a client whose function it is ever more often to mediate between the translator and the user of his translation; a client, moreover who for all practical purposes becomes the owner of the product, which he is free to dispose of as he sees fit, for whatever price he can get for it, regardless of what he pays the translator. Naturally, the mediator's (and especially the simultaneous interpreter's) client may be a political institution rather than a translation company. This does not alter the principle: A teacher, or a researcher, or a writer, or an electrician can also be hired by such an institution. Whatever the administrative or logistic modalities, then, the mediator is ultimately paid, as every other worker, in exchange for his ability to work, rather than for the product thereof.

TRANSLATION, INTERLINGUAL MEDIATION AND THE ELUSIVE CHIMERA OF EQUIVALENCE (My theory in a nutshell)¹¹

Introduction

What follows is an overview of the general theory of interlingual mediation that I propound and explain in Viaggio (2006). The basic theoretical questions concern the delimitation and definition of a theory's object. In our case: What is translation. What is the sufficient/necessary relationship between two texts or utterances that we may call one the translation of the other. What, in short, is a translator to do in order for a translation to exist. Whatever our answers to these questions, they are bound to prove wanting in one crucial respect: We, translators (including interpreters), although mostly engaged in "translation," do things other than "translating." What is it that we do that we may call it by one name? What is the Searlean "constitutive rule" of whatever it is (good) translators and interpreters do always, in writing or orally, semantically or communicatively, documentarily or instrumentally, literally or freely, literarily or pragmatically, visibly or invisibly, overtly or covertly? It is an age-old question that has received different answers, but, to date, none of them has been wholly satisfactory. The problem lies in that, regardless of the explicit or implicit definition -i.e., of the theory- governing the activity of translators across the centuries, and especially now that translation has become directly linked to the development of the productive forces of society, translators have had to do myriad things that have escaped any definition. One fact is, however, certain: translation is a form of communication between human beings, and not simply an operation between languages — or between oral or written texts. It is this perspective that spurs the best modern approaches (Nida (1964), Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989), Lvovskaja (1985 and 1997), Reiss and Vermeer (1996), Gutt (2001), García Landa (2001), and Osimo (2001 and 2002).

Mariano García Landa: speech and translation as perceptual processes

García Landa is the first one to understand speech as the production of second-degree (i.e., social, non-natural) percepts whose object is sense — that which a speaker means to say. Such percepts are produced in specific acts of speech by specific human beings on specific human beings in specific social and historical situations (with, add I, specific purposes). The central idea is that outside the specific speech act *sense does not exist*. Sense -or, if you prefer, meaning, but I submit we keep "meaning" in its myriad guises as a hypernym- is not in the signs. It is the product of a nonce social perception produced in a specific social situation: Outside such nonce and fleeting acts of comprehension -including self-comprehension- there is no sense. Sense is as much on a piece of paper (or in the hard disc inside a computer) as Kevin Kostner is inside the TV set. It is the perceiving subject who interprets those signs or points of light in just three colours respectively as meaning meant or a face — the difference being that one perception is social, second-degree, and the other, first-degree, natural. What a

¹¹ An updated version of my article published in Forum 4:2, pp. 162-190.

speaker physically does, in fact, is to produce differences in air pressure or doodlings¹²: this is what an interlocutor perceives through his senses. Except that what a speaker wishes to produce is not differences in air pressure (let alone doodlings), nor is it they that an interlocutor understands. There is a decisive ontological distinction between the perception of the social, intentional object, and that of the acoustic chains (or the graphic representation thereof) which such percept is turned into or whence it derives. The object of a social perception is, always, an *intention* — an intention to communicate (and, more crucially, add I, an intention to **do** by communicating).

Intended sense comes to the speaker's awareness as a fleeting amalgam of ideational content and verbal form that is endowed with a certain emotive relief. This perception of one's own intended sense is the product of the concomitant activations of one's encyclopaedic and linguistic knowledge. In order to make manifest this percept, the speaker verbalises his intended sense by means of a linguistic chain that must become sensorially perceptible as noise (or visual or tactile images), i.e., that must be turned into a natural, first-degree stimulus producing another natural, first-degree perception. At the other end of the act of communication, the interlocutor projects on the acoustic stimulus he has perceived his knowledge of the sign systems (the sedimentation of the countless acts of speech in which he has participated) and of the world¹³, and associates those differences in air pressure with linguistic signs, so that he too can perceive a linguistic chain. This chain is analysed in a vast mental laboratory in which all the other stimuli accompanying the speech perception proper enter into play together with a complex array of knowledge and experience. The final product of this process is a new second-degree, speech percept — sense as comprehended. Communication will have succeeded insofar as the object perceived by the speaker as his own meaning meant is the same now perceived by the interlocutor as meaning understood, i.e., insofar as there obtain between them a relation of identity. Such identity is not to be understood in the mathematical sense but as the relation established, as in natural perception, between a percept and its object (the term has caused a bit of an uproar; the reader may just substitute it mentally by "sameness").

There is more to meaning than ideational content

So far — García Landa. Indeed, the fact that ideational content can be re-verbalised without much ado is essential for translation. Indeed, the translation of pragmatic texts is mostly a matter of reproducing ideational content. This is what Reiss and Vermeer (1991) imply when they speak of a text as an *information offer*. And that is why it is almost universally recognised that they are "easier" to translate than literary texts, especially than the most formally marked specimens of lyric poetry, in which ideational content may lose most of its relevance. The problem is that there are many other layers of meaning that travel between speaker and interlocutor, even though they are not part of speech comprehension proper and, mostly, ensue from ideational comprehension. One of them is, perhaps, the emotive relief of what García Landa calls the "noetic (i.e., ideational) plate," which vanishes immediately upon the perception of ideational content. If this is so, then in order to be perceived as a component

¹² Or not even that: he can simply press keys that become bytes that will later become points of light on a screen.

¹³ García Landa calls this wherewithal the "hermeneutic package."

of speech comprehension it requires being “transposed” into propositional form and/or the formal semantic and non-semantic attributes of the utterance (collocations, register, prosody, etc. – which, being, by definition, formal attributes, are at best imitable, but never “translatable”). In any event, all these non-ideational aspects of meaning are, indeed, outside speech production and comprehension *per se* and are certainly much more difficult to conceptualise, but they cannot simply be brushed aside. Not in human communication in general, and, definitely, not in translation or *-a fortiori-* interlingual mediation.

Furthermore, a model of communication through speech cannot ignore the meta-representation of what might have been said instead of what has been actually uttered: The fact that a wife says to her husband ‘*I’m fond of you*’ rather than ‘*I love you*’ may be heavily loaded (and, as I shall stress, certainly no less so the fact that she does not say anything at all). Equally loaded, moreover, may be the fact that at an international gathering a Spanish delegate of Catalan origin intervenes in French rather than Spanish. Lexical and other positive choices become relevant, in other words, only insofar as an interlocutor can meta-represent the alternatives and the significance of the fact that they have not been chosen or, more relevantly, that they have been consciously discarded. Because that is very much a part of non-ideational meaning, either meant indirectly or, if not meant at all, then as comprehended by the interlocutor *despite* the speaker’s intentions. This is fraught with consequences for mediation, since the specific weight of an utterance’s form -especially semantic- may be more, or less, relevant as a positive choice. A few years ago, China and the US were at diplomatic loggerheads over the fact that a Chinese Mig had crashed in mid-air with an American intelligence plane above the China Sea, as a result of which the Chinese pilot was missing and presumed dead, whilst the American plane was forced to perform an emergency landing on a Chinese island. All the fuss was over whether the American aircraft was a “*spy*” plane (as characterised by more independent *Euronews*), or a “*surveillance*” plane (as labelled by the more obsequious *CNN*) legally ogling from afar (above, I have deliberately chosen a third term, “*intelligence*,” precisely to avoid either). In this specific context the semantic difference between an “*apology*,” which is what the Chinese demanded, and an “*expression of regret*,” which was as far as the Americans were ready to go, are *not* interchangeable: they give rise to relevantly different (even contradictory) politically charged meta-representations. In most other contexts, instead, they would be interchangeable: ‘*I’m sorry that your father is so ill, Peter,*’ will not give Peter much food for meta-representational lucubrations about whether I said “*I’m sorry*” rather than “*I regret*” in order to convey that I feel responsible. Pretending that every speaker chooses his words as an embattled Minister about to lose a no-confidence vote, carefully weighing and then rejecting each and every alternative (which is, by the way, impossible), and that, therefore, every word present counts as much as every absent word, is as preposterous in direct communication as it is damaging when it comes to the notion of fidelity in interlingual mediation.

And there is more: As I hinted above, a model of communication through speech cannot leave out the meaning of silence. True, silence is not a part of the utterance — but can be nevertheless meaning-laden. Very often, what is not being said is also an important part of what we understand, or, rather, of what we end up understanding after we have understood what has actually been said “officially.” Silence can be an ostensive means of communication -a negative stimulus, as it were- and when taken as such, it is interpreted via a meta-representation of what is left unsaid and a meta-meta-representation of why it is left unsaid.

What really counts is the meta-communicative framework

As we can see, the motivations and intentions that bring the interlocutors together -i.e., that give rise to the speech act to begin with- are a decisive part of the totality of human communication, which transcends speech production and comprehension. If a mediator does not take stock of why and what for the interlocutors who engage him have themselves engaged in producing speech percepts in each other, he may be able to “translate” most competently, but he cannot possibly mediate effectively — or, at least, optimally. Since what he must see to is not ensuring sheer ideational or propositional identity of meaning as meant and as comprehended, whatever the social consequences, but rather ensuring such an identity, coincidence or overlapping of meta-represented -ideational and non-ideational- meaning as will be also as pragmatically adequate as circumstances demand, advise or allow: He must ensure meta-communicatively **relevant** identity or sameness of meaning meant and understood..

No matter how hard he may try, a mediator cannot possibly re-verbalise the speaker’s meaning meant exactly as he himself has understood it — he cannot but modify at least parts of its perspective. The question, then, is not whether but how he is adequately to choose this new perspective. And, again, he cannot possibly unless he takes stock of the meta-communicative circumstances and **purpose** of both of the original speech act and of his own, which may be a very different one indeed (as *Skopostheorie* rightly stresses).

Translation and mediation

If translation proper is -borrowing Wittgenstein’s notion- a language game consisting in re-saying in a second act of speech in another language that which has been said in a previous act of speech in a given language -i.e., re-producing the same (ideational) meaning-mediation, as I understand it, is a larger game, consisting mostly and mainly, but not necessarily, of translating. Mediation -which need not be interlingual at all- has, indeed, as its primary task to help convey meaning by producing ideational identity and/or pragmatic correspondence (but not necessarily both) in different subjects in different situations, but always as a means to a further end: Achieving meta-communicatively relevant communication, which more often than not entails partial or even total manipulation of meaning. In view of the inescapable asymmetry between the ability, motivations, intentions and interests of any pair of interlocutors, these meta-communicative purposes can vary radically from the first speech act to the second. It behoves the mediator, then, to assess what counts as relevant identity this second time around. By this I mean **the necessary -from sufficient to optimum to total- degree of sameness of ideational meaning coupled with an apt -from sufficient to optimum- correlation between effects pursued by the mediator (on his own or in behalf of all or any of the parties), and achieved for the meta-communicative purposes at stake**. Clearly, I submit, if human communication as a whole is inseparable a) from the motivations, intentions, interests, intelligence, ability and sensitivity of all direct and indirect interlocutors and participants or stakeholders in a given event (including the mediator himself and any relevant third parties), and b) from the effects that comprehension produces on subjects, then mediation -whether interlingual or not- cannot be invariably limited to re-verbalising a speaker’s “official” meaning meant. That having been said, if the interlocutors are so far apart that there is no way of establishing meta-

communicatively relevant identity between meaning meant and meaning comprehended, then there is nothing even the best mediator -whether monolingual or interlingual- can do: mediators too can face incurable patients.

As García Landa posits, translation as such, prototypically¹⁴, can indeed be defined and ontologically delimited simply as the noncommittal reproduction in a second speech act of ideational meaning as officially meant in a first act (which still leaves moot the question of whether sometimes linguistic form is better imitated even at the expense of sense comprehension). But, again, this definition, useful as it is conceptually to demarcate translation from other “language games,” proves insufficient when it comes to actual translating. A translator, I submit, cannot be indifferent to the more general social stakes and consequences of his professional actions — and these consequences arise mainly from the global meta-representations of meaning meant that the interlocutors end up producing on the basis of the mediator’s utterances: It is *that* that they will agree or disagree on, like or dislike, embrace, accept, tolerate or outright reject, and they will do so on different intellectual ideological and emotive grounds, as well as out of different interests and motivations. As far as non-mediated communication is concerned, García Landa is right: Understanding what I am saying, after all, is... understanding what I am saying. If I am irrelevant, or awkward, or uncouth, or simply stupid, that is my and my interlocutor’s, problem. And so it is if my interlocutor is unable or unwilling to understand. There is no one in the middle to help us achieve what we cannot achieve on our own. As initiator of this act of speech, for instance, I assume full responsibility for what I want to say or hide, and how and when to say it. And you, as a reader, assume full responsibility for cooperating with me. Our success is in nobody’s hands but our own.

But the moment responsibility for your understanding me relevantly is not yours alone but a professional mediator’s, and the moment making myself relevantly understood by you is no longer my exclusive responsibility but also that of a professional mediator, then you and I are both entitled to demand of him his best professional effort. We are entitled to expect that he understand the reasons behind my initiating this speech act (and not only what I am officially trying to say in it) better than you — and maybe even than I myself, and that he communicate more effectively than I — even if the specific rule of the specific game is to convey nothing but meaning as officially meant (which happens only in the most rarefied, severely institutionalised social settings). And it is also his responsibility to understand better than I — or maybe than you yourself the reasons why you choose to participate in this speech act. That is what turns a “mere” translator into a fully-fledged mediator: his ability to understand *beyond* meanings officially meant (regardless of what he actually *does* with that understanding). A general theory of mediation of necessity must explain that the role of the mediator is, precisely, modulating -or, if you prefer, manipulating- meanings as officially meant so as to help communication overcome all manner of hermeneutic and pragmatic barriers in order to serve its meta-communicative purpose. For that very reason, a general theory of interlingual mediation cannot limit itself to explaining the reproduction and comprehension of meaning as officially meant — it must take a decisive step further and speak of the re-induction of meta-represented meaning within the larger framework of relevance

¹⁴Halverson (2000) asserts that translation is, precisely, a prototypical category with necessarily fuzzy edges. I think that my distinction between translation proper -as the central concept generalised from practice- and interlingual mediation as the variegated, even contradictory, practical realisation of the activity solves the basic theoretical problem.

theory and make room for all the adjustments that meta-communicatively successful communication entails.

The overall importance of qualitative effects

The basic limitation of relevance theory in its original formulation (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), I submit, is that it takes contextual effects to be merely cognitive, i.e., changes in the individual's beliefs (which become strengthened, weakened, or altogether altered). Yet, the end effects of comprehension on an individual are always emotive, or qualitative, and have to do more with the phenomenal aspects of beliefs (i.e., to "what it is like" to entertain them) than with their ideational, propositional or notional aspect. If we incorporate this, then relevance theory neatly explains aesthetic and other qualitative effects, even without going into their physical and social nature (a vastly unexplored realm). This is what Pilkington (2000) has tried to do, contributing the last stone that I needed to finish my theoretical building as it presently stands.

To translate is, indeed, to speak in order to re-say what has been said in another language — but this is not enough

To re-say what has been said is, after all, to manage to have an interlocutor understand the ideational meaning as meant by a speaker. Except that translators and interpreters seldom limit themselves to such thing. There is a gap between translation as a theoretical construct and what translators and interpreters actually do. Who is at fault, the theoretical construct or practitioners? The basic problem with the different theoretical approaches before García Landa is that they are not grounded in a suitable theory of speech. What is missing is a theory of speech production and comprehension as a perceptual process setting in motion all the subsequent cognitive and emotional aftermath. With it, also missing is a satisfactory definition of sense and/or meaning. And with it, a definition of translation that is both theoretically and practically apt. If we limit ourselves to looking at translation as a relationship between oral or written texts, or as a text-production and comprehension activity (which it is **also**), we are leaving out both main pillars supporting speech communication: The minds of the parties to the act of communication and, more specifically, the historically and situationally conditioned intention to do by saying and the historically and situationally conditioned intention to do by understanding that gives rise to it in the first place. Reiss and Vermeer and other functionalists, though without disregarding them, fail to incorporate explicitly these two extremes that precede and follow speech production and comprehension. This, I think, prevents them from producing a definition that is at the same time sufficiently precise and general. As they stand, functionalist approaches show themselves incapable of distinguishing translation from all other forms of interlingual mediation. This is, I believe, their theoretical Achilles' heel. To sum up, then, the approaches by Nida, Gutt, Lvovskaya, the Parisians and García Landa (to translate is to reproduce sense/propositional content) are too restrictive, while that of Reiss and Vermeer (to translate is to offer an information offer about another information offer) — too wide, and Osimo's (to translate is to produce a "mental meta-text" out of a "mental proto-text") — too vague to define with sufficient generality and precision not so much what to "translate" is, but what translators are called upon to do as professional interlingual mediators.

The object of speech perception

What is, then, the object of a speech perception understood as a complex “perceptual space” — as García Landa puts it? By automatically applying your hermeneutic package on the basis of the principles of relevance you perceive a communicative intention behind the signs you are processing. You may like or dislike the message, and maybe the message you get is not the one I wished to convey to you, but you (think that you) know that these letters, words and clauses are not just a string of linguistic signs, because -rightly or wrongly- what your social perceptual apparatus has you perceive is, precisely, a communicative intention and a message. *This* is what you really perceive consciously. And this is why you are taking the trouble of reading this piece. As I have pointed out, your brain transforms this natural, purely optical perception into an intentional message. The object of a speech perceptual space then, is what the other person wishes to say — the ideational meaning he is trying to convey. (Let me repeat that that is not the only object an interlocutor perceives, but everything else is beyond speech perception proper.)

And there is, as we have seen, one more thing: the effects of comprehension. What really counts for the individual in everyday communication is, in the end, what it “feels like” to have understood: the *qualitative* meta-effects of the cognitive effects of comprehension — which, when produced by speech itself, rather than by the paralinguistic or kinetic configuration of an utterance, are but a sheer emotive resonance of ideational comprehension. How are we going to judge interpretation or translation “independently” of the qualitative effects a) pursued and b) actually achieved by the author, and c) pursued and d) actually achieved by the translator?

Similarity, isotopy, equivalence and representation

My contention would be that what a literary or documentary translator -as opposed to, say, an adapter or a “localiser” of a pragmatic text- would normally seek to achieve is to *represent* a text in the target language and culture. In that respect, I cannot but agree with Goodman (as quoted by Ross 1981) that similarity is totally irrelevant to representation. In order to represent a three-dimensional image in perspective, for instance, the artist must distort it; this distortion is, precisely, what makes it look *real*. Something analogous happens when a translator seeks to represent a foreign work in a new linguistic and cultural medium. As Goodman stresses, the goal of a literary (or, add I, documentary) translation that is meant to represent the work in the target language and culture is maximal preservation of what the original *exemplifies* -whether a sonnet or a death certificate- as well as of what it says.

In order to help the reader relevantly to understand a literary or documentary (or even pragmatic) text as such, the translator cannot in the end but distort certain semantic or even propositional details. In order to maintain functionality, that is, similarity must defer to equivalence. Except that equivalence has also been traditionally understood as a one-tier proposition (semantic, lexical, metric, effectual, etc.). If an apt correspondence between meaning meant and understood is pursued globally, then equivalence itself must defer to a package representation, in which well-nigh nothing may end up being similar or strictly equivalent in the end. The same applies to isotopy: any statistical and other analyses of what becomes what in parallel or translated texts or corpora must always bear in mind that

intertextual isotopy, synonymy and isonymy, important as they indeed are for different pedagogical or professional purposes (including, very much, automatic translation), are secondary with respect to the meta-communicatively relevant identity of meaning pursued - and achieved- in each case.

The status of formal equivalence

Whatever they may mean as specimens of a given language, then, whatever the semantic representation they may give rise to, those words that the interlocutor makes out on the basis of the contrasts on the page or the noises on the tape are nothing but the circumstantial evidence of the speaker's or writer's direct intended sense (what he means to say "officially", as opposed to indirect intended sense, for instance, allegorical). All too often, as I mentioned, the explicit or implicit assumption is that if those and no other are the words the speaker chose, he did so for a relevant reason (which sometimes may indeed be *relatively* true), thereby consciously or unconsciously weighting and rejecting each and every possible alternative (a somewhat more problematic proposition). A translator or interpreter (except that the latter has so little time to do it!) cannot but bear in mind that a host of conscious and unconscious, objective and subjective factors need have intervened between the speaker's intention to communicate and the ideational meaning he meant to convey, and then between his verbalising it and the translator's understanding of such verbalisation. The most relevant for the mediator is, of course, the intention behind the words: Not what they, the words, mean, but what he who uttered or wrote them meant by them — the kind of subjective notion to which such words gave objective, perceptible material form (which explains why practitioners feel authorised, nay, duty-bound to correct all sorts of inaccuracies or infelicities in even the most authoritative texts). This direct intended sense by the speaker is what the normal interlocutor normally perceives, and this is what the competent translator ought, in principle, to give him: Meta-representations are *in principle* (but not invariably) the interlocutor's business (even though the mediator may orient them or wish to).

Needless to point out, there is no objective way a mediator -or, for that matter, any interlocutor- can systematically verify that his understanding of, say, God's or Shakespeare's word is what the Almighty or the Bard themselves meant him to understand. Inside the isolated brain of an interlocutor, meaning meant can only be perceived as meaning understood, i.e., in many cases it can but be attributed. Be that as it may, the translator's raw material is not so much the linguistic chain as his own understanding of the meaning meant behind it. This direct intended sense is, again, what he normally -but, as we have seen, not necessarily- would strive to convey — with or without total or partial regard to any or all formal features of the original or translated utterances. Regardless of its empirical verifiability, it can still be asserted that in order for mediation to have succeeded, the mediator must have managed relevantly to convey the meaning as originally meant so that it will be relevantly understood by his interlocutor(s) — i.e., to help achieve between specific human beings in a specific social situation meta-communicatively relevant identity or sameness of ideational meaning plus an adequate correlation between intended and achieved contextual effects. Most exegetic, aesthetic and evaluative discussions will centre, precisely, on whether either of these two conditions has been met.

Relevant identity — translation as mediation

In its prototypical, ideal sense, translation is, thus, but the initiation of a second speech act in order to produce the same ideational meaning: A translator would ideally strive to -and succeed at- producing a second perception of meaning as officially meant. This, however, is seldom possible, necessary or advisable. The differences in time and place, personal and historic experience, knowledge and culture, ability, interests and sensitivity, and, generally, in all manner of pre-comprehension schemes and passing theories- i.e., in the hermeneutic and emotive package, combined with perceived relevance- mean that any new (groups of) interlocutor(s) will approach any oral or written utterance -whether original or translated- with different expectations, ability and willingness to understand (which, again, is the reason behind the many “updates” of certain texts, especially translations, for new generations of readers).

Let us also remember that speech comprehension and the qualitative or cognitive effects of such comprehension are different things, as are immediate, spontaneous speech comprehension and the different meta-representations it may give rise to: In principle, direct intended sense comprehension is always possible, but the meta-representations based it and the effects both of speech comprehension and of the meta-representations it gives rise to tend to vary enormously. The confusion of these ontologically different processes has led to no mean amount of confusion among translation scholars and practitioners. Once the inevitable and often crucial “side effects” of spontaneous speech comprehension are brought into the picture, once we take stock of the inescapable asymmetry between, on the one hand, ability and meaning to mean and, on the other, ability and disposition to understand, then translation is more relevantly seen not as an end in itself, but as the main tool of interlingual mediation, whose purpose is to achieve meta-communicatively relevant identity or sameness of meaning across the language barrier.

In actual practice, translation is always mediation and it is, therefore, more practical to equate them, which is what most modern approaches do, since it is what all professional translators must do all the time, whatever their conscious or unconscious theoretical outlook: A translator who can only “translate” will end up starving or living out of doing something else.

I have defined relevant identity as the symbiosis of a) the necessary degree of sameness between ideational meaning originally meant and finally understood, and b) an adequate correlation between the mediator’s intentions and the contextual effects of comprehension on his interlocutors — between different, not necessarily overlapping meta-representations based on the perception of the same object, which in our case is always the same social object: meaning meant. Different “texts” being different objects, it stands to reason that there can be no identity at that level: readers of a translation perceive the *same* social object, meaning meant, in *different* formal guises. The relationship obtaining between these different forms, as different tokens of the same type, is no longer of identity but of equivalence, similarity, analogy or whatnot. Chesterman (1996) refers to this second, subsidiary look at translation as a comparison of tokens. The confusion has beset practitioners and theoreticians well-nigh since the invention of writing and for a perfectly understandable reason.

The great difference between the translator and the original writer does not lie so much in that he, the translator, has to imitate, say, Shakespeare’s form or strive for any kind of

comparable effect (nobody forces him to), but in that he must re-verbalise Shakespeare's meaning: His *Hamlet* must be the same as Shakespeare's, and act the same way, and utter the same thoughts and give vent to the same feelings, and kill the same characters for the same reasons. Whatever the translator's poetical prowess, any deviations from *that* will be mistranslations (however justified on extra-translational grounds). Because translators have at least intuitively realised that, and despite the fact that most of us do not have access to the original, we all have read *Crime and Punishment* -and not just anybody's: Dostoevsky's- if re-written by someone else. Otherwise, how could we talk and argue about it?

A new definition of equivalence and adequateness

In her most incisive article devoted to the concept of equivalence in translation studies, Halverson has the following to say:

“[T]here are three main components to [a definition of equivalence]: a pair between which the relationship exists, a concept of likeness/sameness/similarity/equality, and a set of qualities... The first, the specification of the entities between which the relationship pertains, is by no means unproblematic. Establishment of such a relationship requires that the two entities involved be, in some way, comparable... The second component of the concept, the idea of likeness/sameness/similarity/equality, is also potentially problematic, though here the problem is of a slightly different nature. In fact, there are actually two specific aspects to the problem of sameness for the purposes of it: its nature and its degree... Sameness is a scalar concept... If two (or more) entities can be compared, and if sameness is defined as the presence of a specific quality, then for many qualities it may be shown that different entities possess those qualities in varying degrees. The third component of the concept of equivalence which can be, and has been, the focus of conceptual debate is the quality in terms of which the sameness is defined” (1997:209-210).

I think that this is an excellent statement of the problem. And I also think that García Landa's model lays the ground for a satisfactory definition of translational equivalence: Whatever the nature or degree of formal similarity between them, a re-verbalisation (in the case of translation, in another language) can be said to be **equivalent** to its respective original or to another re-verbalisation if it helps ensure ideational-meaning identity with similar processing effort (a necessary relevance-based addition that will make room for degrees of equivalence). Now, as we have seen, such meaning identity in and of itself is neither sufficient nor necessary for mediation to be adequate. My development of García Landa's model, I submit, allows us to develop the concept of translational equivalence into that of mediational adequateness: Equivalence becomes adequate only if it helps bring about the intended meta-representations and qualitative side effects produced on the basis of speech comprehension (the contextual effects intended by the mediator, themselves subject to analysis and criticism): A re-verbalisation (in the case of interlingual mediation, in another language) is said to be adequate if it helps ensure meta-communicatively relevant ideational identity. The corollary is that a re-verbalisation may be more or less equivalent to an original one or than another re-verbalisation, but it can also be more or less adequate than either. This, in turn, allows us to perceive Nida's dictum about dynamic equivalence and his definition of the closest natural equivalent first with regard to content and then with regard to form in a new light: Ideational identity plus, whenever possible, if possible at all, equivalent or otherwise comparable contextual effects (i.e., ideational and formal adequateness): cognitive -under the guise of meta-representations- and qualitative — what it feels like to have understood. Unless there is ideational identity (or, if you prefer, sameness of propositional content) there is *no* translation, whatever the effects. Non-translation, however, is not synonymous with bad mediation: In

their quest for relevant communication, translators *qua* mediators often resort to not translating. A glaring case in point is that of the myriad translations/adaptations of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for children, in which the vitriolic social satire is turned into merry pranks with two out of four travels completely discarded. Nobody in their right mind would take a mediator to task for having omitted those chunks of ideational meaning that do not help **relevant** identity between what Swift meant his contemporary adult readers to understand and what contemporary children can healthily understand and enjoy.

What counts in each case as relevant identity depends solely on the meta-communicative purposes of the parties to the double speech act and is determined by the mediator (be it on his own, or in consultation with the parties, or saddled with a specific brief). Those who cannot see it fool themselves: obedience -even the blindest or dumbest, the most timorous or selfless- is but one of freedom's guises. The first thing to be weighed when it comes to judge a mediator or a specific act of mediation is, thus, how aptly relevant identity has been identified. Only then does it make sense to go about assessing the specific hermeneutic and heuristic moves. Since such relevant identity is never exactly the same for the different parties, the mediator, as a function of the meta-communicative purposes and consequences of his mediation and on the basis of his loyalty, decides what criteria to follow.

The most important corollary is that a mediator is interested in the relationship between "texts" and "utterances" only instrumentally. His actual concern is the relationship between sense as intended and as understood — i.e., what the interlocutors achieve by means of those "texts" and "utterances" as produced and understood by specific people in specific situations. The second most important corollary is that there is no *necessary* relationship between original and translated texts — which explains the exasperating conceptual and practical elusiveness of textual "equivalence". Such formal (semantic or other) equivalence, similarity, resemblance or coincidence between the formal attributes of original and translation is but one (if the most frequent and apparent) *consequence* of the mediator's quest for relevant identity between mental representations. This insight, I submit, throws new light on the dictum that a translator does not find equivalences, but creates them. Not quite: a translator finds textual ways of achieving relevant identity between meaning as intended and as understood; these ways may or may not coincide totally, partially or at all with the ways resorted to by the original speaker in his original text. When they do, then some kind of textual "equivalence" will certainly be found. Since very often they do not, it is not altogether productive to look for shared textual attributes as if texts were artefacts in a vacuum. There is, therefore, no need to discard the concept or the term — all that is required is to be aware that it is an ancillary, incidental (if statistically rife) phenomenon that may be present or absent.

Thus, the relationship between the mediator's text or utterance and the original may be extremely varied. We can call it, indeed, "*coherence*;" as *skopostheorists* do, but I do not think it is clear enough. Such relationship is better defined, I think, as *adequacy*: A text or utterance, or segment thereof, is adequate if and only if its comprehension by an interlocutor (whether intended or not) allows it to be relevantly identical to sense as originally intended. Since such identity is always *ad hoc* and a function of the parties' motivations, resistance, sensitivity and heuristic and hermeneutic ability (coupled to all situational factors and the systems gravitating upon them), even though the notion itself does not change, its practical realisation is always different... a bit like happiness. Such adequacy, moreover, is a matter of degree: speech acts initiated by a mediator in a specific situation can be more adequate or less — the more adequate, the better his mediation.

An interlingual mediator's specific job, I insist, is no longer to understand sense (any genuinely interested interlocutor has such a task). Nor is it to re-verbalise it in another language (for that, all is needed is a "translator"). Nor is it to achieve, as monolingual mediators (lawyers, ambassadors, amicable brokers), relevant identity between sense intended and understood. Of course, an interlingual mediator has to do all those things **as well**, but his specific job is to achieve such identity by initiating a new act of speech in a different language (or dialect).

The *skopos* of an act of mediation is, therefore, invariably the same: to determine and achieve the highest degree of relevant identity between intended and comprehended sense in a specific situation. Or, put in other terms, **to have the interlocutor understand what, in the mediator's professional judgement and insofar as objectively possible and deontologically acceptable, it is necessary, convenient or advisable that he understand in the way that it is necessary, convenient or advisable that he understand it.**

In the practice of his profession, the interlingual mediator often stumbles against his lack of social power, due both to his clients' mistrust and to his own theoretical insecurity. These limitations -typical of a young profession that has not yet succeeded in establishing itself and lacks an underlying generally known, acknowledged, assimilated, aptly applied theory- impede his exercising his deontologically responsible discretion (a more apt -and palatable- substitute for "freedom"). Our great battle is to overcome these two interdependent hurdles. It is too late for practitioners of my generation, I am afraid: It is now up to our professional offspring to carry the day, but they too will find it impossible unless they are solidly equipped with an apt theoretical outlook.

This is why students must be *taught to mediate* and not simply to "translate" or to "interpret." This requires that they be endowed with the necessary theoretical wherewithal for competent practice, beginning with an analysis of the meta-communicative framework, the circumstances in which speech is produced and understood, and what comprehension is about — and not only of speech, but, above all, of the speaker's intentions from the standpoint of one's own interlocutors' interests in and willingness or resistance to understand. A thorough analysis of comprehension as *meta-representation* is, I submit indispensable. These elements must be in their young hands *before anything else*. A scientific theory of interlingual mediation cannot come as an afterthought. One cannot be taught first to swim and then to float.

A mediator's deontologically accountable discretion

A professional mediator (whether interlingual or not) is normally pulled by four centrifugal forces. For starters, nowhere is it written that a mediator ought necessarily to be the speaker's *alter ego*: He can also be the interlocutor's — or the commissioner's. Being an *alter ego* means adopting the relevant motivations and intentions, speaking from the perspective of whoever means to mean or from that of whoever takes the trouble to understand — i.e., adopting as relevance criteria the meta-communicative interests of either or, in the case of interlingual mediation, as a general rule, a compromise between them. As we can see, this does not have so far any necessary consequences for the "fidelity" to the original utterance or text. Loyalty toward the speaker's motivations and intentions may well advice or demand departing from an original's meaning. And, obviously, so can loyalty to the interlocutor or the commissioner. But, above all, there is the profession itself, to which, as any other

professional, a mediator owes supreme loyalty. The profession, through its specific deontology, represents the more general interests of society. In the vast or narrow scene in which he is called upon to act, there is no “x” telling the mediator where to stand. Between the speaker, the mediator’s interlocutor, the interest (more often than not less than enlightened) of the commissioner who pays him, and the deontological norms of the profession there is, always, a space within which a mediator is to exercise his deontologically accountable discretion — even if he does not wish to exercise it or is afraid of exercising it. These four points (that can be conflated into three whenever the commissioner is either the speaker or the interlocutor) delimit such discretion. To transgress them is, by definition, to act unethically or, at best, incompetently.

It is the mediator who decides, each time, what counts as relevant identity between meaning as meant by the speaker and as understood by his interlocutor in the second speech act. It is true that sometimes -many fewer than so many believe- the commissioner requests or demands a certain kind of mediation, but it is always up to the mediator to accept or reject this imposition or, often, at least to make his own expert opinion prevail — not any more or less than a physician, a lawyer, an architect, or any other socially acknowledged professional.

A special paragraph must be devoted to the mediator who acts on his own initiative, as has traditionally been the case with the translation of literary, philosophic or religious texts. When a mediator translates *because he damn well pleases*, of course, he has total freedom to translate *as he damn well pleases*. Nobody forces or asks the translator to adapt or fail to adapt, to manipulate his text more or less¹⁵. Let it be clear, however, that, in these instances, there is no real professional exercise or, therefore, professional deontology: The mediator’s ethics is precisely that — ethics pure and simple. The very fact of translating may be considered heretical in itself (as was the case with Luther); where is the heretic’s deontology? In such cases, the mediator translates out of his own motivation and intentions, freely - sometimes even arbitrarily- choosing what counts as relevant identity of meaning. As always, of course, one thing is to choose the kind of relevant identity and a very different one to be able to achieve it.

The constitutive rule of interlingual mediation

The constitutive rule of interlingual mediation can be reduced to the following dictum: Initiating a new act of speech in a new language (and, *a fortiori*, a new situation) so that -in the mediator’s judgment, based on his assessment of the meta-communicative purposes of communication- **the intended interlocutor will understand a) what it behoves him to understand b) in the way that it behoves him to understand it**. Interlingual mediation can be, thus, at the same time more, less and something other than translation proper.

Translational equivalence, as, for that matter, any other kinds of correspondence, similarity or analogy between an original and its “translation” will be a **consequence** of the translator’s work rather than its condition. And this is why the concept has proved as difficult to define as it is elusive to detect. What counts, in the end, is not what people “say” to each other, but the relationship between what a speaker means to communicate and what an interlocutor understands. Can this relationship be empirically proven? Not really: I cannot be

¹⁵Even though, often, the editor ends up imposing his own criterion, it is still a fact that the non-proletarianised literary translator enjoys much more freedom than his mercenary colleagues. This is, I submit, the reason that literary translation theoreticians have mostly refused to step across the boundaries of antiseptic description.

sure that you have managed to understand all of my meaning meant exactly as I mean you to understand it – nor can you, but that is a problem of communication that translation merely makes more visible, and that both direct communication and translation are normally able to surmount most handsomely, otherwise there would be no universal science.

Conclusion

So here I am, my unknown reader, writing this piece on translation theory to you. This imposes upon me the social responsibility not only to guess at your intellectual capability and your sensitivity, but, more importantly, at your actual interest, your willingness, your conscious and unconscious disposition to take the trouble to understand what I have to say. But the buck starts elsewhere: What do I intend to achieve by it... what is in it for me? I have several purposes guiding this written act of speech I have initiated; some of them escape me altogether: they are unconscious. Maybe a sagacious reader might manage to glean them, but I cannot — not while they are unconscious. In any event, I cannot even give an elementary order to my fingers unless I have in my mind something that I want “transferred” to your head. As I write, I do have a general idea of what I mean you to understand in the end, but this piece has not been rehearsed: I write as I speak, linearly — even if every now and then I retrace my steps. What I want transferred is the vector of the simultaneous “flashing” or activation of certain pieces of knowledge of the world and the linguistic means that I have somehow stored in my long-term memory. What I intend to say comes to my awareness in sudden flashes roughly equivalent to a clause.

This is -again, roughly- the way you are now understanding me: Every clause or so produces in your own mind a sudden “click” in which the relevant chunks of your own knowledge of the world and your representation of the linguistic means I am using “react” with the stimulus you are processing and, lo and behold, you add a new chunk of meaning understood. The fact that I use my means and you simply need to represent them is crucial to the translator or interpreter: one does not actually need to speak the language one is translating from.

What I intend you to understand, however, is not a linear series of clauses but my theory of communication and, based upon it, my theory of interlingual mediation. This theory is rather jumbled in my mind. In order to make it accessible to you, I have to articulate it linearly (speech leaves me no alternative). The theory, in other words, is a complex series of meta-representations that, in order to verbalise, I cannot but reduce to a linear series of propositions, itself linearly parsed and articulated in linguistic signs. I am socially responsible for choosing an apt way of “unwinding” it, which in turn depends on my linguistic and intellectual ability and sensitivity, but, more importantly, on my actual interest, my willingness, my conscious and unconscious disposition to take the trouble to have you understand what I have to say and my assessment of your ability, sensitivity, willingness and conscious and unconscious disposition to understand me.

The means I choose are only partially mine. The English language, as I know it and activate it as I write, offers and denies me certain possibilities, which I strive respectively to exploit and palliate. But all that has happened in my mind. You would not have a clue if I did not now turn it into a semiotic stimulus accessible to your natural perceptual system. By the time you are able to perceive and process it lots of time will have elapsed and things

happened over which neither you nor I have any control. One of the possible things that may have happened is translation.

What would count as our mutual success at communicating with each other (mind you, mutual success, both yours and mine)? Simply put that, as a result of having processed chunk by chunk my units of verbalisation -or those of my translator!- the theory that I had jumbled in my mind be now jumbled in yours. You do not need to agree to it or even like it, but unless it is jumbled in your mind, you have not understood it *-it*, not something “similar” or “analogous” to it- and, therefore, me.

This was our first crucial insight: Communication succeeds when the speaker’s representation of his meaning meant is the same as his interlocutor’s. Since we mostly act as interlocutors, the statement is more usefully reversed: communication succeeds when the interlocutor’s representation of meaning meant is the same as the speaker’s.

Now, if the success of communication lies in a certain coincidence, correspondence or sameness of mental representations, the means whereby this is achieved are but instrumental, ancillary, inconsequential in themselves: People are not really interested in understanding each other’s words, but what they intend to communicate through them (often as a means to understanding much more, of course).

This is a good part of the story, but not all. If it were, Seleskovitch’s theory would be the answer to all our problems.

For starters, and for the *n*th time, this interest in understanding is a function of the meta-communicative purposes they pursue at the time. People are not simply after communicating representations of meaning reducible to propositions amenable to linear verbalisation. They are after producing or experiencing certain contextual effects, both cognitive and emotive or qualitative. They are after achieving changes in the (their) world — directly, by influencing their own or their interlocutor’s actions, or indirectly, by changing their interlocutor’s or their own models of the world. This, let me stress, goes both for the speaker and the interlocutor. I, for one, do not read Dickens to learn what he has to “say” to me. I want to be told an “interesting” story, told in such a “way” that will produce a “pleasant” emotive effect. I want to be “thrilled,” “moved,” “amused,” “entertained” and, indeed, “educated;” and the cognitive and emotive effects will change with each act of comprehension — otherwise there would be no point in re-reading. For an interlocutor, meaning to understand on his own terms and for his own purposes (which, indeed, often means understanding the speaker in his own terms) is the name of the game. Or is it different with you now, my unknown friend?

What do you intend by understanding me, what is in it for you? If you are a theoretician, some useful insights that will help you buttress, deepen, develop or even destabilise your own concepts (and if you are too attached to them, you will not take kindly to my possible destabilisation). If you are a practitioner, you would mainly expect new light that might help you improve -and quicken- your performance. If you are a student, you probably hope to find a miraculous panacea to all your troubles: a simple receipt to translate or interpret to your teachers’ satisfaction (that of the actually paying clients can wait). Your “satisfaction” upon reading this piece will be a function of the way it fulfils your expectations — which, needless to say, may change as reading proceeds or, most certainly, in further of re-reading.

The effect of these mumblings will thus depend on both their cognitive usefulness to you and the ease, comfort and, indeed, pleasure that the trouble of processing may demand — themselves a function of your own capabilities, sensitivity, interests and disposition. Now

what if you are not the intended addressee of these mumblings, but an intermediary whose task it is to convey them to him? What, moreover, if you were to convey them to him in a different language? Would you strive simply to understand them clause by clause in order clause by clause to re-verbalise them and be done with it? Would you just try to chop it up in manageable “units of translation” and carry it drudgingly over the linguistic fence? Or would you make an effort yourself to meta-represent this theory and do your best to have your new interlocutors understand it? Would you not take stock of the plusses and minuses of my verbalisation, my repetitiveness, my infelicities of expression, my contradictions of thought and then decide whether, given the commissioner’s (say, this very journal) purpose and your intended readership’s willingness, interests and ability, rendering more or less verbatim all these musings was the most effective way of achieving such a correspondence between my (presumed) intended mental representation and the mental representation now (presumably) emerged in your interlocutor’s mind as a result of what you “said”?

This is what, I submit, you would do unless there were good reasons not to. This, in other words, would be your default position if you were simply and genuinely interested in optimising -and not merely enabling- communication between original speaker and the new intended interlocutors.

Maybe re-saying what the author/speaker meant to say as opposed to what he actually said will not be the most effective means of achieving such optimum correspondence (in legal mediation mistakes in an original are not normally corrected in translation; a jury, as a case in point, will want to become aware even of the most trivial hesitations by the accused or a witness). Maybe saying what he actually said rather than what he meant to say or do by saying is outright inadvisable (the originally innocent joke becomes inane or, worse, offensive). Maybe you ought to be more or less explicit: add, omit, or even say something completely different (for instance, if you want to “translate” an ad in a way that will actually help sell the product to the new audience). Regardless of whether you may have a chance to consult with any of the actors (and not only the speaker), all these decisions will ultimately be yours and yours alone: You cannot help exercise your deontologically responsible discretion and be held accountable for it — exactly as any other true professional, whether physician, architect, engineer or lawyer.

This is, to many, a terrible revelation: Freedom is the most frightening thing. If the author, the original, the “words” you processed, are not divine, who is going to help you tell right from evil? No Great Inquisitor to enlighten poor Ivan Karamazov when it comes to interlingual mediation.

Because, if what counts in the end is not a relationship, similarity, analogy or equivalence between texts, but an empirically unverifiable correspondence between different mental representations achieved on the basis (and not simply as a result) of having processed such oral or written texts, “translational equivalence” is not the condition but the consequence of translational activity. If, by (presumably) willing to achieve cognitive effects *W* in order (presumably) to produce emotive effects *X*, the speaker has (presumably) intended to say *Y* and has actually managed to say *Z*, the basic question is not what the original actually says. Nor what the original speaker actually means to say by that which he has said. Nor what the original speaker actually means to do by actually meaning to say what he has actually said. Nor what the client who has hired me intends to achieve by my translating this text (which may well be *V*). It is rather, what, under the circumstances, on the basis of my answers to those four questions above, counts as the best possible course of action. What, under the

specific circumstances, can or should I say that will help achieve optimum communication given the specific meta-communicative purposes in hand? In order to be “useful,” then, a translation need not be faithful — or, rather, it need not be a “translation” at all. At every step, it behoves a mediator to decide whether to “translate” or to do something more, less or different. If it behoves him to have his interlocutor feel (something akin to) W by actually understanding (something akin to) X by meaning to say (something akin to) Y by saying (something akin to) Z , which in the target language will be Z_I , then chances are that there will be myriad similarities between Z and Z_I , but that is sheer statistical coincidence.

Since, more often than not, W , X , and Y need not -or cannot- be fully matched in the mind of the interlocutor, more often than not Z and Z_I will evince disturbing, heretical, even scandalous discrepancies that will push some theoreticians into discarding altogether the notion of equivalence — disturbing, heretical and scandalous to the prudish adorers of false idols (in our case, those of the sanctity of the original and the fearful submission of the translator or interpreter to it). It is but the history of mankind and the development of knowledge and science. As a part of such development, this theory eagerly awaits those who will find its weaknesses, no matter how disturbed and scandalised I may be at the new heretics: As García Landa taught me, ideas do not belong to those who have had them in the first place, but to those who can put them to profitable (and, hopefully, ethical) use, and, eventually, improve upon them. Your turn, my friend!

A MODEL OF INTERLINGUAL MEDIATION

An initial *caveat*

Throughout the papers that follow I shall explicitly or implicitly apply my development of García Landa's models. I am fully aware that the formalised model looks suspiciously like a mathematical formula, which in the case of a social object such as communication, reeks of hyper-abstraction and ultra-formalism... i.e., of pretentious –and trivial– mumbo-jumbo. Nevertheless, let the reader not be so daunted or irritated by the symbolic notation –as I myself was when first presented with it– as to refuse to give it the benefit of the doubt. In other words, let not conscious resistance to process (U) stand impregnable on the way to comprehension. Unfortunately, such conscious resistance, by the way, is always governed by an unconscious resistance (*z*) which, being unconscious, cannot be consciously managed... Tough luck! My advice is to have handy a printout of the list of symbols and their definition to be found at the end of this piece.

My model of communication through speech

It reads as follows:

1) Every more or less complex **successful** (*NB!*) **act of speech** *D* (whether oral *V*, written *T*, or inner *I*) in a given language *o* is a social transaction whereby someone (the subject of production), out of a **conscious motivation** *W*, governed by an **adequate unconscious predisposition to cooperate** *Z*, with a **main pragmatic intention** *Y* and **secondary pragmatic intentions** *y*, communicates a propositionally more or less complex **speech percept intended** *LPI* which is a function of the activation of a given **set of linguistic systems** *o* together with a set of **pre-comprehension schemes, knowledge base or passing theories** *K*.

2) To that effect, he sets in motion a complex mental operation which involves mainly constructing and presenting to his interlocutor(s) a finished social product which is a **sign chain** *F* in that language *o*. Such chain consists of a) a **phono-morpho-syntactic structure** *X* (actualising a certain **phono-morpho-semantic system** *L*), b) a **semantic potential** *S* (actualising a **semantic system** *H*), c) a **rhythmico-prosodic structure** *V* (actualising a **rhythmico-prosodic system** *R*), and d) a **register** *J* (from a **register series** *Q*¹⁶). This chain is also necessarily couched in a series of **supra-segmental (para-linguistic or typographical and para-textual) features** *C*, and **kinetic or graphic features** *E* that reinforce, refine or modify its meaning. (In face-to-face and written communication, then, the stimulus triggering the comprehension process consists of three components: *F*, *C* and *E*, although the latter one is lost in strictly acoustical communications such as radio, telephone, etc., often making comprehension more difficult.) All the above components are characterised by specific sets of **features** *m*, *n*, etc.

¹⁶It is not certain whether registers constitute a system.

3) The speech act is carried out in a given **social situation** or **sociohistorical field** *G* governed by a **shared system of beliefs, norms and practices**, or a certain **shared life and personal experience** *P*, within a given **micro-world** *M*, at a **historic moment** *VH*, and, within that moment, at a **specific time** *t*. (All these components are also characterised by specific sets of features *m*, *n*, etc.)

4) A subject of comprehension (interlocutor, observer, or the very speaker engaged in an inner dialogue with himself) listens and understands in a complex mental operation which results in his producing in turn a **speech percept comprehended** *LPC*, itself a function of the activation and retro-application of a representation¹⁷ **of the same linguistic systems** *o* and **knowledge base** *K*. **In order to do so, he must resort to or overcome his conscious motivation or resistance** *U* and be governed in turn by an **adequate unconscious predisposition to cooperate** *Z*. We should stress the active nature of comprehension, whereby the comprehender (re-)constructs his speech perception of the speaker's meaning meant retro-applying his own filters *U*, *Z* and *K* to the acoustic/optic stimulus *FCE*. Comprehension produces, moreover, **main and secondary contextual effects** *Aa* (cognitive or qualitative), which, in order for communication not to have failed pragmatically, must correlate somehow to the consciously or unconsciously intended effects.

Regardless of its pragmatic felicity, communication will have succeeded in so far as, in a given social situation, identity or sameness is achieved between what the speaker wants to convey (*LPI*) and what the comprehender has understood (*LPC*) — otherwise it will have failed to a greater or lesser degree. Since neither perception is open to observation, such identity is impossible to verify empirically: it can only be postulated. What is crucial to retain is that, in the end, this identity is a function of the relevant linguistic (*LHRQ*) and cognitive (*KPM*) baggage -the hermeneutic package- shared by both parties to an act of speech and of how adequately predisposed they are to communicate with each other (*Z*). In order to have succeeded pragmatically and, moreover, qualitatively, however, the result of communication must be **relevant** identity (*[=]*) between *LPI* and *LPC* - i.e., as apt a balance or correlation as necessary -from sufficient to optimum- of identity of meaning and correspondence of contextual effects intended and achieved. It is worth stressing that in expressive -and most

¹⁷Notice that while the speaker must activate the linguistic systems proper, the interlocutor can make do with activating a representation thereof. This explains the difference between competence and performance or, more crucially, between active and passive linguistic knowledge. In Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, Salvatore speaks a jumble of the different languages into which Latin had dissolved ("*all of them and none*," as Adso explains) which does not stand in the way of Adso's comprehension — or that of Eco's intended reader: "*Penitenziagite! Vide quando draco venturus est a rodegarla l'anima tua! La mortz est super nos! Prega che vene lo papa santo a liberar nos a malo de todas le peccata!... Bonum monasterium et qui se magna et se priega dominum vostrum. Et el resto valet un figo seco...*" (Eco 1980/2000:54). By definition, nobody can actually "know" this non-existent language, all we -speakers of Romance languages- can have is a representation thereof. Of course, Eco cannot mean -nor do I think he does- for his Italian readers to understand everything Salvatore means to say: It is enough for his readers to understand... *enough* — it is enough for them to understand relevantly. Now how did the English translator, who, unlike Eco, *cannot possibly expect* his average reader to understand Salvatore, manage? By anglicising his jargon to make it easier for his reader to represent it: "*Penitenziagite! Watch out for the draco who cometh in futurum to gnaw your anima! Death is super nos! Pray the Santo Pater come to liberar nos a malo and all our sin!... Bonum monasterium and aqui refectorium and pray to dominum nostrum. And the resto is not worth merda...*" (p. 46). As we can see, Salvatore speaks no given language, and yet we can understand him... and translate him into any given language or another non-existent one.

especially literary- speech, mutual orientedness entails emotive empathy, a kind of shared **emotive package** that would be the emotive counterpart of the cognitive hermeneutic package. If this empathy is absent, for instance, the reader will understand the poem but fail to be affected by it in the way the poet presumably intended¹⁸.

In symbolic notation, the model looks as follows:

Do:

$$W^Z > Yy > LPI^Ko \rightarrow [Fo(Xm^L, Sm^H, Vm^R, Jm^Q)CmEm]G^{PM}VHtm \leftrightarrow U^Z > LPC^Ko \rightarrow Aa$$

Where $>$ means “determines,” \rightarrow means “produces,” and \leftrightarrow means “produces by retro-projecting.” At the purely ideational level, communication will have succeeded, then, if:

$$LPIo = LPCo$$

With this, an interlocutor merely becomes aware of what a speaker means to say. Pragmatically, on the other hand, communication will have succeeded if, in the specific situation, pragmatic intentions adequately correlate to the contextual effects achieved; i.e., if:

$$Yy = Aa$$

It is worth pointing out that pragmatic intentions govern an *LPI*, but do not actually produce it, whilst comprehension -i.e., *LPC*- does produce all contextual effects. In this respect, may I clarify that the same symbol $=$ stands, as the case may be, for identity and adequate correlation between contextual effects pursued and achieved - what, for the sake of brevity, we might call pragmatic correspondence. Globally perfect communication would lie, then, in an optimum correspondence between motivations, interests, intentions and contextual effects coupled to an absolute identity of intended and comprehended sense. As with every human endeavour, of course, perfect communication does not exist: We must make do with a socially relevant degree of success, i.e., with being able to communicate closely enough to this unreachable ideal. In actual reality, what we pursue and normally manage is something both less ambitious and more practical: not total *LPIo/LPCo* identity and perfect *Yy/Aa* correspondence, but sufficient identity and acceptable correspondence, in other words, what I call **relevant identity** between meaning as meant and meaning as comprehended:

$$LPIo [=] LPCo$$

Obviously, the degree of identity and threshold of acceptability varies for each specific act and, more generally, for each specific type of situation. In this respect, a typology of situations is the real phenomenon behind a typology of texts. Some have claimed that this notion is too “vague.” Far from it: it could not be more specific. The problem lies in that a) it varies each time, and b) in some cases it may prove difficult to establish. As is always the case

¹⁸Of course, this emotive package can be developed with life experience and the development of the hermeneutic package: poets that we used to like become trivial or awkward; others suddenly reveal themselves to us after years of intermittent readings.

with social -as opposed to physical- reality, only actual social praxis allows proving or disproving its existence. Neither I nor the notion are to blame, but the obdurate reality of human communication. Those who demand something more “specific” remind me of the character in Gorki’s *The Lower Depths* who asserted that a map was useless unless it showed the Land of Justice.

The sub-model of written communication

The model of the written speech act (which can be extrapolated to any speech act where the act of production is separated in time from the act of comprehension) consists of two distinct phases: the act of writing DT and the act(s) of reading $DL_{(n)}$, which can be widely separated in time and space, whereby the different acts of reading take place at different moments and in sometimes radically different situations. Comprehension is thus scattered across time and space in a constellation of LPC s around a postulated but more often than not inaccessible archetypical LPC (the existence of such an LPC shared by all those who read a “No Smoking” sign is easier to verify than the existence of an LPC shared by all the readers of *Hamlet* or *The Bible*). In the first phase, there is no other LPC than that of the writer understanding himself, who, consciously or unconsciously, assumes that the eventual readers will evoke it too. And, of course, he anticipates their reaction — i.e., the effects that comprehension will have on them. In the model of this phase, then, the pole of comprehension - U^Z , LPC and Aa - is left out:

$$DT_o: W^Z > Y_y > LPI^K_o \rightarrow [Fo(Xm^L, Sm^H, Vm^R, Jm^O)CmEm]GT^{PM}VHtm$$

At the time of writing, the writer assumes that others will relevantly perceive his own LPI , but he does not know it for sure: He lives his own solitary perception of what he means to convey — he is his own and sole interlocutor¹⁹. In this respect, writing resembles inner speech, where intention and comprehension interact within the same skull. The lone author of a sonnet, a love letter or a job application both writes and reads, produces an LPI and perceives it as LPC . Such self-comprehension often leaves him dissatisfied and he rushes to modify either Fo or the very LPI . (Each phrase before you, my friend, has jumped the net countless times.)

In the second phase the situation is inverted: If in the oral act the interlocutor has before him a real speaker with his meaning meant, in the act of reading the reader is almost invariably bereft of this immediate, “personified,” presence of an LPI and the motivations W^Z and intentions Y_y that govern it. What is absent now is the pole of intention²⁰. The only thing that is present is the physical support of F , and then not of all of it: just its morpho-syntactic Xm^L and semantic Sm^H components. The reader finds himself before the isolated chain Fo , and must interpret it often without reference to the original communicative situation or the person who has left it behind - which, by the way, explains the sacralisation of the text: The

¹⁹Developing Osimo’s (2001 and 2002) concept -derived from Eco- we can say that the “empirical author” posits the existence of a “model reader” whom he tries to impersonate as his own first “empirical reader” (the concepts tally with the “implied” reader and author mentioned by Sousa (2002)).

²⁰This time around, the “empirical reader” posits the existence of a “model author” whom he tries to impersonate as the “empirical author” who has actually written the text for him, the empirical reader, to read.

inaccessible God-author must be interpreted through His Word. Thus, in the model of this phase what is left out is the pole of intention — W^Z , Y_y and LPI^K_O . Also absent are prosody V and register J , which, in fact, must be inferred (the way we infer them, for instance, from the classical Latin and Greek texts) — even if the writer meant to set them down. Only a good reader can, by uttering aloud or mentally, supply prosody and register — but they will always be an interpretation (as in the case of music). We do not know for sure how Shakespeare or Dickens pronounced English: in Australia “ T ” and “ may ” rhyme. The reader believes he imagines the voice of Byron or Whitman - but it is just a social (neither optic nor acoustic) illusion of having before him, in the ambiguously silent page, an LPI - except that he is its sole “author”: he imagines him. The reader produces an LPC believing it matches the author’s LPI and strives to infer what the latter’s motives and intentions were, except that, alone as he finds himself before the silent page, in a reading situation at times centuries and oceans apart from the original one, he may miscalculate (in which case, of course, communication fails). Reading, as we see, has also a lot in common with inner speech - except that this time around it is the reader who plays the intention/comprehension game inside his head, imagining himself as the author, meaning to mean (as it is your lot, my overworked friend, this very instant):

$$DLo: [Fo(Xm^L, Sm^H)CmEm]GL^{PM}VHtm+n \leftrightarrow U^Z > LPC^K_O \rightarrow Aa$$

In García Landa’s words, the “existential” separation between DL and DT is due to the technique of writing itself. Graphic signs, imprinted upon matter that can be displaced and reproduced, make possible, nay, inevitable a multitude of acts of reading by the same or different readers. The model of the act of reading will therefore be the sum total of potential individual acts, each by a specific person and in its own situation:

$$DLo_1: [Fo(Xm^L, Sm^H, Vm^R, Jm^Q)CmEm]GL_1^{PM}VHtm+n_1 \leftrightarrow U^Z > LPC^K_{O_1} \rightarrow Aa$$

$$DLo_2: [Fo(Xm^L, Sm^H, Vm^R, Jm^Q)CmEm]GL_2^{PM}VHtm+n_2 \leftrightarrow U^Z > LPC^K_{O_2} \rightarrow Aa$$

$$\dots\dots\dots DLo_n: [Fo(Xm^L, Sm^H, Vm^R, Jm^Q)CmEm]GL_n^{PM}VHtm+n_n \leftrightarrow U^Z > LPC^K_{O_n} \rightarrow Aa$$

As García Landa’s, this model of the reading speech act represents the whole series of possible readings; consequently, the model of the text also ends up being the relationship between these two phases:

$$DTo / DLo_n$$

As García Landa puts it, DL_n rends apart the presences in either poles of the speech act, removing comprehension further and further in time and space from the specific situation of speech production and creating a new situation beyond “sensorial” time and space - a situation that takes place in a new wavelength. This is the existence modality of history, i.e., of the world(s) in which human life flows. This scission has two sides: the separation of the LPC s produced by different and successive readers, and the separation between GT and GL_n (i.e., between the situation where the act of writing took place and the totality of situations in which take place the different acts of reading). Thus, writing creates a world, whilst the unrecorded oral speech act is but an episode. This explains that as decisive changes occur in

the different series of acts of reading, as the pre-comprehension schemes and other elements of the hermeneutic package and, more generally, the reading-act situation (including the readers' motivations and resistance which govern the contextual effects) together with language itself (and, most especially the semantic load of lexicon) new translations become necessary - nay, new acts of writing *DT_n*, even intra-linguistically (for who could manage *Hamlet* or *Don Quixote* with their "dreadful" spelling?²¹).

This multiplicity of readings explains the multiplicity of translations: As the translator himself changes or society evolves, so do different individual or collective readings of the same texts, and with them the individual or collective meta-representations and effects produced by the *LPCs* - and, with them, the translators' *LPIs*²². This model also applies to recorded oral communication, except that in that case, prosody and, to a lesser extent, register are part of the preserved *Fo*, as are its paralinguistic and, in the case of recorded images, kinetic configuration. In any event, delayed communication also succeeds if:

$$LPI [=] LPC$$

And what about translation and interlingual mediation?

Translation would consist merely in achieving sameness of ideational meaning between an LPI produced in an initial speech act in a given language o and a LPC produced as a consequence of a second speech act in language i:

$$LPI_o = LPC_i$$

The purpose of interlingual mediation, however, is not simply to achieve sameness of intended and comprehended ideational meaning, but a certain correlation between intended and achieved pragmatic effects, i.e., relevant identity:

$$LPI_o [=] LPC_i$$

Except that such correspondence does not necessarily depend on the original speaker's intentions or interests: it may be governed by those of the client or the new interlocutor or the mediator himself.

²¹In fact, the same book is often published at either side of the Atlantic with its spelling respectively adapted to the British and American use.

²²Naturally, this applies to speech in general as well as to interpretation, but it is in written translation that it appears more obviously.

THE SYMBOLS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

<i>D</i>	Speech act (<i>V</i> = oral, <i>T</i> = written, <i>I</i> = inner)
<i>o</i>	Original language
<i>i</i>	Target language
<i>Z</i>	Unconscious motivation or resistance to speak or to understand
<i>W</i>	Conscious motivation or resistance to speak
<i>Y</i>	Main pragmatic intention
<i>Y</i>	Secondary pragmatic intentions
<i>U</i>	Conscious predisposition or resistance to understand
<i>A</i>	Main contextual effect of comprehension (cognitive and qualitative or emotive)
<i>a</i>	Secondary contextual effects of comprehension (cognitive or qualitative or emotive)
<i>LP</i>	Speech percept, an “amalgam” of <i>noetic</i> or propositional content and speech signs
<i>LPI</i>	Intended speech percept (that which the speaker means to produce on his interlocutor) – intended meaning
<i>LPC</i>	Comprehended speech percept (that which the speaker ends up producing) – comprehended meaning
<i>K</i>	Encyclopaedic knowledge base as activated in order to speak or understand (pre-comprehension schemes or passing theories)
<i>F</i>	Linguistic sign chain (the actual utterance or text)
<i>X</i>	(phono-)morpho-syntactic structure
<i>L</i>	(phono-)morpho-syntactic system
<i>S</i>	Semantic potential
<i>H</i>	Semantic structure
<i>V</i>	Rhythmic/prosodic structure
<i>R</i>	Rhythmic/prosodic system
<i>J</i>	Register
<i>Q</i>	Register series
<i>G</i>	Socio-historical field
<i>P</i>	System of shared beliefs, norms and practices or life and personal experience (culture)
<i>VH</i>	Historic moment
<i>t</i>	Specific time
<i>m/n</i>	Specific features
=	Perceptual identity between meaning meant and comprehended, similarity or equivalence of formal features
[=]	Relevant identity between meaning meant and comprehended
>	Determination
→	Mono-directional production
↔	Bi-directional production
[→]	Transformation between meaning as understood by the mediator and meaning intended by the mediator

SPEECH PRODUCTION AND COMPREHENSION: PERCEPTION AND META-REPRESENTATION²³

Revisiting some basic concepts

I apologise for the overlap with the corresponding sections of *Translation, Interlingual Mediation and the Elusive Chimera of Equivalence* above. If you have read it and more or less remember it, may I advise you to go directly to *Relevance Theory Developed*,

García Landa's concept developed

The fact that ideational meaning can be verbalised and re-verbalised without much ado is essential for communication (and, most notably, translation). This has, indeed, been the survival significance of speech and the reason behind its emergence and development: My personal contention is that the species has survived against all natural odds because we can communicate “what we think,” which, by allowing for collective intentionality, has also made possible the development of our productive forces and social superstructure. The relative ineffability of “what we feel,” on the other hand, has not stood in the way of our discovering penicillin, figuring out the speed of light, guessing at the existence of anti-matter or devising *penne alla putanesca*. Speech, in other words, was not developed to communicate feelings; this is a subsidiary use to which it is less suited — a bit like hands to playing the cello. This ontological difference between the ideational and the pragmatic (let alone between the ideational and the poetic) explains, for instance that there is but one science-possible, i.e., verbalisable in, and therefore translatable into, any language- and as many literatures as there are dialects, often remiss to effective, or, rather, relevant translation (see Viaggio 1998, 1999 and 2000). What an *LP* allows to represent is, I submit, basically-maybe exclusively-ideational meaning. Everything else is a by-product of such perception and, therefore, lays without speech production and comprehension proper — which is what García Landa sets out to conceptualise and model.

According to him, the perceptual process described above applies initially to the linear production and comprehension of the basic “chunks” of meaning, the so-called units of sense. But it applies also as the sequence of *LPs* is further integrated into and processed as a perceptual “space,” i.e., as a propositionally complex series of percepts. To my mind, it is here that identity or sameness of meaning intended and comprehended becomes more problematic, both theoretically and practically. My fundamental contention is that *LPI/LPC* identity is not the end of the hermeneutic story but, rather, the beginning. Understanding is much more than perceiving a sequence of *LPIs* produced every 250 milliseconds or so, even if that is indeed the way speech is understood on line. What interests me is not so much the micro level of spontaneous, linear, bottom-up production of a speech percept or even perceptual space, but the post-perceptual macro level of its further top-down processing — the historically and psychologically-conditioned re-organisation and systematisation of the *LPCs* that constitute our speech perceptual input. I am interested, in other words, both in what we do with that which we have perceived and in what that which we have perceived does to us once we have perceived it. For starters, in order practically to understand what I really wish to say to you,

²³Unpublished paper.

you do not need to understand every single *LPI* that I am trying to verbalise. You can make do by perceiving enough of the *LPIs* that make up my intended perceptual space to say that, ***for all practical purposes*** -yours alone, mine alone, or ours combined- you have understood what I meant you to understand — i.e., to understand me ***relevantly***. In that sense, there is, at the post-perceptual macro level, a difference in degrees of comprehension both in quantitative and qualitative terms, i.e., in how much you understand spontaneously, and how relevant is that which you have or have not understood.

Perception and meta-representation

When I speak now about what you have understood or not, I am referring to your ***meta-representation***²⁴ of what I intended you to understand globally and at different levels - say, this explanation of my concept. You may understand it without having understood each and every *LPI* so far (upon reading this piece for a second time, for instance, you would only pay attention to key passages), or you may fail to understand it even if, so far, you have managed to understand each and every *LPI*.

This difference in quantitative and qualitative degrees of bottom-up comprehension ***in the end*** is decisive when it comes to meta-representing top-down the speaker's global communicative and -especially- meta-communicative intentions. If at the micro level, due to the linearity of speech, comprehension is also linear (though more discretely segmented), at the post-perceptual level, comprehension entails a thorough reorganisation and systematisation of those linearly produced *LPCs*: Our comprehension of what we are told is not, therefore, simply the sum total of a linear series of *LPCs*: We constantly enrich and revise our global representation of what that series of *LPCs* -presumably, but not always necessarily identical to the respective *LPIs*- amount to as meaning meant on the part of our interlocutor. Cognitively, it seems quite clear: If the linguistic form of an utterance seldom makes it past short-term memory, an *LPI* seldom makes it past medium-term memory; only meta-representations are stored in long-term memory. At the macro level, I insist, the identity or sameness of representations of the same larger social object -of meaning as globally, rather than locally, meant- is a matter of degree. Since the number and combinations of specific *LPIs* that are understood can vary from one interlocutor to another (or for a single interlocutor at different times), and since the further processing of sense comprehended as a consequence of perceiving a sequence of *LPIs* is carried out by an extremely complex machinery of cognitive and emotive factors, at the post-perceptual level interlocutors almost necessarily end up with subtly or widely different global meta-representations. This is -pilfering García Landa's term but not quite his concept- the ***relativity of meaning*** (or, as some prefer, its "instability"): not that today I perceive A and tomorrow B, but that the ***same*** sequence of speech percepts leads me to meta-represent A to-day and B tomorrow, or me to meta-represent A and you to meta-represent B (pretty much as in natural perception the same object may be interpreted by an archaeologist as a mere stone and by another as a man-made artefact). In other words, we have ***two different layers of ideational comprehension***: the one that is the object of the speech perception, and a more complex one that is the product of a (series of) meta-representation(s) based upon it. My distinction, I submit, allows both for the first-level

²⁴See also Noh (2000) and Sperber (2002). In Peircean terms, this meta-representation would be a new interpretant, no longer of *F* but of the *LPC* itself. It must be noted that meta-representations also come to our awareness as speech perceptual spaces, articulated by means of acts of inner speech as series of *LPIs*.

identity that García Landa postulates as necessary for speech comprehension and for the second-level non-identity posited by Peeters when, arguing against Jackendoff (1996), he states:

“I... had to *guess* what Jackendoff meant, and readers of *my* comments will have to guess what I have in mind... Some elements may be lost, others gained, others still transposed. It would be rash to conclude that the original and the reconstructed meaning are identical, and it would be equally rash to conclude that there is no relationship at all” (1996:147).

The corollary is that, according to my particular purpose at a given time, my perception of an object, even a social one such as meaning, even if undistorted, may not be the relevant one at the post-perceptual level.

In our specific case, even having understood each and every *LPI* constituting the perceptual space that is his monumental book, we can understand García Landa’s theory more, or less, or not at all, or misunderstand it completely. As a matter of fact I have gone through all of those stages through repeated acts of linear comprehension, and I am still not sure that I have understood it thoroughly, i.e., that *my* concept of his theory, a meta-representation based on repeated -and mostly successful- attempts at serially establishing *LPI/LPC* identity, is *his* concept, i.e., that our concepts are identical (regardless of whether we do agree or not, to what extent and why).

There is a qualitative leap, moreover, between understanding what people say and understanding people — i.e., not only what they mean to say, but also what they mean to hide, why, etc. This second-degree comprehension, of course, goes far beyond speech comprehension proper. I am not denying the possibility of spontaneous, first-level *LPI/LPC* identity: Without it how could we even hope eventually to understand what people say to us? What I find problematic, rather, is the identity of meta-representations at the macro level, of global comprehension of that which the speaker means to mean and to achieve by saying it.

The theoretical problem stems, then, from conflating two different phenomena: the fleeting percept produced after 250 milliseconds that, as a unit of sense, serves as a bottom-up building block of what soon becomes a complex “perceptual space,” and the perceptual space itself, and also from leaving out the meta-communicative frame that alone can explain why people speak and listen to each other in the first place. The relativity of meaning, let me repeat, is always top-down and meta-communicative: It is meta-represented meaning that leaves the *mnesic trace*, in Seleskovitch’s felicitous expression, since it alone can give rise to further, more complex meta-representations through propositional enrichment (see, for instance, Katan 1999). This is, precisely, the sense in which I meta-represent what Rickert means when he states that:

“When you speak, and I listen, I do not record a verbatim reproduction of your speech in my brain. I interpret it, and my memory will be of my interpretation” (quoted by Peeters 1996:149).

I take Rickert to be referring not to spontaneous comprehension, but to a meta-representation of meaning based on an initially spontaneous comprehension. This is, then, the difference between the elementary act of speech whereby a unit of sense is produced, and the complex sequence of such acts whereby a whole “space” is created, meta-represented and stored in medium- and eventually long-term memory. I have been tempted to call the latter a “communication act” as opposed to a speech act whereby an *LP* is produced, but I do not think it is worth the practical results. I will therefore stick to García Landa’s terminology and

use both speech act and *LPI* respectively to mean the act whereby a propositionally complex space is produced and the resulting complex meta-representation(s). Barring a few exceptions (a verse here, a witty reply there), our memories of past speech acts are, let me repeat, almost entirely reduced to meta-represented ideational content (we remember more or less relevantly what the poets have said, but not how they said it — nor even in all its ideational richness²⁵).

Another decisive question is whence come the objects of our communicative intention, the meanings we intend an interlocutor to perceive. I suggest that they come whence the meanings come that we intend to communicate with ourselves when engaged in inner speech. They may, of course, eventually be traceable to the constant flux of communication that is the flesh and blood of social life and its individual realisation as my mind. But how is it that, all of a sudden, mostly for no apparent reason at all, they shine forth glaringly or flicker dimly into our awareness? I have very little except educated intuition to help me, but the most plausible explanation I can think of is that they come to our consciousness from its immediate anteroom: our preconscious, or even our unconscious. If most of the time what I mean to mean comes automatically to my awareness, it does happen that I know there is something I want to say to you, but I cannot quite “see” it yet, not completely, anyhow — not as a coherent and cohesive series of *LPs*. At other times, maybe (this is just a wild guess) what I want to tell you is already more or less “cooked” in my preconscious, but service is slow. Be that as it may, there can be little doubt, I think, that meaning meant proceeds to our awareness from its anteroom — even if it only acquires its “final” shape as we try to verbalise it for ourselves or publicly. This is as far down into my own self as I can dig. Here is where my development of García Landa’s model starts (see the appendix), in the unconscious motivation ultimately governing my speech (and other) behaviour as a speaker — and here is also where it ends: in the qualitative effects that comprehension has upon me as an interlocutor, which, again, are governed by and vanish into that which is no longer my consciousness.

In any event, the basic problem remains: that of the quantitative and qualitative number of cases of *LPI/LPC* identity that is *ultimately* necessary, sufficient or optimum for the specific purposes and stakes in hand, i.e., for relevant comprehension. García Landa states that in order for speech communication to have succeeded, at the perceptual level meaning meant and meaning comprehended must be the same, i.e., identical. Perceptually, then, speech comprehension is a binary, all-or-nothing phenomenon. This, as we know, is not how things work at the meta-communicative level. It is also a fact that, through an ulterior process on the basis of speech comprehension, a keener interlocutor may well meta-represent what a speaker means better than another or than the speaker himself. It happens all the time; in some situations some people are more adept at understanding their interlocutors than the latter themselves — it is systematically the case between grownups and young children. Again, if what I want to say to you and your comprehension of it do not totally overlap (if there are blanks in comprehension, as there tend to be in a normal telephone conversation), what really counts is that they both coincide in whatever aspects or features are mutually or even individually relevant - i.e., that they are identical *enough*: Enough for the meta-

²⁵Although we can remember that we were affected in a specific way, we cannot re-experience the effect unless we perceive anew (via an external stimulus or by evocation, which, I think, bears out my contention that an *LPI* may indeed be also perception for the speaker himself).

communicative purposes in hand, for the specific social stakes; after all, what matters is not sheer ideational identity, but what the interlocutors have achieved by means of such identity, however partial or imperfect.

The contextual effects of comprehension

Personally, it is not enough for me that you understand every bit of the ideational content I am so laboriously verbalising — what counts is that you understand it (*it*, not something similar or equivalent or analogous to it) ***in a certain way***, that comprehension of what I mean you to understand produces certain effects and, most especially, that it does not produce certain others. As Bakhtin so insightfully puts it:

“An utterance is linked not only to those preceding it, but also to those that will succeed it in the chain of verbal exchange. An utterance, from its very inception, is developed according to the possible reaction-response. The others, those for which my thought becomes, for the first time, real thought (and, because if this, real for me myself) are not passive listeners, but active participants in the verbal exchange. From the very start, the speaker expects from them a response — an active responsive comprehension. The utterance as a whole is articulated as if in anticipation of this response” (1979:302-303, my re-translation from French)

As I verbalise this series of *LPIs* as they come into my awareness, I do so striving to convince you, and trying not to be boring or not to make you work more than you have to; and I do hope that, even if I cannot convince you, at least you will cast a benign eye on my point, suspend disbelief and be willing to entertain it as yours for a while before passing final judgement on it — i.e., before you decide what to do with what you have understood. All this is drenched in emotion. This fact is very much relevant to me as a speaker, and I am sure that whether you are or not convinced, and entertained, irritated or bored in the process, is equally relevant to you as an interlocutor. This is, in particular, the key to literary communication.

There is another important aspect to comprehension at this post-perceptual level. In written -or, rather, “recorded”- speech the formal space acquires its own fully-fledged ontological status: it can be looked at, dissected, manipulated (if always as the formal space *of* an ideational space, itself tinged with emotion). Its perception, even if itself a product of the perception of sense, does funny things to us. It is no longer apt to compare it to the invisible window that makes natural perception possible. We can “see” the invisible glass, we can even fool ourselves into believing that the light passing through it comes from nowhere and goes nowhere (which is what formalism does). What counts, in my concept, is the way those funny things that the perception of an utterance’s form, including its paralinguistic and kinetic configuration, does to us relevantly affects our relationship with and attitude towards the ideational meaning comprehended and towards each other. Because that is, ***in the end***, the paramount concern of any flesh-and-blood human being: what it ***feels like***, not what it actually is or the way it is perceived — much as what it feels like is ultimately determined by what actually is and the way it is perceived.

There is more to meaning than ideational content

There are, indeed, many other layers of meaning that travel between speaker and interlocutor, even though they are not part of the speech perception proper and ensue from ideational comprehension. One of them is, perhaps, the ideational plate’s emotive relief. If this is so, then in order to be perceived as a component of an *LPI* it requires being “transposed” into propositional form and/or the formal attributes of the utterance (collocations, register,

prosody, etc.). In any event, all these non-ideational aspects of meaning are, indeed, outside speech production and comprehension *per se* (form is perceived *as a consequence of* an LPC), and are certainly much more difficult to conceptualise, but they cannot simply be brushed aside.

Furthermore, a model of communication through speech cannot ignore the meta-representation of what might have been said instead of what has been actually uttered: The fact that a wife says to her husband ‘*I’m fond of you*’ **rather than** ‘*I love you*’ may be heavily loaded (and certainly no less the fact that she does not say anything at all). And equally loaded may be the fact that at an international gathering a Spanish delegate of Catalan origin intervenes in French **rather than** Spanish. Lexical and other positive choices become relevant, in other words, only insofar as an interlocutor can meta-represent the alternatives and the significance of the fact that they have not been chosen or, even, that they have been consciously discarded. Because that is very much a part of meaning meant -if meant indirectly- or, if not meant at all, then of meaning as comprehended by an interlocutor **despite** the speaker’s intentions. A case most regrettably in point has been the infamous *Coalition of the Willing* - of the willing, meta-represent I, to bomb Iraq, invade it, occupy it, and, in the process, wreak havoc with the system of collective security embodied by the UN. The name was deliberate: the *willing* meant plainly to differentiate themselves from the *un-willing* — i.e., Germany and, above all, France, whom they also referred to pejoratively as the *old Europe*. Notice that *coalition* is not as loaded politically: I submit that all that mattered was eschewing *alliance* in order not to activate pragmatically problematic memories of the antifascist alliance of yore. Earlier there had been an even more illustrative case: China and the US had been at diplomatic loggerheads over the fact that a Chinese Mig had crashed in mid-air with an American intelligence plane above the China Sea, as a result of which the Chinese pilot was missing and presumed dead, whilst the American plane was forced to perform an emergency landing on a Chinese island. All the fuss was over whether the American aircraft was a “*spy*” plane (as characterised by more independent Euronews), or a “*surveillance*” plane (as labelled by the more obsequious BBC) legally ogling from afar. In this specific context the semantic difference between an “*apology*,” which is what the Chinese demanded, and an “*expression of regret*,” which was as far as the Americans were ready to go, are **not** interchangeable: they give rise to relevantly different (even contradictory) politically charged meta-representations. In most other contexts, instead, they would be very much interchangeable: ‘*I regret that your father is so ill, Peter,*’ will not give Peter much food for meta-representational lucubrations about whether I said, “*I regret*” rather than “*I’m sorry*” in order not to convey that I feel responsible. Pretending -as many translators and, especially, conference interpreters do- that every speaker chooses his words as an embattled Minister about to lose a no-confidence vote, carefully weighing and then rejecting each and every alternative (which, by the way, is impossible), and that, therefore, every word present counts as much as every absent word, is decidedly preposterous.

The rest is silence

And there is more: a model of communication through speech cannot leave out the meaning of **silence**. True, silence is not a part of the utterance, but can be nevertheless meaning-laden. Very often, what is not being said is also an important part of what we understand, or, rather, of what we end up understanding after we have understood what has actually been said “officially.” Silence can be an ostensive means of communication -a negative stimulus, as it

were- and when taken as such, it is interpreted via a meta-representation of what is being left unsaid and a meta-meta-representation of why it is left unsaid.

What really counts are motivations, intentions and effects

The motivations and intentions that bring together the interlocutors -i.e., that give rise to the speech act to begin with- are a decisive part of the totality of human communication that transcends speech production and comprehension. As we know, our ultimate purpose when we engage in communication is not simply to produce speech percepts in our interlocutors, but to achieve certain goals thereby — nor is it purely to perceive what others have to say to us, but also to achieve certain goals thereby. What I have been trying to bring in explicitly is that we are not simply after understanding the other person's speech, his *LPIs*: we also want to understand his motives and meta-represent all that he may be willing to convey to (and/or hide from) us by producing a series of *LPIs* - and this we do on the basis of our own emotively-laden motivations.

Relevance Theory developed

Lest you may need a reminder, let me start by resuming the basic tenets of Relevance Theory: Sperber and Wilson define relevance as the relationship between the contextual effects produced on a specific interlocutor by any act of ostensive communication and the effort that it takes him to process it. Relevance is thus the exclusive domain of speech comprehension (even though it governs speech production insofar as a speaker, mostly unconsciously, “puts himself in the shoes” of his interlocutor). Let us recall the two Principles of Relevance (1986/1995:260 and foll.):

The first principle is cognitive: Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.

The second one is communicative: Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance.

From these principles, Sperber and Wilson derive a presumption of optimal relevance, which consists of two assumptions:

- a) The set of assumptions that the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus.
- b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

There are two decisive corollaries: relevance is always 1) *ad hoc*, and 2) relative.

I would say that these principles apply to any stimulus that the subject *perceives* as one of ostensive communication addressed to him or that he decides to process “as if” (he may attribute intentionality when there is in fact none, or miss intentionality when it is actually there, or simply misattribute it as directed to him rather than to someone else or *vice versa*). This qualification introduces the key element of *attributed intentionality*, which becomes decisive when dealing with displaced situationality, which is typical of written

communication²⁶. Another decisive element, as I have stressed, is the intentionality behind the intentionality to communicate proper — the aims that a speaker pursues by communicating whatever it is he communicates. And yet another — the motive that impels him to communicate something at all in the first place, which can be totally or partially unconscious. I am not referring here to a speech act's illocutionary force, which is, as it were, an integral part of it: Illocutionary force is recoverable through propositional enrichment alone, and is normally perceived automatically as constitutive of a coherent series of *LPIs*. I have in mind, rather, the complex conscious and unconscious motivations that themselves give rise to and govern the (complex) pragmatic intention behind a speech act, which itself governs the act of speaking. And then there are the effects of comprehension on the subject. Again, I am not referring to perlocutionary effects: they too are part of the speech act and are perceived automatically together with -if not necessarily as part of- its series of *LPIs*, but rather to contextual, especially qualitative, effects. This distinction is clearly visible at the aesthetic level: aesthetic effects are hardly perlocutionary in the traditional sense. In any event, never mind what we call them or how they work, they are there, and they are independent of *LPI* comprehension, which explains how we can be affected differently by two acts of comprehension of the same series of *LPIs*. Each time we perceive (the same) intended meaning anew, we experience different cognitive and qualitative effects. Such effects are, in the end, a function of our own ability, sensitivity and disposition there and then, which may or may not match our general ability, sensitivity or disposition, or the statistically average ability, sensitivity or disposition of any group of interlocutors.

Once more, understanding what a person means to convey to us propositionally, understanding the set of assumptions that person means to make manifest, though indeed the basic requirement for understanding speech, is seldom enough. Whenever we have a personal stake in understanding (in understanding that the plumber is making manifest to us that in his expert opinion the whole wall must be ripped open, for instance), we want to understand, also, even more basically, what the speaker's real motives and intentions are, and whence they come. We do it all the time, and not only when we have reason to believe that there is more to it than meets the ear, even if, on many occasions all that counts for all practical purposes is "official" meaning. In Peircean terms, García Landa's model stops at the semiosis that turns the linguistic utterance into meaning meant. Speech comprehension is, indeed, consummated at that point. But we go on peeling the onion as obsessively as required by our perception of meta-communicative relevance. The old joke comes to mind of the two shrinks who cross each other on the street. 'Good day, Doctor,' go each of them, only to stop dead on their tracks and wonder *suspiciously* 'What the hell did he mean by that?'

The overall importance of qualitative effects

The basic limitation of relevance theory in its original formulation, I submit, is that it takes contextual effects to be exclusively cognitive, i.e., changes in the individual's beliefs (which become strengthened, weakened, or altogether altered). Ultimately, the effects of comprehension on an individual are always emotive, or qualitative, and have to do more with the phenomenal aspects of beliefs (i.e., to "what it is like" to entertain them) than with their ideational aspect. If we incorporate this, then relevance theory neatly explains aesthetic and

²⁶This is, as I said Eco's (2001) mistake when he refers to *intentio operis*; so much so that he himself forgets his words and starts speaking of the intention (almost always putative, of course) of the author and, indeed, of the translator.

other qualitative effects, even without going into their physical and social nature (a vastly unexplored realm). This is what Pilkington (2000) has tried to do, contributing the last stone that I needed to finish my theoretical building as it succinctly stands before you.

In the first volume of Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, Justine, who as a young girl had been raped by sinister Capodistria, winces when, reading a musical score, gets to "*d.c.*" She immediately understands, of course, that "*d.c.*" stands for "*da capo*," a normal instruction for the performer to play the passage once again from the beginning, but she immediately associates it with "*Capodistria*" and the qualitative effect produced by her comprehension of this perfectly innocent *LPI* devastates her. I have an even more illustrative example, and from a most unexpected source. In one of the episodes of the old TV series *Bonanza*, old Cartwright and a painter now gone blind are standing atop a cliff overlooking a wonderful landscape. The former painter starts bemoaning the loss of his sight and evoking the landscape he had transferred to canvas so many times in the past; he then starts describing it as he visualises it in his mind. Cartwright comments that what the blind man has just depicted is more beautiful than what he, Cartwright, sees. The moment is rather corny, but most revealing: What Cartwright would have told his blind friend, had he read this piece of mine, is that the *qualia* of the second-degree perception produced in him by his interlocutor's utterance were aesthetically more satisfying than the *qualia* of his optical perception. Due to the intermediate semantic representation flavoured by the non-semantic accoutrements of speech, transforming the second-degree perception into an imaginary first-degree one simply "felt better" or "more moving" than perceiving the landscape directly. Such *qualia* could not have been induced by ideational content alone (itself a propositional abstraction induced from the semantic representation): there is something about both ideational content and, in this instance, the way it was verbalised that did the trick. This "something that does the trick" is what a general theory of communication cannot shy away from conceptualising and incorporating.

Thinking for speaking: Slobin's experiment

There is a whole school of linguistic thought, initiated by Humboldt and articulated in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, according to which each language -i.e., each particular organisation of speech- determines the way its speakers perceive the world. It is undoubtedly true that, within certain limits and up to a certain point, the instrument determines the task: Beethoven himself did not write for the piano the way he wrote for the violin, and his own piano transcription of his violin concerto is wonderfully illustrative in this respect. But which is the task that languages as semiotic instruments determine? Together with Slobin, I think that the task is not that of perceiving, but that of verbalising -i.e., producing- perceptions. Slobin proceeds to an experiment that is as simple as it is splendidly illuminating: He presents a sample of children between the ages of three and nine, speakers of different languages, with the same story illustrated in a series of images and asks them to describe what they see. Children, of course, do not describe "what they see" but, rather, their interpretation of what they perceive, of the movement that they themselves attribute to the succession of static contrasts. Slobin asserts that the semantic and syntactic encoding of certain categories, such as "perfective" and "imperfective" (Spanish-speaking children, for instance, distinguish the child who "*cayó*" [fell] from the dog that "*corría*" [was running]) does not correspond to different ways of "seeing." We would be hard pressed to claim that everything about an image

that could be grammatically encoded in all languages is implicitly present when we look at it. To a great extent, states Slobin, grammar marks distinctions that are relevant to discourse (i.e., to speech production). When speaking Spanish, I cannot but present my representation of past events in relationship to their beginning or end (with the perfective tenses) or independently of either (with the imperfective ones)²⁷; according to Slobin, I cannot but adopt a grammaticalised point of view.

“For instance, in English I might say: “The bees are chasing the dog” or “The dog is being chased by the bees.” Neither of these viewpoints -active or passive- is in the percept. Active and passive constructions serve to organize the flow of information connected to discourse. Thus, even within a single language, grammar provides a set of *options* for schematizing experience for the purposes of verbal expression. Any utterance is multiply determined by what I have seen or experienced, my communicative purpose in telling you about it, and the distinctions that are embodied in my grammar. The world does not present “events” and “situations” to be encoded in language. Rather, experiences are filtered through language into verbalized events. A “verbalized event” is constructed on-line, in the process of speaking” (1996:74-75).

As Slobin points out, it is unlikely that all speakers are completely aware of this, but no doubt every utterance is a selective schematisation of the concept it expresses, a schematisation that, up to a point, depends on the grammaticalised meanings in a language, which the speaker chooses in order to express himself verbally. For Slobin, the expression of experience in linguistic terms constitutes *thinking for speaking*. We encounter the contents of our mind in a special way when we access them in order to use them, i.e., the activity of thinking acquires a particular quality when it is used in the activity of speaking. In the evanescent lapse that we have to produce our utterances in actual speech acts we fit our thoughts into the available linguistic frames (i.e., we produce *LPIs*). Thinking for speaking involves selecting those features of objects and events that a) fit some conceptualisation thereof, and b) are readily encodable into the language. As it acquires language, a child learns certain forms of thinking for speaking. One way of investigating this suggestion is to compare the ways in which speakers of different languages depict the same events. And he adds most tellingly:

“This approach is well known to students of translation, and there is a fascinating literature showing that translations of the same text cannot help but add or remove nuances in accord with the characteristics of the given language” (*ibid.*:76).

We can begin to have a glimpse of a decisive fact: A semantic representation is nothing but a possible way of semantically framing a concept or a proposition, but is not to be confused with the *intended* concept or proposition (i.e., the *LPI*) themselves. Without being aware of it, Slobin opens yet another window on speech: His discovery allows us to explain, *contrario sensu*, the difference between inner speech and speech proper. In the first instance, it is no longer a matter of thinking for speaking, but of *speaking for thinking*, which explains the *sui generis* organisation of inner speech, its apparent formlessness, its permanently incomplete articulation, in a thousand directions at a time and in no one in particular - that

²⁷The difference between these two Spanish verbalisations of the same historic event: “El 12 de octubre de 1492 Colón *descubrió* América” and “El 12 de octubre de 1492 Colón *descubría* América” (undistinguishable in English) is one of perspective. The difference lies in “visualising” the fact as a consummated event or an event that is in process. This perspective Spanish forces me to grammaticalise only in the simple forms of the past tense (as well as in their compound counterparts), the only ones to maintain the aspectual difference. Russian, on its part, makes that difference obligatory in all verbal forms and tenses, including the infinitive.

chaos that Joyce can barely imitate (after all, he was indeed thinking for speaking) in those masterful last pages of *Ulysses*. Moreover, not only do different languages impose, favour, make possible, impede or prevent certain grammatical or even semantic points of view, but each offers its speakers different repertoires of possible viewpoints. Thus, within the limits of his (activated knowledge of) his own language, a speaker at once a) **can choose** the way to express a perception of his environment or his world, and b) **must do so**. This dialectics of freedom and necessity is another constant of human communication.

The semantic representation shibboleth

If the objects of spontaneous communication are *LPs*, then there must be an ontological difference between ideational meaning meant (and/or comprehended) and semantic meaning (linguistic, i.e., systemic, dictionary-itemised). The question is where exactly to find it. I submit that all too often this boundary is mistakenly drawn between the systemic potential meaning of each isolated lexical unit and the more or less cohesive meaning of more or less cohesive chains (basically clauses or sentences), since, once syntactically articulated, the semantic potential of lexical units becomes co-text-bound (*Nb co-text*, not context) and, therefore, automatically reduced. There is, and I think here we all agree, an important distinction between systemic meaning potential and semantic representation: Any more or less cohesive chain may give rise to a semantic representation, which is merely a more or less plausible interpretation of its meaning in propositional terms — something a machine can normally grasp even better than humans, as in the case of the English sentence “*time flies like an arrow*,” for which a computer found five different cohesive non-metaphorical interpretations: 1) “*time proceeds as quickly as an arrow proceeds*,” 2) “*measure the speed of flies in the same way that you measure the speed of an arrow*,” 3) “*measure the speed of flies in the same way that an arrow measures the speed of flies*,” 4) “*measure the speed of flies that resemble an arrow*,” 5) “*flies of a particular kind, called ‘time flies’, are fond of an arrow*” (Pinker 1994:209).

This, precisely, is the tremendous advantage of language over all other semiotic systems: It allows for semantic representations, i.e., for rich, detailed and flexible conceptual models of experience framed in propositional form that can be arrived at and manipulated on the basis of the linguistic meanings of utterances. So that there is, indeed, an important distinction to be made between systemic meaning potential and semantic representation. What, to my mind, is not always clear is that it is still a distinction between linguistic levels — a distinction **within** language. The divide between systemic meaning and meaning meant, I suggest, must be sought at the level above: at the intersection of language and thought⁷, between semantic representation and intended sense. As Gutt (1991:24-25) so clearly explains:

“The semantic representation is a representation that is the output of the language module of the mind. However, because the language module of the mind handles only linguistic data, the semantic representations, which it produces as output, are not normally complete and fully truth-conditional propositions or assumptions, but rather *assumptions schemas* or ‘blueprints for propositions’... which need to be developed and enriched in a number of different ways... Verbal communication involves two distinct kinds of mental representations: semantic representations that are the output of the language module of the mind, and thoughts with propositional forms that are derived from semantic representations by further processing. The way in which audiences get from semantic representations to propositional forms crucially involves the use of *context* [i.e., all situationally relevant linguistic and non-linguistic parameters, S.V.]”

The existence of such a specialised language module (as suggested by Fodor (1975), Jackendoff (1992), *et al.*), independent of whatever modules generate and process conceptual information (i.e., thought) is corroborated at the neurophysiological level: The lexical meaning of words, which, together with their syntactic features and phonological form, is a basic component of each word and therefore part of linguistic competence, is vulnerable to aphasia. Conceptual representations, on the other hand, which are outside linguistic competence, are not — even if they are vulnerable to other forms of mental deterioration (Paradis 1997).

Since in real life we are never really faced with sentences but with socially relevant, intentional utterances, we automatically assume any isolated sentence to be such an utterance, a manifestation of an intended sense, and therefore treat it as such and do what we do in every similar case: On the basis of the principle of relevance we try to come up with an adequate, or at least plausible interpretation of meaning as meant by a specific if imaginary human being. Even a semantically incoherent but grammatically cohesive sentence as Chomsky's famous "*colourless green ideas sleep furiously*" will tend to be perceived and processed as an ultimately coherent -evidently metaphorical, if cryptic- intentional utterance (for instance: "*The faun dreams that he is sleepless in the green forest whose colours are drowned by the wild din of the beasts*"), by the same mental process that allows Alice to "understand" from Jabberwocky that, clearly, "someone killed someone." Bakhtin (1978:281) puts it most transparently: we do not exchange propositions any more than we exchange words — nor do we react to propositions, but to what people mean to communicate by them. Because we tend to treat more or less cohesive segments of language as intentional acts of speech, we can ultimately fool ourselves into believing that we understand them as coherent utterances.

The object of speech perception

García Landa's theory of speech posits that speaking is a social activity whereby human beings put together sign chains in order to produce speech percepts in specific situations governed by an exponential field. The object of a speech perceptual space then, is what the other person wishes to say officially. Thus, when we have such a perception we perceive (or think that we perceive) that which the other person is trying to say, and, at the same time, we have a direct or indirect awareness that that which we perceive comes from that flesh-and-blood human being who is speaking to us. This is the great difference between natural and social perception: clouds do not show themselves, nor do they show us the faces that we think we can see in them, clouds are not *meant* for us to see. Communicative intentions, on the other hand, are, precisely, both communicative and intentional, they are meant to be perceived, they are specifically addressed, calculated, forged and materialised with perception (and response) in mind — in the mind of the social being who is their subject: They are the product of an intention coupled with a hermeneutic and pragmatic strategy.

There is another crucial fact: for communication to be established, it is not necessary that there be identity between meaning meant and meaning understood. Regardless of its eventual success or failure, communication as such is established as soon as we have understood that there is a communicative intention addressed to us, as soon as we perceive that someone is trying to communicate something to us and we decide to play the game: The whole interpretative process is triggered by the stimulus of ostensive communication. This is

where *mutual orientedness* (Toolan 1996) and relevance start working. Speech comprehension (and, sometimes, even speech production) comes later. Before you even begin to read this book, before I start speaking to you and you start understanding me, you must have taken the trouble to get it, to find a place and a time, and to open it. Why would you do that unless you had your own motives and interests, likes and dislikes, even outright resistance, that are prior to your understanding, which in one way or another, influence and can even determine whether and what you understand, at least initially?

Obviously, in order for communication to succeed it is not enough for it to have been established. At the speech perceptual level, success in communication equals ideational comprehension. I may utterly detest physics and most particularly Archimedes' principle, still, I can understand it, and, to that extent, its "author" has succeeded at communicating with me. But ideational comprehension is seldom enough. A speaker sets out to achieve conscious or unconscious goals. This meta-communicative motivation governs his pragmatic intention, which in turn governs his meaning meant and his verbalisation. On his part, an interlocutor also sets out to achieve conscious or unconscious goals. This meta-communicative motivation governs his comprehension disposition and strategy. And then, after comprehension, come the cognitive effects and, in their wake, the decisive qualitative effects on which pragmatic communication ultimately sails or sinks.

Since motivation to speak and to understand are never totally symmetrical, regardless of ideational comprehension, meta-communicative success is always relative to each one of the actors. Only a sufficient degree of mutual orientedness can make mutual success possible — without actually ensuring it. Meta-communicative success can be defined as an adequate (from minimal to optimal -which may be zero- through total) sameness of ideational meaning meant and comprehended coupled with an adequate (from barely acceptable to optimal) correlation of effects intended and achieved. If both actors coincide in the effects that they respectively pursue by speaking and understanding, then success is mutual: the poet means to move and the reader means to be moved. Otherwise, only one party "gets away" with success: the speaker means to provoke but the interlocutor does not and succeeds at not falling for it. This combination of ideational comprehension and correlation between effects pursued and achieved I call *relevant identity* between meaning meant and understood. The closer this identity is to its optimal degree, the more successful the communication and vice versa. This is what we always strive for, and this is what I have tried to achieve by writing these lines. This, too, is what you have expected all along. I hope that you have not been deceived.

Conclusion

There is a fundamental difference between understanding language and understanding what people mean when they use it. And then there is another between meaning as linguistically framed and the series of metarepresentations such initial, spontaneous understanding gives rise to. When we speak about the relativity of meaning, we refer not so much to the understanding of the noetic or ideational content of specific written or oral texts as to the understanding of communicative intensions framed (or **not** framed) linguistically and, even, of conscious or unconscious intentions **not** to communicate — i.e., to lie or to hide. This means more often than not to do away with the semantic representation shibboleth, since distinction between potential linguistic meaning and semantic representation is a difference **within** language and does not involve metarepresentation, except at a basic level of dis-

ambiguation. The object of a speech perception is, this, but meaning as officially meant. Anything beyond that is already a matter of metarepresentation.

TOWARDS A MORE PRECISE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONTEXT AND SITUATION, INTENTION AND SENSE²⁸

Introduction

This work is intended to help interpretation and translation teachers place more precisely before their students a text in the speech situation, a *conditio sine qua non* in order to disentangle sense from the web of linguistic meanings. It is a truism that no utterance²⁹ can be correctly interpreted in a vacuum, as a specimen of a language, rather than as an act of speech, i.e., as a specific use of language in a given situation. In specialised literature the crucial distinction is ever more often made between linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic sense — the latter understood, precisely, as the substantive communicative content of a message, what the speaker means to say with what he says: the Paris school's *vouloir dire*. This sense may be defined, *grosso modo*, as the vector resulting from the linguistic meaning of the message and the sender's communicative intention within the specific speech situation. Of these three factors, the first is the only relatively non-controversial one; the second is already more complex (what about the unconscious intention? And what about the *lapsus linguae*, the betrayal of conscious intention?); while the third encompasses everything besides the utterance itself, including, at times, the sender's very intention. In order to name it, the term usually resorted to is that jack-of-all-trades '*context*,' which, to boot, also covers the purely linguistic surroundings. So if the conceptual and terminological distinction between meaning and sense is already established (though, unfortunately, not enough), there still prevails in literature an indiscriminate use of '*context*' and '*situation*'.

Let us, then, take a closer look at these two pairs of notions.

Although the concepts overlap, it is convenient not to confuse the distinction between linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic sense with that between explicature and implicature. Implicatures arise more or less spontaneously out of a given situation. If the lights are out, the explicature "*lights, please!*" produces the implicature "[*turn on the*] *lights*"; if the lights are on, the opposite implicature is inferred. Sense, as we shall see, is much larger and more complex a notion. What has traditionally been called sense can be defined *grosso modo* as the vector resulting from the linguistic meaning of the message and the speaker's communicative intention within the specific speech situation. Of these three factors, the first is the only relatively non-controversial one; the second is already more complex (what about the unconscious intention? And what about the *lapsus linguae*, the betrayal of a conscious intention?); while the third encompasses everything besides the utterance itself, including, at times, the speaker's very intention. In order to name it, the term usually resorted to is that jack-of-all-trades "*context*," which, to boot, also covers the purely linguistic surroundings. So if the conceptual and terminological distinction between meaning and sense is already established (though, unfortunately, not enough), there still prevails in literature an indiscriminate use of "*context*" and "*situation*."

²⁸An updated version of an article originally published in *Rivista Internazionale di Tecnica della Traduzione* 4, 1999.

²⁹Notice that I use the terms '*text*' and '*utterance*' interchangeably: for my purposes the difference is but quantitative (a text is an utterance or series of utterances), since the notions I am about to develop apply to both. I do, nevertheless, make the distinctions '*originator*'/'*utterer*,' and '*receiver*'/'*addressee*.'

The first one to distinguish terminologically linguistic context from extra-linguistic situation, to my knowledge, is Catford (1969), who calls them respectively “*co-text*” and “*context*.” Catford is among the first clearly to understand that translation cannot be the sheer mechanical substitution of linguistic units: Two utterances, he tells us, are equivalent when they are interchangeable in the same situation. He illustrates this point through his famous example “*Ja prishla*”/“*I have come*,” where the array of semes and morphemes relevant in Russian and English to describe the same event coincides only partially. For Catford, however, the same situation seems to be an iterated identical event: every time a woman has come on foot she will say ‘*Ja prishla*’ in Russian, and ‘*I have come*’ in English. Of course, things are not that simple. What matters are not the features chosen by languages but those selected by speakers, i.e., those features intentionally expressed or left implicit *taking advantage* of a specific language’s freedoms and *bowing* to its servitudes (Vinay 1980)³⁰.

Almost twenty years later, two books appear simultaneously that do indeed elaborate the distinction: Neubert (1985) and Lvovskaya (1985, with an updated Spanish version in 1997). Neubert describes the situation as a series of concentric circles going further away from the text into culture. Among the many outstanding insights in this work is the concept of the linguistic *framing* of the situation. Russian and English speakers frame differently Catford’s situation (the naturalness of framing -i.e., idiomaticity- becomes, thus one of the fundamental criteria of translation quality). Lvovskaya explains the text’s sensic structure as a hierarchical function of a) what she calls the speech situation (whose *formants* are *who, to whom, why, what for, how, where, and when*) — the product of the interaction of the speaker’s persona (*lichnost/personalidad*) and the relevant circumstances of communication, which motivates the speaker’s specific linguistic behaviour and the means of its realisation; b) the text’s pragmatic substructure — the internal programme of linguistic behaviour, formed in the speaker’s conscience under the influence of the speech situation, which appears as a series of communicative tasks subject to a main task and to the logic of speech development; and c) the semantic substructure — the objectual, conceptual and linguistic content of a text, its context, and, at the same time, the linguistic form of the realisation of the speaker’s communicative intention.

Lvovskaya’s scheme is the only systematic attempt at analysing the situation I know of, although she does so in the narrow sense just described. Two basic criticisms come to mind: To begin with, in the semantic substructure, Lvovskaya mixes qualitatively dissimilar elements — one thing is the objectual reference, another its conceptualisation (both extra-linguistic), and quite another the way they are both assigned linguistic meaning. What interests me for my present purposes, however, is that between the speaker’s persona and his communicative intention, extra-linguistic context, and culture (which Lvovskaya leaves out), there remains around the utterance too wide a territory for us to make do with the simple categories of sense and situation.

May I now proceed to suggest a draft classification of the space around an utterance with its relevant terminology.

³⁰When the world was bi-polar, “under-developing” countries demanded “*the* new world economic order” (in which the wealthy would be less all-powerful), whilst the developed nations were only willing to consent to “*a* new world order” (anyone except the one demanded by the underdeveloped). The then Soviet Union washed off her hands blissfully: Since in Russian there is no article, her delegates always spoke simply of “new world economic order.”

An utterance

Keep in mind the following example: A group of ten-year old children are playing around a swimming pool. When it comes to go into the water, little Peter excuses himself saying “*They won’t let me.*” We will analyse exclusively the linguistic stimulus, leaving aside its paralinguistic and kinetic configuration.

This side of the utterance

The speaker’s persona

Every act of speech is, undoubtedly, the work of a **persona**, single or collective — a synthesis of the speaker’s psychological, intellectual, and social background and experience, which influences or determines his linguistic behaviour, i.e., the form and content of the utterance, plus the sheer fact that he chooses to proffer it. The model does not explicitly incorporate the speaker’s persona, just his motivations and intentions, but nothing prevents us from bringing it in explicitly if the need arises.

In our example, we are dealing with an insecure child.

The speaker’s pragmatic intention and conscious and unconscious motivations

The intersection of the persona of the speaker (who can be the originator or the utterer proper) and the need, or conscious or unconscious wish to make verbally manifest something to someone is synthesised in the utterance — the linguistically framed materialisation of an *LPI* and a main and a constellation of secondary **pragmatic intentions** governed by a **conscious** and an **unconscious motivations**. Again, it can be the intention of a specific speaker -a historically, socially and psychologically conditioned persona- or that of a similarly conditioned but de-personalised originator, often expressed through an anonymous and irrelevant author, as is the case with most pragmatic texts. But let it be clear that, even when we can no longer think of an individual speaker, behind the text there is always the State, a social group, interests that produce it or command its production.

The motivation may be varied: to communicate true or false information to, to show to or hide from, or to create a genuine or misleading impression in a specific individual or collective interlocutor. This interlocutor can be real or imaginary, or even the very speaker in a dialogue with himself³¹. I have distinguished conscious from unconscious motivation because they are often at odds. The individual or collective psychology of the speaker (whether unfolded into originator and utterer or not) also governs the tactical and strategic calculation of what to say to whom when and how. Besides, such decision is realised according to the speaker’s rhetorical and linguistic competence, itself a part of the wider competence required to produce meaningful discourse.

A pragmatic intention is, thus, the communicative intention where conscious and unconscious motivations converge. With the development of discourse the intention may indeed change, but we can posit that it is always prior to the utterance. This applies even to hesitations and phatic fillers, which, as is known, are due most of the time to the unconscious intention to keep the communication channel open.

³¹Indeed, even in inner speech do conscious and unconscious motivations and pragmatic intentions intervene: Think of the heated private argument preceding any important decision, from demanding a salary increase to deciding what number we are going to bet on at the roulette table.

In our example, we have child who is afraid of getting into the pool (and does not know why), who wants to get off the hook and lies in order not to lose face.

The speaker's direct intended sense (LPI)

Prior to the utterance, then, a persona comes up with a pragmatic intention that leads him to initiate a speech act. Such intention materialises through a **direct intended sense**, the equivalent of Lvovskaya's communicative task — that which the speaker wishes to say officially -including, and here I add to García Landa's concept, the immediate secondary perlocutionary effects he consciously intends to produce- in order to produce the desired pragmatic effect. Such intended sense is a synthesis of intentions, thought and speech that manifests itself as a perception — an *LPI*³². Let me stress that intended sense, pragmatic intention and motivation are different things. General Motors extol the virtues of their new model (direct intended sense) with a view to inducing the interlocutor to buy it (pragmatic intention) in order to increase profits (motivation). GM do not say -or imply- '*Out with your money!*' If they show their cards, their intention fails, even if the intended sense is impeccably framed linguistically. That is why we can assert that in order for communication to succeed meta-communicatively, it may be unadvisable or even self-defeating for the interlocutor to grasp the speaker's true conscious or unconscious motivation. It would be the case of a physician mendaciously soothing the child patient before a painful procedure, or of a husband who feigns having forgotten about their wedding anniversary in order later to surprise his wife with a beautiful present: It is "good" both for physician and child, and for husband and wife that the speaker's true motivations and intentions remain hidden from the interlocutor.

As with the intention, we can also distinguish a main direct intended sense -equivalent to discourse analysis's macro-proposition- and a series of secondary directly intended senses, correlatable to propositions.

The interaction between pragmatic intention and direct intended sense governs both a text's functionality and the organisation of the themes and rhemes — i.e., the articulation of logical subjects and predicates, or the distribution of an utterance's informative load.

In our example, the *LPI* automatically inferred from *F* "*They won't let me*" is [*I cannot get into the water because my parents have told me not to*]. Uttered in a different situation, this *F* might be interpreted as the vehicle of a different intended sense.

The speaker's indirect intended sense

We can further distinguish an **indirect intended sense** (to which direct intended sense is pragmatically subject). Indirect intended sense is a meta-representation that the speaker intends (or hopes) to induce in his interlocutor on the basis of his *LPI* - the archetypical case is allegory³³. In other words, the *LPI* has a certain perlocutionary purpose. The speaker is counting on his interlocutor making the necessary inferences in order to proceed, in Peircean terms, to a second semiosis, taking direct intended sense as an index of indirect intended sense. An interlocutor, however, can understand the latter without grasping the former: More than any other, literary speech comprehension demands such ability to meta-represent. Identity between indirect intended and comprehended sense is, therefore, a much more

³²Resorting to Allwood's (1996:60 and foll.) model, we can say that direct intended sense is signalled by the speaker, i.e., the speaker intends to make manifest that he is displaying something.

³³Allwood would say that the speaker is simply displaying indirect intended sense.

problematic problem, witness the many conflicting interpretations of the “meaning” of so many literary pieces.

For the sake of simplicity, I have not introduced the distinction in the model, but, again, nothing prevents it. In any event, indirect sense, as all other meta-representations, is part of the contextual effects of *LPI* comprehension.

In our example, indirect intended sense would be [*It is not that I am afraid, on the contrary, I'd love to*].

At the utterance

The utterance's objective meaning

It is desirable to distinguish direct intended sense from **objective meaning** — the meaning - including usual secondary perlocutionary effects and subsequently triggered meta-representations- that the utterance would normally be attributed *in the specific situation* (which often -but not necessarily- would be its literal interpretation), or the interpretation the bulk of the subjects of comprehension (whether or not intended interlocutors) would give it “out of context,” as it were, i.e., in a typical situation, independently of the speaker's intention. Although they usually coincide, direct intended sense and objective meaning should not be confused. The allegorical sense of a literary piece, superimposed upon its direct intended sense, is interpreted on the basis of the latter: The author resorts *intentionally* to direct intended sense in order to express the indirect one. Objective meaning, let us remind ourselves, is *independent from the speaker's intention* (even if he may consciously take advantage of it)³⁴ — it is, in a manner of speaking, the “default” sense that a given linguistic chain would be perceived as making to the majority of speakers in a specific situation. It often happens that a speaker denies the hidden intentions attributed to him by an interlocutor and swears that he never meant to imply anything more than he has said: ‘*No, it is not that I do not wish to go out: I just remarked that it is raining.*’ In purely informative texts, objective meaning and intended (direct and indirect) sense tend to coincide. The speaker, that is, does not pursue any ulterior perlocutionary effects, which simplifies interpretation: he simply means exactly what he says. If it coincides with his *LPI* (i.e., if intended sense = objective meaning), communication unfolds unencumbered. It is, I hope, the case with this piece, before which the reader (at least the contemporary one) does not need to infer too much in order to go from what I have said to what I mean him to understand.

Even in such instances, however, the cultural and situational displacement specific to writing and mediation often provokes fissures between the two. The discrepancies between direct intended sense and objective meaning are usually due to three series of factors: An intended sense incompetently framed by the speaker, insufficient sophistication on the part of the interlocutor³⁵, or a decisive change in one or more of the formants in the second speech situation, so that if in the original situation both direct intended sense and objective meaning

³⁴Milos Forman's *The Firemen's Ball* used an incompetent fire brigade as an allegory for Czechoslovakia's Stalinist leaders. That allegorical sense, though, was so successfully masked that neither the country's bureaucrats nor her firemen understood it: The censure let the film slip through... and the fire-fighters protested against what they took to be an uncalled for and appalling portrayal. Both mistook objective meaning for indirect intended sense.

³⁵As was the case with Forman's Stalinist and fire-fighting audiences, neither of which, incidentally, were the film's intended addressees.

match, they no longer do in the new one. Moreover, since the original situation becomes inaccessible, the text is interpreted exclusively on the basis of the second one³⁶. This is often the case with written translation, where the direct intended sense can remain elusive, forcing the translator -as any other contemporary reader- to enrich *ad hoc* his hermeneutic package by resorting to philological, historic, literary and other most variegated kinds of substantive and ancillary knowledge in order to transcend an utterance's objective meaning and get to the "author's" meaning. The first case can be trivially illustrated: Many grandmothers mistake the names of their children and grandchildren. Sometimes it is clear whom they are referring to; at other times, the interlocutor has no way of knowing that Peter is not Peter but John. There has been a short circuit between the *LPI* and its verbalisation: granny means "*John*," but utters "*Peter*." So that although intended sense may be, say, '*My son has called me*' the objective meaning is '*My grandson has called me*.'

Neither should we mistake objective meaning as rightly understood by an interlocutor with intended sense misunderstood due to the interlocutor's own mistake or incompetence. (In a delicate situation, even the best interpreter lets go of intended sense and treads carefully sticking to objective meaning. The bad ones do not even know that there may be a difference and that their work is, first and foremost, to distinguish them — and then to decide in all responsibility which one to reproduce, which normally is the directly intended one³⁷. In other words, the default object of re-verbalisation ought to be always intended sense, to be superseded in exceptional circumstances rather than the other way round — exactly as it happens in everyday life.)

In our example, the objective meaning is, simply [*I am not allowed*].

The utterance's literal meaning

As pointed out above, objective meaning should not be equated with **literal meaning** — the literal interpretation of the utterance's linguistic meaning, *without considering the relevant contextual factors*. One of children's most endearing qualities is their inability to go beyond literal meaning and mistaking it for intended sense (for them, literal meaning *is* objective — and therefore intended). In the homonymous film, retarded Forrest Gump is the only one in all the American army to believe that they are in the Viet-Nam jungle looking for a guy called Charlie (which, as the less young ones among us know, is how the American GI's called the *Viet-Cong* fighters). As a case in point, despite managing to discover literal meanings that few humans could have perceived, the objective meaning of "*time flies like an arrow*" -which is metaphorical- was precisely the one the computer could not grasp. Here we can see clearly the ontological difference between objective and literal meaning, since none of the specialist could discern all those possible literal meanings! With literal meaning, we exit communication on the lower end into the impersonal realm of *la langue*. We are no longer speaking of sense (of the verbalisation and comprehension of an *LP* or of a communicative

³⁶When asked by his translator, Norman Thomas DiGiovanni, what he meant by a certain metaphor in one of his early poems, Borges could no longer remember — the situation having changed, his own indirect intended sense escaped him, and was no longer accessible through objective meaning. In that same interview, by the way, my great compatriot advised DiGiovanni not to translate what he had written but what he had meant, thus both distinguishing between intended sense and objective and literal meaning, and giving primacy to the former.

³⁷Reproducing objective, or even literal, meaning may be a sweet instrument of revenge (see Robinson 1991) rather than of prudence.

intention) but exclusively of linguistic meanings, of semantics, of non-intentional abstractions (and fie the translator who clings to this flotsam when comprehension sinks!).

In our example, there are at least two possible literal meanings: [*My parents won't allow me*] and [*My parents won't lease me*].

The utterance's deep meaning

Let us add a category indispensable, for instance, with a view to the psychoanalytic interpretation of an utterance: **deep meaning** -including all non-consciously intentional perlocutionary effects- which comes from the unconscious and often has nothing to do with either intended sense or objective meaning and is accessed only via a meta-meta-representation (i.e., via a third-degree semiosis)³⁸. Melville swore that *Moby Dick* had no allegorical sense; if he did sincerely believe so, we do not³⁹. It is known, besides, that detectives and psychotherapists are more after deep meaning — that which the speaker does not consciously mean to convey, or even wishes to hide. Deep meaning is the last layer of the textual onion I shall peel away. With it, my analysis exits communication on the upper end into the black box of the human psyche, whence every human action -including every utterance- comes.

So deep meaning is unconsciously transmitted by the speaker; intended sense (direct and indirect) is the result of his conscious intention; objective meaning is the neutral ground between speaker and interlocutor; and literal meaning is the sheer skimming of the utterance's linguistic surface without attention to the extra-linguistic factors. Direct intended sense and objective meaning are mostly perceived directly, whilst indirect intended sense and deep meaning are always the product of a meta-representation. And so is, paradoxically, literal meaning (none of the linguists could perceive all the possible literal meanings of "*time flies like an arrow*," and it took me quite some time to come up with another literal sense of "*My parents won't let me*"). To a great extent, in pragmatic texts -viz. scientific articles without a polemic intention- intended sense and objective meaning match. Literal meaning, on its part, can be disregarded in the certainty that any sophisticated reader will be able to tell when he is to take any utterance literally, whilst deep meaning becomes all but irrelevant. (It would be wrong, however, to assume that collective and anonymous pragmatic texts lack deep meaning, witness the class, racist, or sexist content of so many advertisements.) In a legal text such as

³⁸In Allwood's terms, deep meaning is neither displayed nor signalled by the speaker but merely indicated, i.e., conveyed without actually intending to.

³⁹On the other hand, if Melville was lying, and he did indeed have the *conscious* intention to write an allegory, then the allegorical sense would have been intended. In any case, I do not think that Sophocles was aware of his *Oedipus*'s complex — or, for that matter, his own. In his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels quotes an extremely interesting interpretation of Aeschylus's *Eumenides* as the triumph of patriarchal over matriarchal society, which could not possibly have been consciously intended by the playwright.

Security Council Resolution 242⁴⁰, however, where the suspect interlocutor must be denied all alibis, literal meaning becomes of the essence.

In our example, deep meaning would be [*I am afraid, but I don't want to lose face by admitting it*].

Around the utterance

The linguistic context

And so the speaker produces his utterance or text depending on his persona, motivations, and pragmatic intentions, and on the foreseen interlocutor and his reaction; and according to his own specific communicative and linguistic ability. The result is a linear utterance, the different units of which acquire a linguistic life of their own in the chain, within a **linguistic context** that specifies their semantic and syntactic meaning. (Thus, for instance, in the sentence above “*result*” is grammatically interpreted as a noun rather than as a verb, while “*specifies*” is semantically interpreted as a synonym of “*makes specific*” rather than of “*prescribes*”⁴¹.)

In our example, it is the linguistic context that allows us to interpret “*let*” as the infinitive rather than the past tense of the verb.

The extra-linguistic context

All the rest -the intonation and gestures that go with orality, the illustrations and graphic layout specific to written texts- is what we could call **extra-linguistic context**, which, as the linguistic one, does normally help decisively the interpretation of sense and the different layers of meaning. I basically distinguish two components: paralinguistic or supra-segmental, i.e., intonation or its typographical equivalent — which is inseparably incorporated into the utterance, and perilinguistic, i.e., kinetics and illustrations or layout — which is added on to it. A colleague comes to mind who, by dint of sheer language, had to translate the catalogue of a photo exhibition from Russian into Spanish. One of the pictures was called *Djévushka s Ljéjkoj*, i.e., *Girl With Watering Can...* though maybe *With Camera* (i.e., with a *Leika*). We can also think, for that matter, the beginning of *Le petit prince*, in which instead of a minute description of his hero, St. Exupéry shows us the drawing he says he made afterwards. The

⁴⁰See the controversy around the definite article in the French version -nobody cared about the Spanish- of Security Council Resolution 242, which in English calls upon Israel to withdraw “*from occupied territories*,” which can be interpreted hypothetically, and in French “*des territoires occupés*,” which implies that they indeed exist. Of course, everybody knew what territories it was all about, so there was no misunderstanding. The French text (passed at the same time as the English one) says what it is said in French to say what the collective speaker means to say, as does, of course, the English one. The greater indeterminacy of the English version is a fact of language, not of speech. The French definite article (as its Spanish equivalent) is but a *servitude*. The alleged controversy, as with all legalistic tug of war, is in bad faith, typical of the cases where the Gricean maxim of cooperation falls overboard.

⁴¹Rouchota and Jucker (1998) analyse the way people semantically interpret utterances on the basis of relevance. Without minimising this kind of study, I think that a speaker’s semantic projection upon the linguistic stimulus is almost always automatic, unconscious. From the standpoint of speech production, comprehension and, in the case of translation, re-production, this kind of exercise is at best ancillary.

text of the catalogue, and up to a point that of the novel, are almost at the mercy of their graphic context⁴².

In our example, it is the extralinguistic context that allows us to infer that “*won't let me*” refers to getting into the pool.

The speech act's setting

Text and context are moreover situated within a **setting** in which the time/space/person coordinates take shape — the immediate *where*, *when*, and *who*; it is the framework of the anaphoric and cataphoric relations, so indispensable for the interpreter or the film subtitler, since deictics can save a lot of syllables.

In our example, the setting is the garden where the children are playing.

The speech act's circumstances

Such setting is nothing but the theatre where the **circumstances** intervene — the wider *who*, *to whom*, *wherefore*, *why*, *where*, and *when*. Circumstances are the immediate causes and effects of live, or, at least real-time communication (news items, media reports, ads, and all nonce literature). Let me explain why I distinguish *wherefore* from *why*. The latter is the essential motivation: GM advertise because they want to sell; but the *wherefore* of this ad for this model of this year is, precisely, that there is a new model this year, and the ad (as well as its linguistic/graphic form and that of its campaign) is due to an *ad hoc* calculation. The *wherefore* is always an immediate reaction to the other circumstances of speech. As in García Landa's model, setting and circumstances are conflated into the situation, but, as I have just done here, they can be distinguished if necessary.

In our example, it is circumstances that force Peter to look for an excuse.

The relevant encyclopaedic base

Speaker and interlocutor communicate and understand by activating their relevant **encyclopaedic base** -chunks of their knowledge of the world- which enables, on the one hand, the crystallisation of intended sense into an utterance, and, on the other, the synopsis of sense in the mind of the interlocutor — that *click* with which the more or less discrete units in the linguistic chain are interpreted at given intervals as a unit of sense (i.e., an *LPI*); i.e., the blossoming of speech perception into directly comprehended sense. The accessibility, associability, and recallability of the information needed to produce and comprehend sense always depend on the interlocutors' relevant encyclopaedic base (as well as on their intelligence and sensitivity — a decisive couple of formants indeed!). Communication becomes easier and more efficient the greater the shared knowledge and, even more so, when shared knowledge is *known* to be shared (Neubert 1985), as is, I presume, our case. Even so, there are spheres that individually escape some of us: I have referred to the utterance's theme-rheme organisation and the synopsis of sense without being certain that all of my readers would know what they are, trying to explain it so as not to offend those who do or those who do not. Psychoanalysis and Marxism have also crept in. The usual generalisations, typical of every translation, are but an attempt at reducing the encyclopaedic base to a more manageable scope (i.e., at increasing the general to specific knowledge ratio), thus optimising the

⁴²Oittinen (2001) makes an excellent analysis of the importance of the interrelationship between text and images in translating books for children. Kruger (2001), De Linde and Kay (1999), Gottlieb (1992) and Guardini (1998), among others, make a similar analysis with respect to subtitling.

ergonomy of discourse processing by the interlocutor, i.e., relevance. Communication, let us remember, works inferentially and becomes more efficient as the linguistic, paralinguistic and perilinguistic stimulus leads more directly to the relevant implicatures and other meta-representations.

In our example, both Peter and his friends activate chunks of knowledge that allow them to disregard the different literal meanings, enrich objective meaning and infer that those who allegedly have forbidden Peter to go into the water are his parents.

The microworld

Besides the general knowledge that is activated for the production and comprehension of intended sense, there are situation-specific pre-comprehension schemes and social practices that become the hallmark of an act of speech. It is what García Landa calls “*mundillo*” and I have translated as **microworld**. In our case, we have everything specifically connected to translation theory and practice — that which would interest anybody who buys a book on translation theory, plus the relevant conventions governing this kind of publication. Fillmore’s scenes, frames and scenarios, specific to a speech act setting and circumstances, all contribute to constituting the microworld.

In our case, the microworld is that of a group of children who have gotten together to play in a garden on a summer afternoon.

Culture

Lastly, both the speaker and, of course, his text are the product, reflection and part of a **culture**, defined broadly as the receptacle of the social group’s experience — the historically conditioned values, knowledge, habits, tastes, affects through which each interlocutor filters what he says and what he hears. Needless to say, the interlocutor may belong to a different culture (as is systematically the case with a translation’s addressees). Culture, naturally, is in turn a complex category; it varies with nationality, age, sex, sexual orientation, profession, class provenance, ideology, time, and numberless other factors that to a larger or lesser extent influence every act of speech production and comprehension. As in García Landa’s model, these aspects are subsumed in the exponent *P*, but, as here, they can be further detailed.

It is impossible -and unnecessary- to rend apart with a scalpel the encyclopaedic knowledge base from that of the microworld that render comprehension possible (or from the culture that filters it). García Landa uses these two categories because the general pre-comprehension schemes are not microworld-specific, whilst each microworld activates certain specific spheres, different from those activated by other microworlds. At a meeting, for instance, an interpreter participates in two partially overlapping microworlds: that of the meeting proper (subject, procedures, etc.), which he shares with his interlocutors, but in which he is, in fact, a *parvenu*, and that of simultaneous interpreting (his colleagues, the booth, the client, etc.)

A sign chain, by functioning within the ensemble of activities and relationships in the speech act’s exponential field, on its part, can modify, re-create or newly invent the different levels. Each character in any novel has its own persona and intention, and is placed within its specific setting, circumstances, microworld, and culture.

In our example, it is specific to Western petite bourgeois culture for children to play unattended around a private swimming pool and for parents to forbid them to get into the water — as it is for young children to be already aware of the need to save face.

That side of the utterance

The interlocutor's persona

Every act of speech is addressed to a (or culminates in the comprehension by an un-addressed) **persona**, single or collective — a synthesis of the interlocutor's psychological, intellectual, and social background and experience, which influences or determines his linguistic behaviour, i.e., the form and content of his comprehension and the effects that it has upon him. Again, the model does not explicitly bring in the interlocutor's persona, just his motivations and intentions, plus the effects of comprehension, but nothing prevents us from incorporating it explicitly if the need arises.

In our example, we have a most probably homogeneous group of children looking for ways to have fun.

The interlocutor's acceptability criteria

The intersection of the interlocutor's persona and his need, or conscious or unconscious wish or resistance to understand something from someone is synthesised in his **acceptability criteria**. It can be the criteria of a specific interlocutor -a historically, socially, and psychologically conditioned persona- or that of a similarly conditioned but de-personalised "institution," often materialised in an anonymous and irrelevant addressee (*viz.* the secretary taking a message for his boss). But let it be clear that even when we can no longer think of an individual interlocutor, behind individual comprehension there is always the State, a social group, interests that comprehend or command comprehension.

The motivation to comprehend may be varied: to learn true or false information, to show or hide interest, to enjoy, to be entertained, etc. I have distinguished conscious from unconscious motivation because they are often at odds. The individual or collective psychology of the interlocutor (whether unfolded into institution and addressee or not) also governs the tactical and strategic calculation of what attitude to adopt when and how. Besides, such comprehension is produced according to the interlocutor's rhetorical and linguistic competence, itself a part of the wider competence required to understand meaningful discourse.

Acceptability criteria are thus where conscious and unconscious motivations and/or resistance converge. With the development of discourse these criteria may indeed change, but we can posit that they are always prior to comprehension.

In our example, most of the children will be more or less ready to believe the excuse, or, at least to accept it. Their reaction will depend on how they take it.

Sense as comprehended by the interlocutor

So far I have referred to sense as intended by the speaker and somehow present on its own in his mind, and to meaning as if it was in the text itself (which, let me repeat, is but an illusion on the part of the subject of comprehension).

At the other side of the utterance comes **comprehended sense** — that which the interlocutor infers from the text, his interpretation of literal and objective meaning, direct and indirect intended sense, and deep meaning. The different degrees of comprehension depend greatly on the interlocutor's persona (including his intelligence, knowledge, interests and sensitivity), in a way roughly mirroring the speaker's. Between the two subjective extremes,

which are what the speaker wishes to convey and what the interlocutor grasps, we have the objective aspects of communication, including, but not limited to, the utterance's linguistic form. Let me repeat that the fact that the different aspects of meaning and sense are not always identical does not diminish my model's validity: Every act of sense comprehension is, in fact, different (even when the same person is comprehending the same utterance for a second or *n*th time); yet, provided relevant *LPI/LPC* identity obtains, communication has prospered. I do not assert that sensic identity obtains invariably, but limit myself to posit its existence as an indispensable felicity condition of communication. If the speaker has meant one thing and the interlocutor has understood another, such identity, of course, has not been established — but then communication has failed.

In our example, the children will have understood exactly Peter's direct intended sense, so that *LPI=LPC*.

The contextual effects of comprehension

As I have pointed out, I am referring here to two different kinds of **contextual effects** of *LPI* comprehension: **cognitive** and **qualitative**. Cognitive effects can be thought of in terms of meta-representations, among others, of indirect intended sense or deep meaning — i.e., of the actual conscious or unconscious intentions and motivations behind the speaker's speech behaviour. Qualitative effects are purely emotive. **Pragmatic** effects could perhaps be seen as their meeting point.

In our example, cognitively, some of the children will have believed that Peter is saying the truth, while others -probably most of them- will have realised that he is lying. Qualitatively, some will have felt pity, others shame, others irritation, etc.

The articulation of the speech act

The double articulation of the utterance

We can see, then, a double articulation of any utterance, somewhat analogous to that of language, where linguistic units already doubly articulated (phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, syntagms, clauses, sentences), but lacking sense on their own, are strung together by the speaker, basically according to the semantic and syntactic rules of a given language, to become coupled to a pragmatic intention that avails itself of them in order to express an intended sense embodied in a specific utterance or text.

The multiple articulation of the speech act

A more refined analysis would lead us to perceive a) below the utterance, both articulations of language resulting in a) a syntactically organised chain of linguistic *signifiants* and *signifiés*; b) a notch above, the articulation of the utterance's linguistic meanings and its literal meaning; c) above literal meaning, the articulation between it and objective meaning (always in a dialectical form-content relationship); d) then, that of objective meaning and direct intended sense; e) thereafter the articulation between direct and indirect intended sense; next, f) the confluence of indirect intended sense and pragmatic intention; above it, g) the articulation between pragmatic intention and motivation; and -last stop before exiting the communication act- h) that of motivation and deep meaning. (Whereby translation would be, in its turn, a **new articulation**, as suggested by Di Virgilio (1984).) The totem could be summarised as follows:

(DEEP MEANING)⁴³
 MOTIVATION
 PRAGMATIC INTENTION
 INDIRECT INTENDED SENSE
 DIRECT INTENDED SENSE
 (OBJECTIVE MEANING)
 (LITERAL MEANING)
 FIRST ARTICULATION OF LANGUAGE ([*signifiés*])
 FIRST ARTICULATION OF LANGUAGE (/signifiants/)
 SECOND ARTICULATION OF LANGUAGE (phonemes/graphemes)

In the case of our little hero, the totem would be:

(FEAR/INSECURITY)
 FINDING AN EXCUSE
 EXCUSING ONESELF BY EXPLAINING AWAY
I'd love to, but I cannot
My parents won't allow me
(They won't allow me)
(They refuse to/shall not in the future allow/lease me)
 “([**they won't let me**])”
 “(/they won't let me/)”
 “/t-h-e-y w-o-n-t l-e-t m-e/”

Obviously, this scheme of the space surrounding a sign chain can only be established from the pole of comprehension; we will always be analysing a speech act initiated by someone else (even if it was us). The scheme can be summarised as follows: Prior to elocation, we have a speaker, acting as a persona, who, out of his conscious and unconscious motivations, has come up with a pragmatic intention to be expressed through an intended sense linguistically framed into an utterance or text. Text and linguistic context are placed within an extra-linguistic context that specifies sense. This sense becomes the meaning of the text or the utterance and thus more or less objective, in so far as the majority of the interlocutors would agree on it in a specific situation. With the disappearance or ignorance of the relevant extra-linguistic factors, the utterance is left with nothing but its objective meaning — a notch above what a machine can manage, which is but literal linguistic meaning. The utterance lends itself, moreover, to a transcendental interpretation beyond intended sense and objective meaning, in which, to a keener interlocutor, the speaker's speech act reveals its deep meaning.

Needless to say, in order to arrive from the speaker's psyche and intention to the interlocutor's intellection, an utterance travels a rough path: the speaker's emotive, intellectual, linguistic, and rhetorical competence and disposition; the clarity of the communication channel; the extra-linguistic context; the setting and circumstances of

⁴³Deep meaning is in brackets because it is independent from the speaker's conscious pragmatic intention. This can also be the case with objective and literal meaning.

communication; the accessibility of the encyclopaedic knowledge base, microworld; culture; and the rhetorical, linguistic, intellectual, and emotive competence of the interlocutor. (For emotive competence, I understand a double sensitivity: the ability to perceive a) the utterance's indirect intended sense and deep meaning, and b) the aesthetic aspect of the linguistic framing - both a must for the appreciation of literature.) It is obvious that there are no precise boundaries between persona, intention, setting, circumstances, encyclopaedic knowledge base, microworld, and culture; nor is it always possible clearly to distinguish that which is still linguistic form that which no longer is. All factors of speech penetrate and influence each other, and change as discourse develops. On the other hand, we know that even in face-to-face communication the situation formants are not identical for speaker and interlocutor. For one thing, there is always a difference in the extent of shared pre-comprehension schemes, including the cognitive ability and emotive disposition to cooperate; if it becomes too wide, then relevant *LPI/LPC* identity becomes altogether impossible.

The asymmetry between meaning and ability to mean and willingness and ability to understand

Six-year-old David Copperfield listens intently while Mr. Murdstone talks cryptically to a friend, without realising that the conversation is about him (i.e., he understands what Mr. Murdstone *says* but not what he *means*). In fact, Murdstone knows he has two interlocutors equipped with different abilities and dispositions to understand. David thinks that he is a mere observer, but evil Mr. Murdstone is engaging in *two* simultaneous speech acts, with a single *LPI*, one addressed to David, who, as Murdstone knows, will interpret it on the basis of the objective meaning of *F*, and the main one addressed to his friend, who can directly proceed to meta-represent indirect intended sense. Murdstone wants David *not* to understand his indirect intended sense and manages to conceal it. From this standpoint, David ends up understanding exactly what his stepfather means him to understand. As I pointed out, in order for communication to succeed it is not necessary -it may even be *counterproductive*- that an interlocutor grasp the speaker's true motivations and intentions. If David could understand more than he does, communication between him and Murdstone would have failed (but, unfortunately for David, it does not)⁴⁴.

As it has become transparent, meaning to mean (*Meinen*) and understanding (*Verstehen*) are not symmetrical activities (see Hörmann 1976), in that they pursue different aims. Speaker and interlocutor never are moved by exactly mirror interests, no matter how overlapping they may be. The more these interests are in conflict, the harder for communication to succeed, especially at the pragmatic level — and the harder the mediator's task. My model brings in this asymmetry most explicitly: It starts before the speech act proper with the motivations and intentions that lead the speaker to open his mouth in the first place, and then interposes the interlocutor's own interests in (or resistance to) understanding, which inevitably filters comprehension and its effects; and it ends after the speech act - with the

⁴⁴Relevance theorists distinguish between *naively optimistic*, *cautiously optimistic* and *sophisticated* understanding on the basis of the degree of meta-representative ability actually applied when processing an utterance. I submit that *naive optimism* is the bane of the profession, and that *cautious optimism* prevents translators from mediating actively. Only *sophisticated understanding* allows for an adequate global and specific assessment of what counts as relevant *LPIo/LPCi* identity at each turn (see, *inter alia*, Setton (2001) and, especially, Sperber (2000)).

effects that comprehension has upon him. As a matter of fact, a speaker may very well *not wish* to speak — otherwise torture would be unnecessary. Whenever I refer to the speaker's motivation I mean any motivation he may have, including a negative one: the interlocutor may be much more interested in understanding than the speaker in making himself understood. The reason I do mention explicitly the interlocutor's possible resistance is that, under normal circumstances, the speaker may consciously choose not to speak; whereas, once the speaker has chosen to speak, the interlocutor cannot help understanding — his only negative choice is *misunderstanding*. Misunderstanding can be consciously feigned, of course, but it can only be "honest" when the unwillingness to understand is unconscious. By the same token, the speaker can knowingly lie — the only way of lying "honestly," however, is if the willingness to hide the truth is also unconscious. This is why the unconscious motivation and/or resistance both to speak and to understand is so decisive a factor in human communication. Emerson's lines: "*They reckon ill who leave me out: when me they fly, I am their wings,*" could bear the signature of the unconscious.

Indeed, an interlocutor (or any other subject of comprehension), on his part, does not understand exclusively as a function of his hermeneutic package: he must be willing to apply it. If we can venture to postulate an *LPI*'s relevance for whomever decides to communicate it, it is too naive to presume that all those who perceive it will be equally interested. Also, it is not enough to mean to say to be able aptly to communicate, as it is not enough to be willing to understand in order to manage. In both instances it is necessary to be both willing *and* able. Every interlocutor finds some things difficult or impossible to understand intellectually or cognitively (an insufficient hermeneutic package), which tallies with García Landa's concept. But then there are things that an interlocutor will not understand because of non-cognitive psychological barriers. Five prototypical cases come to mind: 1) Animosity towards the speaker. 2) Total lack of interest in the *LPI* proper (viz. when what someone is saying to us comes in one ear and goes out the other). 3) When we do not want to understand an *LPI* (if we are told something that we know or fear will hurt us). 4) When our mind is simply elsewhere (we are too worried or excited about something that prevents us from paying attention to what they are saying to us, no matter how momentous). 5) When we are too tired.

In other words, if from the standpoint of the speaker his utterance's functionality (and more generally, relevance) is the synthesis of his pragmatic intention, his *LPI* and his verbalisation thereof, an interlocutor assigns it according to his own sensitivity and interests and to the cognitive and qualitative effects that comprehension produces upon him. Every interlocutor invariably filters his comprehension through his own conscious and, above all, unconscious motivation or resistance, showing himself more or less ready to cooperate. This is, obviously, the reason that laws and generally texts that impose legal or moral responsibility are so exasperatingly explicit and prolix: they are addressed to people who do not really want to cooperate in understanding them. And that is also the reason that emotively loaded interlocutors find it so difficult to exchange the most propositionally innocent *LPI*s.

If in direct communication we can make abstraction of this asymmetry, it is impossible to ignore it in mediation.

So is there room for perceptual identity after all?

Indeed there is — otherwise the species could not survive and Peter would not have managed to communicate with his friends. But we have seen that in order for communication

relevantly to succeed, i.e., to succeed for all *practical* purposes at the meta-communicative level, what is required (the only thing that is actually possible in practice) is that between meaning meant and meaning understood, between intended and comprehended sense, between *LPI* and *LPC* there obtain a sufficient degree of identity together with a pragmatically acceptable correlation between the speaker's motivations and intentions on the one hand, and, on the other, the contextual effects that comprehension finally produces on the interlocutor. Successful communication, in my view, is both less and more than total *LPI/LPC* identity at the micro level. Yes, I would love it if you devoured every word I have taken the trouble to write, if you found fascinatingly relevant every single *LPI* in this book. So would you, by the way. But it would be naive even to dream of it. We can both die most happily if you understand what is really relevant to you and are not too unhappy about it. This would be the minimum that would have made my effort and yours mutually relevant. If we have achieved more, so much the better. This is what a mediator (and not necessarily an interlingual one) has as his professional task: not simply to re-say that which has been said, not just to reproduce an *LPI*, but to reproduce it in as relevant a way as possible under the circumstances. If speaker and interlocutor communicate successfully with each other, they do not need a mediator. If the *only* obstacle intervening between them is language, then García Landa's model applies lock, stock and barrel: All that the translator has to do is reproduce *LPIs* back and forth without worrying about the pragmatic success of his task or the meta-representations that it gives rise to. But language is *never* the only obstacle! A translator who just, well, translates, whatever the circumstances, whatever the stakes, whatever the consequences, whatever the coincidences or divergences in outlook, interests, ideology, sophistication, intelligence or sensitivity between the interlocutors, a translator, for instance, who does not know when it is deontologically necessary *not* to translate, is, and I am weighing my words most carefully, a dreadful mediator. Think of a mediator who would "just translate," exactly the same way, between two Prime Ministers and a physician and a four-year-old survivor of the Rwandan massacre: dreadful, right?

Successful communication, then, consists in establishing adequate -i.e., relevant-identity between sense as intended and sense as understood. There is an inevitable loss⁴ between feeling and thinking, thinking and meaning to mean, meaning to mean and ability to say, ability to say and actual uttering. From then on, another series of mirror entropies goes all the way down to an interlocutor's unconscious. Part of these losses is irreversible, for either speaker or interlocutor or both, but evolution has endowed us with key tools that, most of the time, allow us to salvage what is really relevant. These tools are our second signal-system and our ability to infer. Communication and knowledge would be impossible without them.

Conclusion

And so we have had for the last few pages sender Sergio Viaggio, with something to say with a relatively admissible aim, which in this instance coincides almost totally with my intended sense, except for several elements that, though I do not mean to hide, I do not consciously mean to communicate either. And thus here you have, little by little, my text, my *LPI* embodied in this paper, whose development you do not know completely as yet. You perceive it linearly, understanding synopsis by synopsis, rebuilding, with a greater or lesser degree of success, the

⁴⁵Again, what Venuti (1991, 1995 and 1998) calls "the remainder," and Osimo (2001) "*residuo*."

edifice of what I mean to say, and getting in passing an idea of who I am and how I felt when I wrote this piece.

This sense I wish to express, this paper's subject, its macro-proposition does not come to my mind for no reason at all, nor is it for no reason at all that I want to objectify it and communicate it to others. There is a history: mine, translatology's, of the productive forces, of Judeo-Christian culture, and of all of you behind this act of linguistic communication — i.e., of speech. With this background, I can think and write with reasonable aplomb what I am writing, and you can understand and, maybe, agree with me. Without it... who knows!

The main intention, the strictly translational intended sense (and notice, nevertheless, that I have scarcely referred strictly to translation) would not have changed with the setting or the circumstances. It depends, basically, on what I think about translation and speech. It is generated and interpreted with reference to a relevant world where Sarajevo, the economic crisis, and my fear that, third-world excrescence that I am, I may not be allowed to stay in Europe if I quit the United Nations belong less than the eternal philosophic swashbuckling between idealism and materialism, Saussure, Catford, Seleskovitch and Newmark; cognitive and deep psychology; the practice of writing; etc. Both I and you, my reader, resort to our knowledge of such relevant world in order to produce and understand this that I am saying about translation (which, let me repeat, is but a part -if fundamental- of all that I am saying).

And this text, all of it, in both its translational and personal slants, the outcome of my half-conscious, half un-conscious intention, is neatly rooted in a culture, itself complex: Argentine, *petite bourgeoisie*, intellectual, adult, cosmopolitan, Judeo-Christian, end-of-XXth-century. This culture, and also my ignorance of other cultures, limits it. Perhaps I would have more convincing arguments to put forward or a subtler classification to suggest if I knew non-Indo-European languages or if I looked at the world from behind a lathe rather than a desk. With all its limitations, this culture is one of the many into which our species' universal experience is divided, which ensures that my text be basically comprehensible for most educated adults on the planet, and thus transferable outside this pages, outside this culture, and, crucial for us, outside this language — or rather into it, since these ideas I first expressed in Spanish.

ANNEX: My scheme of the structuration of text, sense, and situation

SITUATION

PERSONALITY The interlocutors' psychological and social background (similar to Lvovskaya's, but with the unconscious duly weighted).

UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION The deep motivation that governs an act of speech, which escapes the utterer's awareness.

CONSCIOUS MOTIVATION What the utterer consciously pursues with his act of speech.

INTENTION The overall pragmatic intention (together with intended sense, Lvovskaya's communicative task).

SENSE

INTENDED SENSE (indirect or direct) The overall sense -including the intentional secondary illocutionary effects- that the sender wishes to confer to his utterance.

TEXT

LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

LITERAL SENSE The literal interpretation of the utterance's linguistic meaning, without consideration to the relevant extra-linguistic factors.

OBJECTIVE SENSE The sense -including the habitual secondary illocutionary effects- that the utterance would normally have in the specific situation.

DEEP SENSE The unconscious sense -including the unconscious secondary illocutionary effects- that the utterance reveals to the comprehender.

APPREHENDED SENSE The sense-including the secondary illocutionary effects- gleaned by the receiver.

EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CONTEXT Supra-segmental (intonation, graphic resources), or para-linguistic (gestures, illustrations, layout).

SETTING The scene of speech: space-time-person coordinates/anaphoric and cataphoric relations.

CIRCUMSTANCES The immediate factors of the speech situation: what / to whom / wherefore / what for / how / when / where (Lvovskaya's formants).

RELEVANT WORLD The objective and subjective factors, knowledge, experience, etc. directly necessary in order to process the text.

CULTURE The habits tastes, ideology, experience, etc. of the social group to which sender and receiver belong, as well as its subcultural variables: class, age, profession, etc.

CONTESTING PETER NEWMARK⁴⁶

Dans l'attitude littéraliste, il y a du respect, et de l'adoration. Il y a aussi de la peur: ... peur de l'exploitation du sens.
 Louis Truffaut⁴⁷

When I first read Newmark, I was impressed, educated and, at the same time, somewhat uneasy. Back then (1988), I was only beginning to give shape to my mostly intuitive thoughts on translation. I have since read and reread everything bearing his signature that came my way - not that much, really, several articles (four of them later included in *Approaches to Translation*) and *A Textbook of Translation*, the latest -and last, if he is to be believed- most comprehensive and systematised articulation of his thoughts on the matter. In the following pages I shall endeavour to show that, his claims to the contrary notwithstanding, Newmark does indeed have a single, coherent theory of translation, that it is a wrong and didactically dangerous one, and that despite all that, he makes a substantive and most opportune and welcome contribution to the development of our discipline. I believe that both Newmark the thinker and Newmark the translator are better than his theory.

In the opening piece, "The theory and the craft of translation," Newmark goes as far as he has gone up to now in defining translation and translation theory:

Translation theory derives from comparative linguistics, and within linguistics, it is mainly an aspect of semantics, ... sociosemantics, ... semiotics, literary and non-literary criticism. ... Logic and philosophy, ... have a bearing on the grammatical and lexical aspects of translation respectively. A study of logic will assist the translator to assess the truth-values underlying the passage he is translating. All sentences depend on presuppositions and where sentences are obscure or ambiguous ... the translator must determine the presuppositions. Translation theory is not only an interdisciplinary study, it is even a function of the disciplines I have briefly alluded to. ... Translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language." (pp.5-7)

This was first published in 1976; later on, in his Textbook, he is even less specific:

"What is translation? Often, though not by any means always, it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." (p. 5)

Presumably, the latter definition supersedes the former; but what, if anything, is translation **always**? A definition of translation can hardly stop at calling it an attempt: it is not enough to try to replace a written message and/or statement (what is the difference?) in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language: in order to deserve its name, a translation must at least partially succeed. What are the criteria to evaluate such a success? What, in other words, qualifies as 'the same message and/or statement' in another language? All these questions come naturally to mind, but Newmark does not address them. Nor does he address the translation of oral texts, nor their interpretation. I have made an intentional distinction: oral texts can be translated in written form, as in the case of speeches and transcripts of conversations or the subtitling of films. Written texts, on their part, can be translated orally, as in the case of sight translation. There is also consecutive and simultaneous

⁴⁶Published in *Rivista Internazionale di Tecnica della Traduzione* 0:1992.

⁴⁷Truffaut (1980, p. 431).

interpretation. There is the translation of opera libretti and lyrics in general. And lastly, let us not forget, there is dubbing, the least studied of all the branches of translation. Can they be encompassed by a single theory of text/message/statement-replacement in another language? Why? Why not?

Next, in *"What translation theory is about,"* he adds:

"Translation theory is a misnomer, a blanket term, a possible translation, therefore a translation label. ... In fact translation theory is neither a theory nor a science, but the body of knowledge that we have and have still to have about the process of translating: it is therefore an -ology, but I prefer not to call it 'translatology' ... or 'traductology' ..., because the terms sound too pretentious — I do not wish to add any -ologies or -isms. ... Translation theory's main concern is to determine appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of text-categories. Further, it provides a framework of principles, restricted rules and hints for translating texts and criticising translations, a background for problem-solving. ... Lastly [it] attempts to give some insight into the relation between thought, meaning and language. ... The translator's first task is to understand the text... so it is the business of translation theory to suggest some criteria and priorities for this analysis." (pp. 19-20)

Apparently, Newmark does not think too much of translation theory: just an eclectic bag of principles, restricted rules and insights. Yet, if translation theory's main concern is to determine appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of text-categories, then it must have one single point of departure, some feature common to all those different methods, a feature common, moreover, to all texts. I think Newmark himself points to the answer: that insight into the relation between thought, meaning and language. As we shall see, he leaves this crucial area largely unexplored. One thing, though, is already apparent from the formulation: Thought, meaning and language are different things. I couldn't agree more. But Newmark himself goes back on this assertion, refusing to distinguish linguistic, semantic meaning from extra-linguistic sense. If meaning is linguistic, if it is a feature of language, very much as grammar or lexis, the three elements are not at the same level, and it is no longer a triad we are talking about but just thought and language. Understanding the text, therefore, and very much despite Newmark's own repeated assertions to the contrary, will be in essence reduced to understanding the meaning of the words.

"All texts have aspects of the expressive, the informative and the vocative function: the sentence 'I love you' tells you something about the transmitter of the utterance, the depth of his feelings and his manner of expressing himself; it gives you a piece of straight information; and it illustrates the means he is using to produce a certain effect (action, emotion, reflection) upon his reader. That particular sentence, which also illustrates the most logical, common, and neutral sequence of arguments, viz. SVO, more particularly, animate subject-verb-inanimate object (the object of a sentence is 'inanimate', whether it be a person or a thing, because it has a passive role), with no emphasis on any of the three components, must be translated literally, since literal translation is always best provided it has the same communicative and semantic effect [*sic*]." (p. 21)

Newmark posits a "universal word order," and takes for granted that SVO is *"the natural word order of a sentence ... which follows the natural order of thought,"* (1988b:134). I, for one, would not hasten to assert that *'the order of thought'* is necessarily SVO; the linearity of language and the linearity of thought need not be the same. Besides, the SVO order is far from universal: according to Polinsky *"nearly half the languages show the SOV order"* (1988:111). But that substantive quibble aside, let us see how it is that Newmark can climb down from an otherwise unimpeachable premise to an untenably dogmatic conclusion. On the one hand, he seems to be saying that the sense of the sentence is the same as the sum of its meanings; on the other, he wants us to assume it is much more. All he gives us is [*first*

person + singular] + [*'love' + present + indicative*] + [*second person + objective case*] + (suprasegmentally) [*assertion*]. Those are the means chosen among the array offered by the English language to the speaker to convey a **sense**. Why does Newmark take so blithely for granted that any person who utters *'I love you'* is giving his addressee a piece of straight information? He may be lying, or mistaken in his feelings, or jesting, or using an example to make Newmark's point, or turning it around in order to refute it. I can imagine Newmark saying what he repeats several times when rebuking similar arguments: Whatever the intention, whatever the secondary act, it will always be as indirectly conveyed in a literal translation. Right? Wrong! Newmark drops a sentence and assumes its semantic meaning to be self-sufficient, but he gives no context; no context — no idea of the extra-linguistic situation; no idea of the situation — no hint of the sense; no hint of the sense — no translation, just transcoding. Yet, he asserts that such sentence must be translated literally (provided it has the same communicative and semantic effect). May I bring in an admittedly extreme case. Suppose the context is the song that goes:

*Be sure it's true
When you say, 'I love you':
It's a sin to tell a lie.
Millions of hearts have been broken
Just because these words were spoken:
'I love you,
Yes I do,
I love you!
If you break my heart I'll die!"
So be sure it is true
When you say, 'I love you':
It's a sin to tell a lie.*

What if a literal translation doesn't rhyme, or proves too long or short, or cannot otherwise be sung to the beat? But even barring such a special case, how would Newmark go about translating that sentence literally into Italian, French, Russian, German or any language grammatically distinguishing between second person singular and second person plural? How would he, for instance, suggest that it be translated into Spanish, which distinguishes a) between second person singular and second person plural, b) between the formal and informal second person pronoun (only in the singular in Latin America, both in the singular and the plural in the Iberian peninsula; plus the Riverplatean *vos* and the Colombian *Su Merced*), and c) between second person feminine and second person masculine (both singular and plural); plus in which d) the subject pronoun is not mandatory, while e) the accusative may be doubled, and f) the objective pronoun can be both enclitic and proclitic? Which, then, of these literal translations would Newmark advise me to go for; 1) *Te amo*, 2) *Yo te amo*, 3) *Yo te amo a ti*, 4) *Ámote*, 5) *Ámote a ti*, 6) *Te amo a ti*, 7) *Yo os amo*, 8) *Ámoos*, 9) *Ámoos a vos*, 10) *Ámoos a vosotros*, 11) *Ámoos a vosotras*, 12) *Yo lo amo*, 13) *Lo amo*, 14) *Ámolo*, 15) *Le amo*, 16) *Yo le amo a Ud.*, 17) *Ámolo a Ud.*, 18) *La amo*, 19) *Yo la amo*, 20) *Yo la amo a Ud.*, 21) *Ámola*, 22) *Ámola a Ud.*, 23) *Los amo*, 24) *Los amo a Uds.*, 25) *Las amo*, 26) *Las amo a Uds.*, 27) *Ámoles*, 28) *Ámolos a Uds.*, 29) *Ámolos*, 30) *Ámolos a Uds.*, 31) *Yo las amo*, 32) *Yo los amo*, plus another 32 sentences with *querer* instead of *amar*? And there are quite a few more **literal** translations into Spanish (**all** of them back-translating as *'I love you'*); the reader is cordially challenged to find them when trying to mitigate a sleepless night (I have come up with 82).

As for what these sentences (presumably to be themselves literally translated into English) would 'say' about the speaker according to Newmark's logic: for instance, *lo amo*, if the speaker is an adult male, probably that he is a shy homosexual. Newmark wants the translator to translate **sentences**⁴⁸; I am not looking to pick on a word just to quibble or make a trivial point, but I suggest it is rather useless and somewhat impossible. An apparently harmless and direct **sentence** can become different texts when looked at -and used- not as SVO but as a vehicle for thought, a conveyor of sense, a tool of communication. All texts are situated, and no language will offer any translator one 'literal' or even 'free' translation that will be apt to frame⁴⁹ all those different situations, to convey all those different senses. When Newmark all but plunges from defining translation to legislating on how to translate an isolated sentence, he is simply trampling underfoot the last thirty or so years of translatology and paying his students the utmost disservice. Of course, Newmark might say that he is not advocating any specific literal translation, just the literal approach. I still think he is methodologically wrong; besides, what is the use of advocating a choice limited 'exclusively' to one of close to 100 possible literal translations? Especially when Spanish leaves us no alternative but to select only one of at least six semantically different framings of the same **meanings** (*first person singular - amar/querer - present indicative - second person object*); i.e, it forces the translator to interpret the text resorting to the extra-linguistic situation via the context, which in turn may very well advise against any of the 64 (or 82) literal translations after all!

The English text conveys insufficient semantic information for its reproduction in Spanish. What is semantically enough to frame an everyday utterance in English proves insufficient for a Spanish utterance. If Newmark's sentence were the one surviving fragment of a Shakespeare play, a translation into Spanish would be impossible; the translator would have to choose arbitrarily one of six interpretations (and I assume the different 'age', 'sex' and/or 'social' markers in many languages would impose additional restrictions on their translators); his language denying him the possibility of being as ambiguous, he would have only a 15 percent chance of randomly hitting the nail.

Indeed, I would imagine that in many translations, a **sentence** such as '*I love you*' might perfectly and even optimally become *te quiero*. But it should not be the result of a decision to translate literally. Ideally, the translator would have analysed the text, inferred the sense, weighted the different possibilities Spanish offers him linguistically to re-frame the sense, and find that *te quiero* is the best possible choice. It stands to reason that if any two languages tend to segment and organise experience along similar lines and through similar means, then the same situations, the same communicative plans, the same emotions, the same sense would tend to end up clad in similar linguistic garb. Again, that is but a statistical coincidence. It may be helpful for the translator to know beforehand that chances are his translation will be formally close to the original (although I doubt it, since it could lead him to

⁴⁸See Lyons (1983).

⁴⁹I am indebted to Neubert (1985) for this very useful concept and term. Catford's famous example (I have arrived / **ja prishlá**), leading him to postulate that meaning is language-specific and that two texts can be said to be equivalent when apt in the same situation is but an illustration of the different situational features mandatorily framed in Russian and English (1965, p. 38)

'lower his guard'); but statistical coincidence cannot be advocated, much less commanded. Otherwise we would be mandating the translator to be more literal when translating from French into Spanish than when the ST is in English, i.e., to apply a different 'method' to each pair of languages. That to my mind is unscientific and can only lead to the atomisation of our discipline into as many theories as there are pairs of languages and types of texts. That does not mean, of course, that specific applications of the general theory and method should not produce specific and more 'delicate' (as Catford would put it) principles and even rules, exactly the same way medicine has more particular branches such as tropical or space medicine, or traumatology or dermatology, each with a more specific object requiring a more specific application of the **same** general principles⁵⁰.

The next three chapters are the Babel articles on semantic and communicative translation. Semantic and communicative translation are the heirs of the literal vs. free approaches (and, later, in *A Textbook*, word-for-word vs. adaptation); the gradation Newmark shows is as follows:

SOURCE LANGUAGE BIAS		TARGET LANGUAGE BIAS	
(WORD-FOR-WORD)		(ADAPTATION)	
LITERAL		FREE	
FAITHFUL		IDIOMATIC	
SEMANTIC	COMMUNICATIVE		

Word-for-word translation is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, its main use is to understand the mechanics of the SL. In **literal translation**, the SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problems to be solved. A **faithful translation** attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the TL grammatical structures. **Semantic translation** differs from 'faithful translation' only as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the SL text, compromising on 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars the finished version; it may make other small concessions to the readership, admits exception to the 100% fidelity, and allows for the translator's intuitive empathy with the original. **Adaptation** is the 'freest' form of translation and is used mainly for the theatre. **Free translation** reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original, a so-called 'intra-lingual translation,' often prolix and pretentious, and not translation at all. An **idiomatic translation** reproduces the 'message' of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original. **Communicative translation** attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

⁵⁰In Semko *et al.* a general overview is given of the main Soviet translato-logists' positions on translation theory. From the tens of definitions quoted, it is more than crystal-clear that, with the exception of Rosenthal and Rosenzweig in the early 60's, all of them consider it to be one and applicable to all texts. Although not every Soviet researcher I am acquainted with makes the terminological distinction between meaning and sense, all of them, that I can recall out of hand, differentiate the concepts. For a very brief overview of where several authors stand, see Viaggio (1988a, p. 347).

The above is a synthesis of Newmark's definitions as further developed in *A Textbook* (pp. 45-47). We can see quite plainly where his sympathies lie: free translation gets all the invectives, whereas literal translation, its direct opposite, will systematically be preferred. As Newmark rightly points out, there is a dialectical tension between form and content. Semantic and communicative translations would be the strictly translational poles of resolution, as it were, of this dialectical tension whenever the TL forces the translator into a different balancing of the twain. Newmark thus becomes a Saint Jerome of sorts: *sensum de sensu* for communicative texts, *verbum e verbo* for the authoritative ones (although for St. Jerome, only the Bible was authoritative enough for the *verbum e verbo*). Methodologically, I think this is an extremely useful device, scientifically spelling out what Ortega y Gasset had hinted at but intuitively⁵¹. Newmark repeats, again and again, that these are but the truly 'translational' extremes of a continuum that goes from word-to-word and literal translation to free translation and adaptation, that there is no exclusively semantic or solely communicative way of translating, that different passages of the same text will advise a more or less semantic or communicative approach. But I'm afraid his disclaimers are too weak for his claims. The reason for this, to my mind, is a crucial methodological gap in Newmark's thinking. The key words are 'exact (later on 'complete,' and, in *A Textbook*, 'precise' contextual meaning'; which I very much doubt is at all possible to reproduce — when talking about translation, *exact* is a word better eschewed). The question is not what they mean, but what Newmark means by them. Once again, we find a plea for literalism:

"However, in communicative as in semantic translation, provided that equivalent-effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, it is the only valid method of translation." (p. 39)

As I see it, Newmark blurs or altogether fails to see the difference between accuracy and adequacy, so fully developed by the Russians⁵². Accuracy cannot be but 'content-based,' it is, I think, an almost strictly 'semantical' (no wonder!) category. Adequacy, instead, encompasses a synthesis of the contradiction between form and content. Adequacy is a function of the translator's assessment of his specific task, his ability to pick out the relevant features of the SL text and his success at reproducing them. A translation may be 'accurate' without being 'adequate' (viz. in the case of Nabokov's *Evgeni Onegin*, where the elsewhere superb writer dismally fails at conveying anything but Pushkin's semantic bones) or 'adequate' without being 'accurate' (as in the successful re-writing of an advertisement). Adequacy being a concept of a higher degree, it must prevail over accuracy. Newmark remains shackled to 'meaning' -'exact contextual meaning' to be more precise- and that's his theoretical undoing, since not at all paradoxically, as I hope to show, 'meaning' is but a second-degree 'form'. With my reader's appetite duly whetted, then, let me proceed with my tour.

I shall next seek to prove that semantic translation and communicative translation are not different methods, but different choices at a specific stage of the translating process (which Newmark himself somewhat belatedly indicates). Until translatology develops any

⁵¹Ortega's essay, written back in 1937 poses the following Schleiermacherian dichotomy: the translation must either bring the SL to the reader or bring the reader to the SL, and he too prefers the latter. And that far back, this Spaniard who was not a linguist came up with this astonishing insight: "The issue of translation, upon closer scrutiny, leads us to the most hidden secrets of that wonderful phenomenon which is speech." [My translation] (1967, p. 109)

⁵²A crucial distinction. The degree of accuracy is but one -albeit basic- of the criteria for global adequacy, which will basically be measured against the translator's intention, i.e., the degree of success he has had in achieving it.

further, there is, that I know of, one and only one universally apt method of translating. Some people proclaim it, others resort to it intuitively, and others, such as Newmark, vigorously deny it in theory and in class, while applying it in practice. That method is rather simple (not to be confused with easy): identification of the translator's purpose; understanding of the SL text; inferring of sense (including any relevant formal features); re-expression of sense as a TL text (with as adequate a re-creation of the **relevant** formal features as possible); collation of original and translation for semantic and stylistic adequacy (what Newmark calls 'justification').

Naturally, things are not **that** simple. Let us be more delicate. a) Identification of the translator's purpose: There are many ways of translating a text (and not only semantic or communicative, as Newmark rightly points out); the translator must ask himself why he wants to translate this text or why he is asked to do it. He is about to generate speech, and he must do what anybody about to make an utterance is called upon to do: take stock of what he has to say, who he is saying it to, what he is saying it for, why he is saying it, under what circumstances he is going to say it, how much time he has to say it, what obstacles (subjective or objective) may stand in the way of successful communication, etc. b) Understanding of the SL text: The translator has to make sure he understands the linguistic framing. Words are his gate to the text and he has to cross that gate properly. c) Inferring of sense: Having formally understood the text as a specimen of the SL language, the translator has to re-interpret the linguistic meaning as extra-linguistic sense; he must take stock of all the relevant formants⁵ of the situation the original is embedded in (communicative intention of the author, his addressees, his time, his culture, etc.). d) Re-expression of sense: On the basis of his assessment of the communicative task (which may have been totally or partially modified as a result of the interpretation), he then must synthesise that sense into a TL text. Again, he will assess the new situation obtaining between him and his addressees. He will weight different linguistic alternatives and decide on the most satisfying one — or less disappointing, as the case may be. One crucial task at this stage is assessing what features of the original, both at the formal and content levels, are **relevant** for the translation. The corollary of such analysis will be deciding on the best way of reproducing them in his text. When any feature becomes impossible to reproduce effectively, the translator must try and find the way of compensating for it somewhere else. Collating both texts: He will do basically two things: 1) check his translation against the original for accuracy and fidelity to content and form as necessary, and 2) read his translation as an autonomous piece, looking after coherence and cohesion in form and content. The choice between semantic and communicative translation as possible practical criteria is, then, but one of the stages in the method, coming, as Newmark himself explains, after the text has been understood and interpreted, and is a result of the translator's assessment of his communicative task.

We can still proceed to a greater delicacy. Interpreting the text is more than identifying words and establishing syntactic connections. Sense is a dialectical, dynamic category that can only be determined by correlating the linguistic and the extra-linguistic, the dictionary and the encyclopaedia (in the general sense of the translator's knowledge of the world, which

⁵³This and the concept of the situation as **actualiser** (*aktualizátor*) of sense, I have stolen from Lvovskaja's splendid book, which has contributed to this one much more than I dare admit. Of all my sources, it is she who makes the thoroughest and deepest analysis of the difference between sense (*smysl*) and meaning (*znachenije*). My only quibble is with the dismal Spanish translations she uses to illustrate her many brilliant points. The formants (*formanty*) she mentions are the usual *Wh*'s.

Newmark shares). Every single linguistic utterance can have countless senses. Sense is, basically, the result of the interaction between the semantic meaning of the utterance and the communication situation, which in turn is its only actualiser. Out of situation, and even within a linguistic context, any word, any clause, any sentence, any paragraph, and any speech have a myriad possible senses; in the specific situation — only one (which can include deliberate ambiguity). The translator ideally has to know all the relevant features of the situation univocally to make out sense. The vaguer the text, the more relevant a greater number of features of the situation become; if the translator -as indeed any reader of a text- is unable to acquaint himself with all the pertinent formants, he will be unable univocally and unambiguously to make sense out of it, and that is why all modern editions -let alone translations- of ancient works are teeming with glosses. As Neubert explains, the situation ripples away into the outermost realms of culture and civilisation, and it also goes deep into the psychology of the individual. Unless the translator's attempt at reproducing the text in another language is carried out by meticulously following the above steps, he is bound to make serious **methodological** mistakes, whether on the semantic or the communicative end. Poor Faust, unable to check it out with God, has a rough time translating *logos*; the Bible being both a literary piece and -at least for Faust- the utmost authoritative statement, the wretched devil would not be much helped by Newmark's angel advising him to trust his Maker and translate semantically, conveying 'the exact contextual meaning,' much less literally⁵⁴.

Sense, moreover, is social. Sense is the result of four processes: sense conceived, sense conveyed, sense perceived and sense comprehended. A breakdown anywhere in the chain may impede or prevent communication (viz. a mad author, a stuttering speaker or illegible writer, a deaf listener or illiterate reader, a dumb addressee). And that is why the readership is so important for the author and even more so for the translator. Because, for whatever reasons, the author may have failed duly to take his addressee into account, or the addressee of the translation may even be unintended (for one thing, he may have been totally unaware that someone was 'eavesdropping' on him, as in the case of several bugged conversations between drug dealers I have had to translate for a law-enforcement agency); but the translator knows that he is translating for somebody, and knows or tries to guess what that somebody's expectations, advantages and limitations are. He is, as a rule, being paid precisely to take them into account. Translation is communication, and communication does not begin or end in texts: it originates and culminates in the mind of human beings; texts are just the observable vehicles of such attempts at communicating. The translator's material work is, naturally, on the material of communication; he is not paid for words understood, for sense made out, for tropes re-created, but for words actually consigned to paper. A longer translation of a text will be paid more than a shorter one, even if, as Newmark rightly points out, the shorter version is more likely to be the better one. (I always end up losing money in my 'justification' leg.) But that is the translator's material, physically quantifiable work, even though, as we all know, lots of things go on between reading and writing. The first thing a translation theory should state is that translation operates at the material ends of communication, but that such end-objects as original and translation are neither the beginning nor the end of communication, which is accomplished between subjects.

⁵⁴"If you consider Faust's famous struggle to translate the word *logos*, a word that is virtually context-free, and therefore has to be translated for itself." (p. 79)

So the translator must be mindful of the communication situation between him and his readership. Features that were relevant for him as a reader of the original may become irrelevant for him as a writer of the translation and vice versa. Translation (as opposed to simultaneous or consecutive interpretation) presupposes displaced situationality and, in different situations, identity of meaning in no way assures identity of sense. As a matter of fact, the translator (and the interpreter) may well find himself in need of changing the meaning in order to preserve sense. This is the heart of translation theory; this dialectic tension between form and content at two basically different levels: linguistic and extra-linguistic, where the vector resulting from the combination of linguistic form and content becomes itself the form of the extra-linguistic sense. As García Landa expostulates, in order to see this you don't have to be a Marxist, just a translator⁵⁵.

Newmark rejects both the idea that translation is always communication and -in actual practice- the notion that meaning of words and other linguistic units and structures is subordinate to what the people who use language mean by them. He fails fully to acknowledge that there's the semantic meaning(s) any unit or even text may have from the standpoint of *la langue* and the dictionary, and then there's the meaning people want to make, which -deliberately or unwittingly- may be different from what their 'utterance' means, or simply not coincide totally with it. As a matter of fact, the latter is systematically the case, since one cannot possibly say **all** that one means, and, following the maxims of quantity, relevance and cooperation, conveys only as much linguistic information as necessary for successful communication. The Parisians and the Muscovites, among others, have suggested the terminological distinction of both 'meanings' followed here: 'meaning' for the semantic, 'sense' for the extra-linguistic. For instance, above, probably because of a typo, the sentence going "That particular sentence ... must be translated literally, since literal translation is always best provided it has the same communicative and semantic effect" makes no sense unless we a) put a comma between 'best' and 'provided' or b) add 'if' before 'it'. The error is slight and easily corrected in either case, but the meaning of the sentence changes, and with it the sense. How do we know which is the right interpretation, unless we give Newmark the benefit of the doubt and decide, as he himself stresses, that "the writer would never have written a drop of nonsense in the middle of a sea of sense?" (Notice how Newmark has to make the distinction, after all!) Refusing to make the formal differentiation makes no sense, unless one flatly refuses to accept the conceptual distinction. Newmark states, "The translation theorist is concerned from start to finish with meaning." (p. 23) What kinds of meaning? "Linguistic, ... referential, ... intentional, ... performative, ... subjective, ... inferential, ... cultural, ... code, ... pragmatic, [and] ... semiotic (the complete contextual meaning of the text extract)" — which is, by the way, as close to an explanation of the expression 'exact/precise/complete contextual meaning' as Newmark gives us. "All varieties of meaning may or may not assist the translator. He is always expected to know the referential ('encyclopaedic') as well as the linguistic ('dictionary') meaning whether he makes use of them or not." I submit that the list, though quite exhaustive, is, at best, haphazard, with no order or priority. If translation theory has a basic task, it is precisely either itself to establish a hierarchy or to provide the translator with the criteria to come up with it in each specific instance. The polarisation between communicative and semantic translation, though pointing

⁵⁵The phrase is García Landa's (1984), who in his triple capacity as an erudite in classical philosophy, an accomplished translator and a brilliant interpreter, should know.

in the right direction, is obviously not exhaustive or specific enough. One last observation: a fundamental difference is at work between lexical and grammatical meaning; it ought to be stressed and explained. For instance, English morphology being less formalised than those of Spanish or French, an enormous number of lexical meanings are found both as nouns, adjectives and verbs, as in the case of 'cable' or 'wall'; this poses all manner of problems to the beginner — and not only to him. The least a literalist could do to help is bring out such distinction clearly.

The next article, "Thought, speech and translation," is crucial:

"When Vygotsky writes, 'Inner speech is not the interior aspect of external speech — it is a function in itself. It is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings' he provides me with a source of reference for my definition of 'semantic translation' in contrast to 'communicative translation'. I believe that the primary activity, application and purpose of language in the mature adult is **thinking**, not speech or writing or communication or (self-)expression. It is not possible to prove or disprove this assertion, but merely to produce some evidence. First, one cannot think for long without having words in one's mind. ... Language therefore informs but does not comprise thinking. ... Moreover, whilst thought and writing are concurrent activities (it is not possible to write without continuous inner speech), the relation between thought and speech is intermittent — thought sparks off speech, and speech is frequently an automatism, a reflex action, the response to a stimulus and only 'weakly' the product of thought. Therefore thought is closer to writing than to speaking, and in this sense, writing, arising from and controlled by thought, has primacy over speaking. Further, when one listens to a person, one normally 'thinks' only in the interstices of his conversation — otherwise one 'comprehends' wordlessly. ... When one is translating orally (simultaneous interpretation), one only starts thinking, in the sense of inner speech, when one is lost for a word or meets some difficulty; when one writes a translation one is thinking all the time." (pp. 57-58)

That, by the way, is definitely not the way I read Vygotsky. Be it as it may, for Newmark, then, writing goes always in hand with inner speech. I do not think so: in the booth, when lost for a word, I cannot afford to engage in anything resembling inner speech. I cannot vouch for the rest of my colleagues, but I doubt very much they do either. As to translating, again I do not think one is necessarily engaged all the time in inner speech, any more than when one is writing an original piece, such as this one, for instance. Yes, very often I stop, ponder, wonder, argue with myself; that is inner speech indeed. But perhaps more often than not -I have no way of knowing- I just write, and my writing appendages seem to second-guess me pretty much the same way my phonatory organs do as I talk: my fingers become my tongue, the keyboard my mouth, the screen my voice.

"If one accepts the proposition that thinking precedes speech and writing and therefore that the main purpose of language is **not** to communicate (since thought is by definition private and non-communicative although it is partially, but never wholly, communicable) one has to review the now generally accepted arguments in favour of the 'primacy of speech' or 'the priority of the spoken language' and reject the proposition that writing is merely a poor substitute for an imitation of speech [*sic*]⁵⁶. ... The most important reason for challenging the primacy of speech over writing is that writing is much more closely related physically and mentally to thought than is speech. Writing is permanent, it is used not necessarily because the addressee is inaccessible to speech, but because one wants to make a strong and durable impression on him. All the world's most important thoughts and statements, including Lincoln's, Churchill's, De Gaulle's and doubtless Pericles' speeches, were probably written before they were spoken. ... Speech, however, is often a response to a stimulus and though it is often preceded by thought, it is frequently thoughtless while it lasts." (p. 58)

⁵⁶Another sentence that I am not sure I completely understand: 'substitute for an imitation' would seem to be an overkill unlikely of Newmark; I rather guess it is another typo: 'substitute for **and** imitation of speech' or, alternatively, 'substitute for **or** imitation of speech'. As a translator, I would hesitate to go either way.

I, for one, do not accept that proposition⁵⁷. One can improvise; as a rule one does. When I sat down to write this paper, I did have a pretty good idea of what I wanted to say, i.e., the sense I wanted to make, but the words came to my fingers almost as they came to my mind. The lag is more noticeable because I am a hopeless typist, and that is why I normally record my translations (the best school of interpretation if anybody should have a mind to try the 'other' thing). Writing is not a poor substitute or imitation of speech, not to me at least; I like writing very much. I think it is just another way of talking, with its specific pluses and minuses. On the other hand, moreover, if all-important statements were written before they were said, they were thought before they were written, and thought they were following the rules of oral speech. They were edited and revised, and made more precise, and more effective, and more convincing, and more beautiful, perhaps in successive waves, but they were silently 'said' over and over, many times, before and after they were written, and I would bet they were never uttered exactly as written. The spoken word must always have the last say: what would otherwise be the point of minding how a written text, whether original or translated, sounds?

"Where writing is closest to thought, where the reader is 'listening in' rather than being consciously addressed, the method of translation is normally semantic. ... I take it as axiomatic that in thought or in monologue, the expressive function of language is predominant, the informative is incidental, the social and the phatic inoperative. ... Semantic translation, like thought, relates to the word or the word-group; communicative translation, like speech, relates to the sentence. ... The primary purpose of speech is to communicate, and communicative translation is related to speech as semantic translation is to thought. ... Usually, one translates a text to meet a reader's demands -to inform him, to persuade him, to give him advice. All this is communicative translation." (pp. 59-60)

We can approach translation from different perspectives, as a result, as a process, as a mental activity, as linguistic trans-coding, but whatever our standpoint, it is obvious that it must have materially observable ends: an SL text and a TL text, whether oral or written. No analysis of translation can do without texts. A good point to start our inquiry, then, is to ask ourselves what texts are. No one, I trust, will disagree that all texts are specific acts of speech. We may argue about the difference between *langue* and *parole*, about 'speech acts', about the relationship between thought and language, language and speech, thought and speech, etc.; but whatever the answer we may give to all those questions, texts remain acts of speech, thoughts or emotions uttered. No theory of translation, then, without a theory of texts, and no such theory of texts without a theory of speech. I assume Newmark and I are in agreement thus far. The premise for any theory of translation, whether general or specific, whether eclectic or not, is, therefore, a general theory of speech. A general theory of speech would have to be based on a general theory of language, which would explain the relationship between language and speech, on the one hand, and between language and thought on the other; a general theory of language as *langage*, i.e., as man's superior nervous activity via the second signal system. It is here that Newmark goes his way, and the Parisians, the Muscovites, the Leipzigers, myself and a few others — ours.

Peter Newmark assimilates translation to writing, writing to spontaneous inner speech, and also, up to a point, inner speech to thought, and thought to lucubration. His theory of

⁵⁷I haven't seen Roger Roothauer's gem in Newmark's bibliography. Most of my ideas on the subject I have borrowed from him. One example I cannot refrain from quoting, since, to my mind, it puts to rest the controversy about 'non-verbal thinking': When composing a symphony, the musician definitely thinks about his score, but hardly with words. The reader may also want to check Lyons and Wilss.

language is therefore upside down, and with it, inevitably, his theory of translation. No; when we think, it is not as if we were writing; we talk, we talk to an imaginary interlocutor or directly to ourselves. All the rules of oral speech apply, including what might be, perhaps, the most important for translation: that of shared situationality and of the *savoir partagé* — the shared knowledge so stressed by the Parisians. We feel everything we feel and know everything we know, we are closely acquainted with all the relevant formants of the communicative situation between us and ourselves (except, perhaps, for the unconscious ones) therefore we can do -if we wish- with the utmost telegraphic inner speech. But we make the same mistakes and incur the same hesitations and detours as when we speak. We do not go back to edit our thought. We think with intonation and, yes, gestures very much in our mind — and often on our face. And when we write, we wish we could be talking, we wish the paper somehow kept track of our gestures and our voice. Punctuation marks, all manner of ways of marking intonation, inverted commas, exclamation marks, capitalisation, underlining and what not are our desperate attempt at bringing the silent, written text as close as we can to our mental uttering of it, in the hope that the reader will be able to reconstruct our voice and face. The great difference between written speech and the spoken word lies not so much in the former's congealment (a transcript of a conversation remains a piece of oral speech, and a statement read aloud is no less a piece of written speech), as in that when we write, we can go back and forth, rethink, or simply stop to think, or choose the right psychological or physical moment, or do it over time. We can erase all the imperfections, ambiguities, redundancies and irrelevancies inevitable in oral speech; we can fill all the gaps, reorganise our exposition; it is a bit like the difference between a live performance and a studio recording. Writing allows us to review our own thinking. Thinking, like oral speech, is ephemeral. How many times have we had a brilliant thought, a historical insight, now forever lost for lack of pen and paper! Writing allows us to objectivate our thoughts, to take distance from them, to read them as if they were somebody else's. When we write, we are trying to convince, inform, move an imaginary or at least ideal addressee. When we read, we become that addressee ourselves. Precisely: when we read, even our own writing, we also feel we are spoken to, and we react as to an interlocutor or, perhaps, a lecturer. More importantly, as we read, we talk to ourselves. We make our mental comments; we say 'Rubbish!' or 'Wow!' or 'How's that again?' or 'You bet!' or 'If only so and so could read this!' When faced with a difficult passage we paraphrase it, we discuss it with ourselves; always talking. When we are not talking, of course, we are, as Newmark states, comprehending wordlessly (so much for 'language-bound' thought!). And come to think of it, the stream of consciousness, even when modulated by such a master as Joyce, is not the easiest thing to read, much less write down. The closest thing to thought I have seen committed to paper is not the monologues of *Hamlet* or *Richard III* but those last seventy-odd pages of *Ulysses*.

So to the assertion that "all of the world's most important thoughts and statements ... were written before they were spoken," I retort that they were mentally spoken before or as they were written. I retort moreover that the two capital works of Western literature were never written! Homer and all the great poets of antiquity were masters of the spoken word. There was, in fact, no other word. Would the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* be any better if they had been written? Perhaps. Writing is a wonderful help; but it is not the primary mode of speech, let alone thought. Writing fixes thought, it allows for the working out of thought, to give it better shape, to 'signify' it better. The better one is at speaking, the less one has to edit one's writing.

"The concepts of communicative and semantic translation ... were formulated in opposition to the monistic theory that translation is basically a means of communication or a manner of addressing one or more persons in the speaker's presence; that translation, like language, is purely a social phenomenon." (p. 62)

One can concede, for argument's sake, the point that language is not or need not be social, but texts, the linguistic materialisation of a communicative intention and the abstracting of sense thereof, cannot be but social. The closed book is not a text, but a pile of paper. In monologue one is 'listening in,' otherwise there is no monologue. Hamlet is alone on the stage, not in the theatre.

"In view of the fact that translation rests on at least three dichotomies — the foreign and native cultures, the two languages, the writer and the translator respectively, with the translation readership looming over the whole process (the facts of the matter -the extra-linguistic reality- is an additional powerful factor) — it seems unlikely that it can be incorporated in one theory. ... Lastly, behind this translation argument there is a philosophical conflict. This is said to be the age of reproduction, of the media, of mass-communication and I am suggesting that the social factor is only a part of the truth, continuously overemphasised by technology and the present political advance to democracy. Thus the 'expressive' text represents an individual, not wholly socialised nor conditioned, voice." (p. 62)

My guess is that Newmark confuses a) theory, method, and approach; and b) the collective with the social. From the fact that translation rests on those three dichotomies -and much more- it does not follow that it cannot be incorporated in a single theory. What follows, rather, is that it must be incorporated in a theory capable of sorting out such contradictions, or at least help do that. What follows is, therefore, that the theory of translation must a) accept and b) explain that translation is subject to so many and qualitatively different tensions. It must then c) proceed to weight those different factors against each other (the author, the original situation, the original readers, the translational situation, the new readership, etc.), and d) provide insight and orientation as to the possible ways of harmonising those competing factors in a TL text. One of the main dichotomies being between meaning and sense, it must help the translator map his way between them. On the other hand, it is not a matter of the voice being socialised or conditioned -though I do not think it could be otherwise- but of communication, what the voice voices, which becomes social as soon as it is overheard. Hamlet does not know he is addressing an audience; but Shakespeare does, and any actor playing the Prince had better be aware of the 'listeners in'. *Ditto* the translator.

In the eighth section, "The Translation of Synonymy," Newmark reverts again to theoretical questions and devotes a couple of pages to Seleskovitch's interpretive theory. Here is the gist of his argumentation:

"... The brilliant Seleskovitch... has explained her interpretative theory of translation which is based on sense, not words or sentences; non-verbal not linguistic meanings; awareness of purpose, not of language; consciousness and language reflexes, not deductions from contrastive linguistics. ... The basis of [her] theory is unsound. Translation and interpretation have to be based on words, sentences, linguistic meaning, language. ... Meaning does not exist without words... It is difficult to understand Seleskovitch's final thesis: 'translation of language and rendering of sense are not to be confused; neither are linguistics and the science of translation,' nor her peculiar distinction between 'sense' and 'meaning'. I can only maintain that translation is concerned with words, that it is only partially a science..., and that in as far as it is a science, it can only be based on linguistics." (pp. 98-99)

The basis of Seleskovitch's theory is as sound as hard rock. When she says that one does not translate words, that one does not translate language, she is hitting the nail squarely

on the head. That does NOT mean that words or language are irrelevant; what it does mean is that they are secondary, subordinate, vehicular, a means to an end. Who could seriously maintain that sense has nothing to do with words? What Seleskovitch rightly asserts is that sense is larger than words, that it is sense that remains invariant when languages change, i.e., when words are substituted, or disappear, or seem miraculously to emerge in translation. Linguistics is, indeed, the basic science in translatology -at least for now- but it is hardly the only one; we are just beginning to grasp what language is, how languages work, and what goes on in the brain of people as they talk, understand and translate. That is precisely why so many novel concepts and insights have come from interpreters and people who study them. It is in the booth that translation -in the larger sense- can be 'observed', and where interpreters, translating against all odds and with a tremendous time deficit, have had intuitively to come up with the essence, the bare bones, the no-nonsense gist of translation: they have proved the hard, irrefutable way that everything -even Shakespeare's style- is negotiable and, yes, disposable under adverse circumstances, but that translation, as any other kind of communication, still succeeds as long as sense is conveyed, while it fails completely and inescapably if it is not. We can argue whether such or such other translation of Homer into Urdu or of the UN Charter into Spanish is good or bad or apt or inept, but we can only call it translation insofar as we recognise the sense of the original in the translated text. As to the alleged peculiarity of Seleskovitch's distinction between meaning and sense, I can only say that, with the sole exception of Peter Newmark, every single source I have consulted, from Nida to Neubert -to mention his most often cited authors- openly or tacitly operates with that distinction, and that people as diverse as García Yebra, García Landa, Lvovskaja and Schweitzer (as early as 1973!) make the terminological difference as well.

Part Two is entitled "Some Propositions on Translation"; in its introduction we read:

"In spite of the claims of Nida and the Leipzig translation school, who start writing on translation where others leave off, there is no such thing as a science of translation, and never will be." (p. 113)

I wish I could be so certain about eternity as Newmark is. All I can say is that if there can be a science of the human psyche, complex and unpredictable as it is, there is no reason to posit the implausibility of a science of translation. I think, moreover, that a scientific observation of any phenomenon is possible and that such observation -observation of practice verified in practice and by practice- and whatever general rules and principles it allows to infer deserve the name of science. What is science, after all, but experience made awareness, as Marx so tightly and rightly put it?

Our last quotation from *Approaches* will be from Proposition 54:

"A lexical item repeated in the same or following sentence of the SL text must be correspondingly repeated in the TL text, unless the original is poorly or loosely written. It should not be rendered the second time by a synonym or a 'kenning' (periphrastic expression used to replace a simple name)." (p. 147)

This is, unquestionably, the most dogmatic statement about translation ever published.

I will not dwell on the rest of the book. It contains very useful insights, especially with regard to the translation of metaphor, a Newmark specialty (and in connection to which he must advise his students on occasion to turn it into 'sense'). I shall next make a brief stopover at "The Translation of Authoritative Statements" in order to discuss a most bewildering assertion:

"However, in his handling of authoritative statements, the translator has a responsibility to the moral and social truth, which he must exercise independently of his translation, viz. in a separate annotation. Where he believes it to be necessary he has to alert the TL reader to any explicit or latent expression of moral prejudice in the SL text, assuming (and it is some assumption), that he himself is committed to the kind of moral universals that are enshrined in the Constitutions, where they have one, of the countries influenced by the French Revolution. To be concrete: 'blog' means 'non (British) Public School'; 'gook' means Vietnamese; ... 'deficient' may mean 'mentally handicapped,' etc. It is not enough to note, as dictionaries do, that such words are 'derogatory' or 'pejorative'. Further, I think that the translator should gloss a statement such as 'I believe that Zionism is the worst form of racism and anti-human ideology our world has seen' with a separate comment such as: 'Israel has never had any extermination camps'. Such a comment is a fact and does not commit him to a belief in Zionism or Israel." (p. 390)

Some *dictum* indeed! By the same token, a statement such as "Zionism is the national liberation ideology of the Jewish people" should be glossed with "An ideology according to which one's people is the one chosen by God, and ideology that deems anybody whose mother does not ethnically belong to the people to be excluded from their numbers, that assimilates race to religion, religion to state, state to territory and therefore territory to race cannot be liberating and is bound to become aggressive and dangerous". I think the UN is wise to reward any such gloss by its translators with an automatic kick in the buttocks. Who is Peter Newmark, or Sergio Viaggio, or anybody else, to assume a translator's commitment to 'moral universals' (itself a more than dubious term) and tell him to act accordingly? Why translators? Why not everybody else? Newmark has the right to his principles and to live by them, but that tirade is, to my mind, completely out of place in any paper on translation.

And now let us move over to *A Textbook*, this time around, a single, more structured opus (though -alas!- far from systematic). It is here that Newmark propounds his theory with more vigour, and from the preface itself:

"I am somewhat of a 'literalist,' because I am for truth and accuracy. I think that words as well as sentences and texts have meaning, and you only deviate from literal translation when there are good semantic and pragmatic reasons for doing so, which is more often than not, except in grey texts. ... There are no absolutes in translation, everything is conditional, any principle (e.g., accuracy) may be in opposition to another (e.g., economy) or at least there may be tension between them. ... When Halliday writes that language is entirely a social phenomenon, ... I disagree. ... The single word is getting swamped in the discourse and the individual in the mass of society - I am trying to reinstate them both, to redress the balance. If people express themselves individually, in a certain type of text, translators must also express themselves individually, even if they are told they are only reacting to, and therefore conforming with, social discourse conventions of the time." (pp. xi-xii)

Already on page 5, the book asks the right question: "What is translation?" But the answer, as I warned, leaves a lot to be desired:

"Often, though not by any means always, it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. ... The principle with which this book starts is that everything without exception is translatable; the translator cannot afford the luxury of saying that something cannot be translated." (pp. 5-6)

One more time, unless we are told what translation is **always**, we cannot accept that 'everything without exception is translatable.' Granted, the translator -and I speak from experience- can ill afford the luxury of rejecting a job as untranslatable; but many a time he has no alternative. Even if it were not so, it does not follow that everything is translatable: the

fact that a physician cannot afford the luxury of saying that some patient cannot be cured does not mean that all patients are curable.

"A translator, perhaps more than any other practitioner of a profession, is continually faced with choices. ... In making his choice, he is intuitively or consciously following a theory of translation, just as any teacher of grammar teaches a theory of linguistics." (p. 8)

Indeed. But, once again, is there a general theory, a principle applied at all times, something that translation is **always**? If, as he states, this is the last book he plans to write on translation, we will probably never find out from Peter Newmark.

"In a narrow sense, translation theory is concerned with the translation method appropriately used for a certain type of text, and it is therefore dependent on a functional theory of language. However, in a wider sense, translation theory is the body of knowledge that we have about translating, extending from general principles to guidelines, suggestions and hints. (The only rule I know is the equal frequency rule, viz. that corresponding words, where they exist - metaphors, collocations, groups, clauses, sentences, word order, proverbs, etc.- should have approximately equal frequency, for the topic and register in question, in both ... [languages].) Translation theory ... is a frame of reference for translation and translation criticism, relating first to complete texts, where it has most to say, then, in descending level to ... words. ... What translation theory does is, first, to identify and define a translation problem (no problem - no translation theory!); second, to indicate all the factors that have to be taken into account in solving the problem; third, to list all the possible translation procedures; finally, to recommend the most suitable translation procedure, plus the appropriate translation." (p. 9)

Fine. But how does translation theory actually go about doing what it does? And how can it come up with **the** appropriate translation? Of course, Newmark does not believe that there is **one** appropriate translation, but that and no other is the meaning of his words above (he may, of course, have a different **sense** in mind, though). Be it as it may, he more or less leaves the matter at that and takes us to the second chapter, "The Analysis of a Text".

"Understanding the text requires both general and close reading. ... Close reading is required, in any challenging text, of the words both out of and in context. In principle, everything has to be looked up that does not make good sense in its context." (p. 11)

Nothing wrong with that, and especially the irruption of sense. The next sections concern the intention of the text, that of the translator, text styles, readership, stylistic scales, attitude, setting, the quality of the writing, connotations and denotations, the last reading. Conclusion:

"You have to study the text not for itself but as something that may have to be reconstituted for a different readership in a different culture." (p. 18)

Not a word about the situation as actualiser of sense, nary a word about sense itself. Let us read on:

The Process of Translating: "My description of translating procedure is operational. It begins with choosing a method of approach. Secondly, when we are translating, we translate with four levels more or less consciously in mind: (1) the SL text level ...; (2) the referential level ...; (3) the cohesive level ... to which we may have to adjust the language level; (4) the level of naturalness. ... Finally there is the revision procedure, which may be concentrated or staggered according to the situation. This procedure constitutes at least half of the complete process. ... The purpose of this theory of translating is to be of service to the translator. It is designed to be a continuous link between translation theory and practice; it derives from a translation theory framework which proposes that when the main purpose of the text is to convey information and convince the reader, a method of translation must be 'natural'; if, on the other

hand, the text is an expression of the peculiar innovative (or clichéd) and authoritative style of an author (whether it be a lyric [*sic*], a prime minister's speech or a legal document), the translator's own version has to reflect any deviation from a 'natural' style. ... 'Naturalness' is both grammatical and lexical, and is a touchstone at every level of a text, from paragraph to word, from title to punctuation. ... The level of naturalness binds translation theory to translating theory, and translating theory to practice." (pp. 19-20)

As I pointed out, I, for one, do not choose a method of approach, I already have one, and I do not change it whatever the intention of the text or, more importantly, mine, since its first step is, precisely, to define them both. I will, though, choose a global approach to re-writing (along Newmark's scale) and adjust it specifically as required. The level of naturalness, on its part, is a formal linguistic level. It is indeed of the utmost importance, but I do not think it qualifies as the binding force between the theory of translation, the theory of translating and practice. As I have emphasised, the binding force is the level of sense, or, rather, the dialectic relationship between sense and meaning, thought and language, content and form; the synthesis between **form** (itself a synthesis between language's planes of form and content) and **content** (itself a synthesis of communicative intention and extralinguistic reality) **of verbal communication**. A translation may be more or less natural, more or less literal, more or less semantic, more or less communicative, more or less oral, more or less written; but it will **always** have to make the right extra-linguistic sense the right linguistic way. That is what adequacy is all about, no more, no less.

"The remainder of my translating theory is in essence psychological — the relationship between language and 'reality' (though all we know of 'reality' is mental images and mental verbalising or thinking) — but it has practical applications. ... There are two approaches to translating (and many compromises between them): (1) you start translating sentence by sentence ...; (2) you read the whole text two or three times. ... You may think the first method more suitable for a literary and the second for a technical or an institutional text. ... Alternatively, you may prefer the first approach for a relatively easy text, the second for a harder one. ... The heart of translation theory is translation problems...; translation theory broadly consists of, and can be defined as, a large number of generalisations of translation problems." (pp. 18-21)

Well, perhaps, insofar as medicine broadly consists of, and can be defined as, a large number of generalisations of health problems. But stating things like that, and approaching translation exclusively as the translation of this particular text, is more or less like teaching surgery as operating upon this particular patient.

"Working on the text level, you intuitively and automatically make certain 'conversions'; you transpose the SL grammar (clauses and groups) into their 'ready' TL equivalents and you translate the lexical units into the sense that appears immediately appropriate in the context of the sentence." (p. 22)

Indeed that is what most students do, and it is dead wrong! Intuition and automatism, unless properly built up, lead systematically astray. The student must be taught to mistrust both. Experience shows that translationese is invariably rampant throughout the first stages of any translator's training (sometimes never to be overcome). The student's linguistic intuition is blocked by the SL forms. It has to be restored; and that will never happen automatically. The automatism to be instilled is precisely the opposite of 'converting,' 'transposing' and blithely laying hands on 'ready' equivalents. The student must learn that, as in the case of weapons, words may be the veteran's trusted friends, but are the rookie's lethal enemies. The student

must discipline himself into avoiding rushing into the arms of ready equivalents. It is the imperative task of the teacher to slap him on the wrist every time he does⁵⁸.

"Your base level ... is the text. ... [Then comes the referential level.] Always, you have to be able to summarise in crude lay terms, to simplify at the risk of over-simplification, to pierce the jargon, to penetrate the fog of words. ... Thus your translation is some hint of a compromise between the text and the facts. For each sentence, when it is not clear, when there is an ambiguity, when the writing is abstract or figurative, you have to ask yourself: What is actually happening here? and why? For what reason, on what grounds, for what purpose? Can you see it in your mind? Can you **visualise** it? If you cannot, you have to 'supplement' the linguistic level, the text level with the referential level, the factual level with the necessary additional information (no more) from this level of reality, the facts of the matter. ... This may or may not take you away temporarily from the words in the text. And certainly it is all too easy to immerse yourself in language and to detach yourself from the reality, real or imaginary, that is being described. ... You have to gain perspective to stand back from the language and have an image of the reality behind the text. ... The referential level, where you mentally sort out the text, is built up out of, based on, the clarification of all linguistic difficulties. ... You build up the referential picture in your mind when you transform the SL into the TL text; and, being a professional, you are responsible for the truth of this picture. Does this mean ... that 'the (SL) words disappear' or that you 'deverbalise concepts'? Not at all, you are working continuously on two levels, the real and the linguistic, life and language, reference and sense, but you write, you 'compose' on the linguistic level, where your job is to achieve the greatest possible correspondence, referentially and pragmatically, with the words and sentences of the SL text." (pp. 22-23)

The words could not be more eloquently chosen: 'conversions,' 'transpose,' 'ready,' 'the context of the sentence'. Do you deverbalise concepts? What for! Look at the SL text; start transcoding; check if reality does not play a trick on you; go on transcoding. On the other hand, is not 'visualising' what is going on but a retreat from language, an outright de-verbalisation? What is so dangerous or abnormal or addictive about being 'taken away from words'? As to the referential level being 'built out of, based on, the clarification of all linguistic difficulties', I find it normally to be the other way around: it is precisely the referential level that actually helps sort out those very linguistic trouble spots, as I shall illustrate a couple of paragraphs down the line. In other words, it is not by understanding the linguistic utterance that you come to know the world, but by knowing the world that you come to understand the utterance; i.e., attribute it a specific sense. Of course, the linguistic utterance thus understood, or rather its sense (and NOT the way it is linguistically expressed), becomes itself a new element that adds to and modifies one's knowledge of the world, and will in turn further contribute to understanding new and more sophisticated statements. I have mentioned several authors, I know what they have written, I am influenced by it, I am, up to a point, the product of what other people have said, but I scarcely remember any words; they have evanesced, but their sense has very much stayed with me and is partially spilled over these pages. It is that knowledge, extra-linguistic, that helps me understand and dispute Newmark's words.

With regard to the translator building up the referential picture in his mind 'when he transforms the SL text into the TL text', that picture should be well established **before** the writing actually begins, unless the translator translates as he reads (which is what I normally do when translating a text on a subject I trust myself in); the student, however, should most definitely be advised **against** setting out to write before he has understood, and the crucial component of that understanding, the understanding of sense, is **precisely** the picture of what

⁵⁸The reader is entreated to read Wilss (1989), where a thorough analysis of translation behaviour awaits him.

is actually going on 'in the world'. Lastly, translating is not 'transposing' a text into another, but generating a completely new one.

"Beyond the second factual level of translating, there is a third, generalised, level linking the first and the second level, which you have to bear in mind. This is the 'cohesive' level; it follows both the structure and the moods of the text: the structure ... follows the train of thought. ... This is where the findings of discourse analysis are pertinent." (pp. 23-24)

No quarrel with that necessary statement, but it comes too late, too weak, too short. Of course, nobody can guess the presuppositions, the macropropositions and the propositions before reading the words, but one has not understood the text until one has grasped its conceptual and argumentative framework. Going about translating without a clear notion of the global picture is very much like painting a landscape tree by tree and figure by figure without having perspective or composition in mind. Which is, indeed, exactly the way novices translate and paint.

The Level of Naturalness: "With all that, for all texts (except the ones you know are 'odd' or badly written but authoritative, innovative or 'special', e.g., where a writer has a peculiar way of writing which has to be reproduced — so for philosophy, Heidegger, Sartre, Husserl; so for fiction any surrealist, baroque, and certain Romantic writers) — for the vast majority of texts, you have to ensure: (a) that your translation makes sense; (b) that it reads naturally. ... [But] a translation of serious innovative writing ... may not sound natural, may not be natural to you, though if it is good it is likely to become more so with repeated readings. ... You may find [the above] sentences [one from Ramuz and one from Thomas Mann] unnatural. Yet, in spite of numerous lexical inadequacies ... this is what Ramuz and Thomas Mann wrote, and we cannot change that." (p. 24-25)

But translating means, by definition, changing that. Look at this Japanese sentence, literally rendered by E. Seidensticker: "The I yesterday to you introduced from Osaka aunt tomorrow afternoon on the Sea Breeze Express is going back⁵⁹." I do not know who is the author of the text, but I would imagine it could have come from a novel. We had better change that. If an author achieves an aesthetic effect through his idiosyncratic use of language, the translator must definitely try to do the same. Now 'the same' is not merely aping the form, but achieving with it as close an effect as possible. Seidensticker mentions a tendency in some contemporary Japanese writers to imitate 'Western' syntactic clarity (bending backwards, it would seem, to compensate for the absence of relative pronouns in their language); how would, say, and English translator go about reproducing a deviation of the original meant to make it sound more like English?

"Normally, you can only do this by temporarily disengaging yourself from the SL text, by reading your own translation as though no original existed." (p. 24)

Indeed one should read the translation as if it were not such. The translation should become an original in its own right, whether innovative or natural: the way the original itself is, whether natural or innovative, an original. That indeed can only be achieved by disengaging oneself from the SL text; that is what deverbalisation accomplishes: a translation that will read as though no original existed.

⁵⁹Edward Seidensticker, "On Trying to Translate from Japanese," in Biguenet and Schulte (1989, p. 144); the reader will find in this gem of a book a series of excellent articles by literary translators, all to a man concurring -tacitly or expressly- with my position.

The Unit of Translating. "Normally you translate sentence by sentence..., running the risk of not paying enough attention to the sentence-joins. If the translation of a sentence has no problems, it is based firmly on literal translation..., plus virtually automatic and spontaneous transpositions and shifts, changes in word order etc. ... The first sign of a translation problem is where these automatic procedures from language to language, apparently without intercession of thought (scornfully referred to as *transcodage* by the ESIT School of Paris), are not adequate. ... The mental struggle between the SL words and the TL thought then begins. How do you conduct this struggle? Maybe if you are an interpreter ... you try to forget the SL words, you deverbalise, you produce independent thought, you take the message first, and then perhaps bring the SL words in. If you are like me, you never forget the SL words, they are always the point of departure; you create, you interpret on the basis of these words". (pp. 30-31)

Well, I am an interpreter, and deverbalsing is exactly what I try to do. I have fought a long and gallant battle against my wrong 'literalist' instincts and prevailed. I now deverbalsise 'automatically' and 'intuitively,' although, of course, sometimes I fail to and the result is, at best, a mangled utterance, and at worst — sheer nonsense. And deverbalsing, by the way, is exactly what I try to do -more successfully, there being so much more time available- when I translate **or** write my own stuff, as in this case. Mind you, I am not an interpreter turned translator, but very much the inverse turncoat, steeped in the theory and practice of poetic translation since college days. I can vouch that when Seleskovitch avers that the practice of interpretation carries within it the theory of translation, that in simultaneous interpretation the (good) interpreter minds well-nigh sense alone, de-verbalised (i.e., not un-linguistic, but extra-linguistic, abstracted from any specific linguistic clothing), she knows very well whereof she speaks; I, for one, had come to the same conclusion on my own. Let me show you what I mean.

Last year, I had to translate into Spanish a hopelessly written text on demography. This was the most difficult sentence in it: "Tabulations were prepared on the 'behaviourally infecund' married women (i.e., currently married women who had a non-contraceptive [*sic*] open birth interval of at least five years)." Now, I defy any average reader to understand by sheerly adding the semantic meaning of the 'words' what the deuce the fellow is talking about; I challenge, moreover, any translator to produce a sensible TL text without letting go of the SL words. I, for one, went about it the way I universally propound: First I tried to understand the language. That I could: I knew the meanings of 'behaviourally,' 'infecund,' 'non,' 'contraceptive,' 'open,' 'birth' and 'interval'. Still I was not sure what the relationship was between 'behaviourally' and 'infecund,' nor could I glean it that easily out of the explanation in the text.

I thus proceeded to play Sherlock Holmes, to examine the clues, to treat the meaning of the words as circumstantial evidence of sense. First and foremost, since I could not identify 'behaviourally infecund' with the definition, I sought to find out 'behaviourally infecund' as opposed to what? Translating sentence by sentence (which is indeed the way I, and most colleagues I know, normally work) can do more than risk losing sight of the connections between them, but of their specific contribution to global sense. According to the context, the other 'currently married' women were a) those who 'thought' they were infecund and were not asked about their contraceptive practice, b) those who were fecund and practiced contraception, and c) those who were fecund but wanted more children and therefore were not practicing contraception. Obviously, the 'behaviourally infecund' were not to be confused with any of the others. So they did not think they were infecund, they did not want any more children, they were however not practicing contraception, but they were nevertheless having no offspring. Do you follow me? Good!, because it took me a very long time to bring you and

myself to this insight. By the way, do you remember how the original definition read? Neither do I; I am afraid we have forgotten the words — let alone about them. So let us go back to it, shall we? 'Currently married women who had a non-contraceptive open birth interval of at least five years'. Okay... So they are 'women who at the time of the survey were living with a man and had spent at least five years without practicing contraception and without having children'. See? It was not that difficult. So this is the 'message,' the 'concept,' deverbalised in that it is not wedded to any specific linguistic formulation (definitely NOT to 'non- open birth interval of at least five years!').

And now, how do I say this in Spanish? What about *casadas en ese momento que habían pasado al menos cinco años sin tener hijos ni usar anticonceptivos* [currently married women who had spent at least five years without having any children or practicing contraception]. The 'name' remains a problem, though. How can we couple *infecundas* to *actitud/comportamiento/conducta*? I was so elated at having solved the semasiological puzzle, that I forgot about my own proselytising and on my onomasiological way back went for a literal *infecundas de actitud*, not realising that 'behaviour' had nothing to do with the phenomenon. Later that year, I posed the problem to my students at the Centro Internacional de Conferencias, in Buenos Aires; one of them said, 'Oh, yes; I was one of them. I spent five years trying to have a baby with my first husband but I could not. We were both checked and everything looked normal. They told me I was *infecunda sin causas aparentes* [infertile for no apparent reason]'. I shall never forgive myself for not having thought of that one⁶⁰!

Another example, this time a legal text I had to translate for a Latin American client: The original, an excerpt from a US law, read, if memory serves me right, roughly as follows: 'In the case that a person found guilty of a crime under this section has previously been convicted of such crime under this section, then such person shall be liable to an additional fine of...' Now, that can be translated quite literally as *'toda persona hallada culpable de un delito en virtud del presente apartado que con anterioridad hubiera sido hallada culpable de idéntico delito será multada con...'* or any such legalese. I suspect this orthodox semantic approach -it is after all a Law- would leave Newmark happy. That is a pity, because I translated *'Todo reincidente será multado con...'* (taking due advantage of the legal concept Spanish has found a name for, i.e., the sense it is able to signify as a lexical meaning). Which, by the way, is the one case not contemplated by Newmark, namely when two or more SL units can be combined in the TL⁶¹.

"By rule of thumb you know literal translation is likely to work best and most with written, prosy, semi-formal, non-literary language, and also with innovative language; worst and least with ordinary spoken idiomatic language. Further, it is more often effectively used than most writers on translation, from Cicero to Nida and Neubert (but not Wilss), lead you to believe. ... Primarily, you translate by the sentence, and in each sentence, it is the object and what happens to it that you sort out first. Further, if the object has been previously mentioned, or it is the main theme, you put it in the early part of the sentence, whilst you put the new information at the end, where it normally gets most stress. ... Your problem is normally how to make sense of a difficult sentence. ... Below the sentence, you go to clauses, both finite and non-finite, which, if you are experienced, you tend to recast intuitively. ... Difficulties with words are of two kinds: (a) you do not understand them; (b) you find them hard to translate. ... But be assured of one thing: the writer must have known what he wanted to say: he would never have written a drop of nonsense in the middle of a sea of sense. ... You have to force your word (usually it is a word) into sense, you have to at least satisfy yourself at last that there are no other

⁶⁰It can further be improved to *aparentemente infecunda* since the definition makes the concept crystal-clear.

⁶¹Malone (1988); a most interesting approach that develops Vinay & Dalbarnet's *procédés*.

reasonable alternatives. ... So far I have been assuming that the word is more or less context-free — and I do think that far more words are more or less context-free than most people imagine. ... You are over- or under-translating most of the time, usually the latter. ... But my last word is this: be accurate. ... Many translators say you should never translate words, you translate sentences or ideas or messages. I think they are fooling themselves. The SL texts consist of words, that is all that is there, on the page." (pp. 31-37)

Again, Newmark beckons his students to translate language; after all, there is nothing but words on the page (hieroglyphs and Chinese characters apparently do not count, nor do knots, which are on no page whatsoever). This is not so, as I hope I will be able to demonstrate further on. Maybe far more words are context-free, than I, for one, imagine; but that is not the point. The point is that there are many, many, many more words that are NOT context-free than most students imagine. The student must be taught to mistrust both his reflexes and the dictionary; not that dictionaries are inherently wrong, bad, or evil, but that students are not aware of the difference between *langue* and *parole*, and their reflex -the wrong reflex they have to overcome in order to acquire the right one- is to translate the former for the latter. Newmark even mocks those who advise to translate sentences rather than words. His distinction cuts not even between linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic sense, but between words on the one hand, and sentences, ideas and messages on the other. Newmark's advice reminds me of my granny, who would give us candy before supper and defeat my mother's strenuous struggle to educate us for adulthood.

In the next chapter, "Language Functions, Text-categories and Text-types," Newmark makes the crucial assertion I have been harping on time after time: "I suggest that all translations are based implicitly on a theory of language." (p. 39) He then proceeds to quote Bühler's and Jakobson's functions; expressive, informative, vocative, aesthetic, phatic and metalingual... and that's about all. Then come "Translation Methods." It starts by stating that "the central problem of translating has always been whether to translate literally or freely," (p. 45) and sets about to articulate his communicative versus semantic approaches.

"I should first say that only semantic and communicative translation fulfil the two main aims of translation, which are first, accuracy, and second, economy." (p. 47)

I shall again refrain from commenting on Newmark's crucial contribution to translatology, which will be dwelt upon later. The reader is encouraged to read what our author has to say about, among other things, the unit of translation. One last reminder that Newmark fails to see adequacy above accuracy, and on we jump to page 70, where, yet again, we hear the *leitmotif*:

"I believe literal translation to be the basic translation procedure, both in communicative and semantic translation, in that translation starts from there. However, above the word level, literal translation becomes increasingly difficult. When there is any kind of translation problem, literal translation is normally (not always) out of the question." (p. 70)

Words cannot be translated as such, because neither language *per se* nor any of its units makes sense inherently. Languages can have roughly equivalent units, semantically, stylistically and functionally, within their systems, such as *man* and *hombre* or *eat* and *comer*, which explains their statistically parallel appearance in parallel contexts (whether original or translated, it makes no difference at all — it is not that 'to eat' is 'normally' 'literally' translated as *comer*, but that when an English speaker *eats* a speaker of Spanish usually *come*). That, for

sheer unadulterated comfort, one should start seeking what may lie closest at hand (what's the point of searching for another synonym for *comer* just for the sake of not writing the word immediately to come to mind?) is a criterion that can be entertained (dangerous as it may prove for the beginner), but saying that literal translation comes first is at best dogmatic.

"Literal translation above the word level is the only correct procedure if the SL and TL meaning correspond, or correspond more closely than any alternative; that means that the referent and the pragmatic effect are equivalent, i.e., that the words not only refer to the same 'thing' but have similar associations." (p. 70)

I agree one hundred percent. I also believe, on the other hand, that **free** translation at the text level is the only correct procedure if the SL and TL sense correspond or correspond more closely than any alternative; that means that the sense and the pragmatic effect are adequately equivalent, i.e., that the 'different' words not only make the same 'sense' but have adequately similar associations. **any** translation is the only correct procedure if the SL and the TL meaning correspond more closely than any alternative and equivalent effect is maintained!

"For me, a translation can be inaccurate, it can never be too literal. ... If translation is to be regarded -if only partially- as 'scientific', it has to: a) reduce its options to the taste area; b) in claiming accuracy and economy as its main aims, reject both the open choices and the random paraphrasing of free translation; c) eliminate the universal negative connotations of and prejudices against literal translation." (p. 72)

For me, translation can be inadequate, it can never be too free. Besides, I think there are many more widespread, universal prejudices against free translation. Those universal 'negative connotations of' and 'prejudices' against literal translation are found not in most translators -let alone most people- but among most translato-logists, i.e., most practitioners who have reflected thoroughly and deeply upon our discipline, and sought to bring out its essence and specificity. They may be wrong, of course, but it would be too much of a coincidence: all the Leipzigers (Neubert, Kade, Wotjak, Cartellieri, Jäger); all the Russians (Barkhudarov, Kommissarov, Lvovskaja, Schweitzer, Fjodorov, Chernov); all the Parisians, both French and Canadian (Seleskovitch, Déjean Le-Féal, Pergnier, Lederer, Bertone, Ladmiral, Gile, Thiéry, Délisle, García Landa); Italian Gran, Hungarian Radö, Spaniard García Yebra, Nigerian Simpson, Vietnamese Ton That Thien and Chinese Dan Shen; Snell-Hornby, Di Virgilio, Roothauer and Mossop, my humble self... We may be indeed prejudiced, but those prejudices are the result of deep and knowledgeable judgement.

"Many theorists believe that translation is more a process of explanation, interpretation and reformulation of ideas than a transformation of words; that the role of language is secondary, it is merely a vector or carrier of thoughts. Consequently everything is translatable, and linguistic difficulties do not exist. My position is that everything is translatable up to a point, but that there are often enormous difficulties." (pp. 72-73)

I am definitely one of them. A different theory of language accounts for that. But I do not think for a moment linguistic difficulties therefore do not exist. On the very contrary. And not only when the aesthetic or metalingual functions are involved. I do not know of any theorist who believes that everything is translatable (except Newmark himself, although this statement seems shier than the one in *Approaches* quoted earlier) or that there are no such things as linguistic difficulties (certainly not Seleskovitch or Delisle!). But that language **is** secondary, in that it is not the aim, nor the object, nor the end of communication; that we do

not choose to translate or are asked or paid to translate language but sense; that when Gorbachev speaks or García Márquez writes, they are using language in order to say something, to express something, to make a point, and not merely toying with it, cannot, I think, sensibly be denied.

I could have chosen a different example, I could have chosen a different way of saying what I have just jotted down; for instance, I could have written "I might have selected linguistic expressions other than the ones I used". I could have organised my whole argument in a different way. I could, indeed, have written this paper in Spanish. It would still be the same argument, I would be making exactly the same sense; not a bit more or less, although the particular freedoms and servitudes of either language, or my better or worse command thereof might help or hamper its effectiveness here or there.

"All the same, we do translate words, because there is nothing else to translate; there are only words on the page; there is nothing else there. We do not translate isolated words, we translate words all **more** or **less** (and sometimes less rather than more, but never not at all) bound by their syntactic, collocational, situational, cultural and individual idiolectal contexts. That is one way of looking at translation, which suggests it is basically lexical. This is not so. The basic thought-carrying element of language is its grammar. But since the grammar is expressed only in words, we have to get the words right. The words must stretch and give only if the thought is threatened." (p. 73)

Newmark says that there is nothing but words on the paper; I submit, instead, that there's nothing but shapes. They become words for those who can read the language, the same way the 'peep-peep-peep' of the telegraph becomes letters to anyone who knows the Morse code (and is not deaf), but turns into words only for those who, besides, know the language (and spells a 'message' only for those who, on top of it all, can make sense out of them). Newmark has already seen on the page something that is not there to begin with: words are but one possible interpretation of the shapes. How can we tell, in the abstract, that the shape 'x' is a letter rather than a cross or an erasure, or a symbol for a crossing? (What about an unknown Chinese character, for that matter?) And even when the shapes can be construed as words, one has still to interpret them further. What language is this sentence in: *Vengo*, Italian or Spanish? If it is Spanish [I am coming], that is one thing; but if it is Italian, then the Spanish translation would probably be *Voy* [I am going], its semantic antonym! Saying that all there is on the page are words is only slightly more helpful than asserting that all there is are contrasts. The shapes have to be interpreted into words, the words into a linguistic structure, and that linguistic structure into a text, into something being said. And, as I pointed out above, that something is not first person singular, present indicative, 'love,' objective case, first person singular, personal pronoun, assertion; those are merely the means the speaker has chosen among the resources offered by the English language in order to convey a 'sense'.

If we do not take his sentence's 'meaning' for his acumen's sense, then sense must be sought elsewhere, behind, beyond, above or beneath those words. Newmark, though, is quite right in reminding us that there is nothing but words **on** the page. Those are our clues. We also know that we 'mean' much more than we can possibly say, and that, normally, we say no more than we consider reasonably enough to be understood (what Marianne Lederer brilliantly propounds as the principle of 'synecdoche,' i.e., the part mentioned for the whole meant)⁶². The translator must make sure that he has understood all that the author wanted him to understand and, normally, much more. And he cannot be satisfied with having himself

⁶²Lederer (1976).

understood: he must now proceed to make someone else understand; the situation, vehicle (language), and addressees having been substituted, he must assess the formal accommodations newly necessitated to ensure successful communication. Now, if the page has less 'meaning' than the author intended to convey, if there's 'meaning' that has been left unsaid or implied, if it somehow exists without the actual support of words, then there is a distinction between meaning actually signified and meaning meant. As I stated, Newmark refuses to distinguish between meaning (linguistic, linguistically signified, semantic, of words and structures) and sense (non-linguistic, whether signified as meaning or not), but he cannot make believe they do not exist. It is more than a pity to relinquish such a comfortable distinction: it is outright dangerous.

Newmark reacts -justifiably, in my opinion- against the extremism of some Parisians, but he drops the baby with the bath-water. Most of my sources believe language to be secondary. It does not follow that the words of the original have to be completely disregarded. They must of necessity be taken into account, after all, that is all the (linguistic) 'evidence' of sense the translator has. That evidence has next to be interpreted. Once interpreted, the particular exhibits must be momentarily forgotten, so they will not unduly interfere with the re-expression stage. But as soon as the translator has come up with a suitable re-expression, he has to double- and triple-check it against the original, not only for accuracy, but also for style and function, i.e., for adequacy. And this is precisely what Newmark was telling us above, but not forcefully enough.

One last *caveat*: when I spoke about the difference between meaning 'meant' and meaning 'signified,' I had in mind both what was intentionally left implied or unsaid and what was unwittingly left off, as it were. It is not enough to state that what was intentionally tacit must be also left unsaid in the translation. If the author does not want to say something, even though he means it, we are dealing with one kind of communicative intention: there is a secondary speech act behind the observable one. If, on the other hand, the author left something unsaid because it is linguistically or sensically unnecessary, redundant, bothersome or irrelevant for his addressees (if it violates any of the maxims of conversation), then this is a qualitatively different intention: in this case there is no secondary act intended. Secondary acts, perlocution, circumlocution and the like, must normally remain so in the translation. But this does not exonerate the translator from understanding the unsaid even in order to leave it in turn tacit. On the other hand, anything that becomes necessary and relevant to the addressees of the translation must be made explicit, the empty case valencies being a perfect example at the sheer linguistic level (i.e., the TL structurally demands more explicitness on the part of the translator), and the need for additional situational information one at the level of sense (for instance, in Argentina, a *Comodoro* is an Air Force officer, in the UK 'Commodores' are navy men; therefore *Comodoro* will have to be rendered as 'Air Force General' or, perhaps, 'Air Force Commodore'). By the way, the reverse is also true: elements that become linguistically or situationally redundant ought to go. In the English-language newspaper *The Buenos Aires Herald*, the editorial is systematically published in its original and the Spanish translation; in one of the pieces, mention was made of 'Air Force Commodore Estrella,' who had been involved in an attempted *coup d'état* a few days earlier. The translation duly went *Comodoro de la Fuerza Aérea*, an egregious case of over-translation if there ever was one, equivalent to saying 'Navy Admiral;' the maxim of quantity (one should not say more than needed to convey sense) is so grossly violated that the translation becomes either patronising or asinine, depending on the reader's mood.

Newmark is perfectly right when he asserts that the translator's fidelity to Churchill or Shakespeare may outweigh his fidelity to the reader, but he forgets that both Churchill and Shakespeare wanted very much to communicate (although not at any price, as he rightly warns elsewhere). If the translator forgets that, he is not being faithful to his author. If he could consult either, none of them would tell him "Just translate my words as I said them and if they don't understand them or are not impressed, that's their problem⁶³". I am sure Newmark himself would want any translation of his books to be accurate, pleasing **and** convincing. Communicative translation works for texts whose style does not really matter, be it because it is altogether irrelevant, or because they are badly written. Mind you, Shakespeare's style too can become absolutely irrelevant: in the interpreter's booth. A simultaneous interpreter should be more than happy if he can come up, on the spot and off his cuff, with:

"¿Me mato o no? Ese es el problema. ¿Qué es más noble, sufrir una vida dolorosa o atreverse a ponerle fin? Morir; dormir... o sea, terminar con toda pena; ¡no está mal! Dormir; tal vez soñar... Pero ¡ajo! Soñar ¿qué?"

["Shall I kill myself or not? That is the problem. What is nobler, to endure a painful life or to dare put an end to it? To die, to sleep... that is, putting an end to all misery; not bad! To sleep, may be to dream... But wait a sec! To dream what? "]

I have had to interpret Omar Khayam, Pushkin, Shevchenko, Corneille, Shakespeare, Byron and Pessoa. Translatology must help me do it as best as possible. I have also translated Pushkin, Lermontov and Dryden for my own pleasure and for my thesis. The translations of Pushkin I come up with when alone and peaceful at my table and leisure are definitely better and more faithful (semantically and poetically) to the author (thank Heavens!), but they are not arrived at through a different method; just the same method more comfortably applied. In the booth I have a few seconds to translate a stanza that may have taken the poet himself a whole day. All I can do is tackle the priorities in order and see how far I can go. The first priority normally being global sense (the macroproposition(s)), I try and give that. If I can, I will try to convey the propositions. I have enough acumen left for a timid stab at rhythm? I go for it as well. On a couple of occasions, the text was given a few minutes in advance and I have been able to come up with a pretty decent *rubai* (much better than the dismal prosaic version read in the English by the speaker), and a presentable Pessoa.

Getting the words right and getting the right words is not the same. Getting the words right is rightly to interpret them, to climb up from form to semantic meaning and from semantic meaning to sense (or thought, if Newmark prefers), i.e., going about the semasiological process the right way. Getting the right words is the converse procedure: finding the most suitable TL articulation for that sense; i.e., embarking upon the adequate onomasiological process. There is nothing wrong with coming up with a right onomasiology that will almost 'literally' coincide with the onomasiology originally performed by the author when translating his thoughts into language; nothing at all! Provided the translation makes the same sense, that it is adequate, pragmatically, idiolectally, situationally and what have you, who cares about *eat* and *comer*? If Newmark or anybody else, myself included in many instances, finds fault with a translation being too free, i.e., being **inadequate** because of

⁶³"Jorge Luis Borges had a fine sense of how words are used and of their limitations when he told his translator not to write what he said but what he wanted to say." G. Rabassa, in "No Two Snowflakes Are Alike: Translation as Metaphor," in Biguenet and Schulte (1989, p. 2)

arbitrary liberties taken by the translator, he and any knowledgeable critic can justly condemn it. But exactly the same applies to a translation being inadequate out of excessive arbitrary literalness. It is not that a translation should or should not be literal or free *a priori*, for all texts and all times and for any pair of languages. A translation should be adequate. Not adequate in the abstract; there is no such thing, as Nida brilliantly pointed out: Adequate for its purpose. If it is adequate, then it follows that it is good that it is literal or that it is good that it is free. I fail to see Newmark's point.

"I am not suggesting that any more or less context-free SL word must always be translated one-to-one or literally by its 'usual' TL equivalent. The SL word may: (a) be used more frequently (within the register); (b) have a wider semantic range than the corresponding TL word. Thus *hardiesse* may translate as 'effrontery' (pejorative) as well as 'daring' (positive, honorific) depending on the context. But *la plaine* which appears almost to coincide in frequency and semantic range with 'the plain' will always translate as 'plain', unless it is the alternative spelling of *la plane* ('plane')." (p. 75)

What about if it doesn't rhyme with the word it is supposed to rhyme, what if it can be replaced by a deictic, what if it can be replaced by *it* (as opposed to 'she'/'he') unambiguously whilst the French *elle* would prove equivocal, or altogether omitted (viz. in Spanish) as a tacit subject; what if it does rhyme with the following word or bring in an undesired alliteration; what if it is used meta-lingually; what, in short, if the text, that "ultimate court of appeal" (1988c, p. 116), advises against it? How can anybody, much less such a knowledgeable and able translator as Newmark, claim that any word, even 'endocrinology,' must **always** be translated by any other given word?

"Literal translation is the first step in translation, and a good translator abandons a literal version only when it is plainly inexact, or, in the case of a vocative or informative text, badly written. A bad translator will always do his best to avoid translating word for word. Re-creative translation - 'contextual re-creation' as Delisle calls it- which means, roughly, translating the thoughts behind the words, sometimes between the words, or translating the sub-text, is a procedure which some authorities and translation teachers regard as the heart or the central issue of translation ('get as far away as possible from the words'). The truth is the opposite: 'interpret the sense, not the words' is, to my mind, the translator's last resource; an essential resource, certainly, and a touchstone of his linguistic sensitivity and creativity, not to mention his alertness and perspicacity, when words mislead." (p. 76)

I guess Newmark's bad translators must be better than many good ones I know (and that he has not had the chance of rejoicing in the Spanish 'translations' rife in the U.S). Getting as far away as possible from the words is the only way to make absolutely sure one has understood the sense those self-same words were meant to carry. It means re-expressing without the spectre of the SL haunting the translator, or, worse, shackling him. It does **not** mean never again minding or even looking back at them (except in the booth, where they are gone and you wouldn't have the time anyway); yet precisely by momentarily forgetting about the SL words have I been able to come up with ten or so of the very few metric translations of Pushkin into Spanish, and I am quite proud of them. Besides, one does not 'interpret the sense,' what one interprets is, precisely, the 'words;' sense is the **result** of that interpretation. To my mind, by the way, the last resource of any translator is to translate the words and not the sense; it happens when one has not been able to make sense out of them and hopes that sheer transcoding will do the trick, knowing, in the bottom of one's heart, that it most probably will not.

"'Looking at translation in an ideal sense,' Gadamer has pointed out that 'no translation can replace the original, ... the translator's task is never to copy what is said, but to place himself in the direction of

what is said (i.e., in its meaning) in order to carry over what is to be said into the direction of his own saying'. Again, this reliance on the *vouloir dire* and the significance of what the SL text deliberately left unsaid can be dangerous, and applies only to the most difficult texts, where some kind of interpretation and hermeneutics are essential if the translator is to be active, to 'become again the one saying the text'." (p. 79)

This is exactly what I did with the 'non-contraceptive five-year open birth interval' or whatever the words were (I forgot). It would probably not qualify as one of the most difficult texts requiring some kind of interpretation and hermeneutics (except that **all** texts require interpretation, even that 'I love you' we were supposed to translate literally in view of its SVO unmarkedness). All it takes is... well, common sense, good knowledge of 'the world' and an adequate competence at writing one's own texts, if for no other purpose than to make someone else's sense — albeit in hendecasyllables and alexandrines.

I have brought the reader rather laboriously through some two hundred pages of Newmark's basic theoretical thought and precepts. The rest of this and the other works goes into the specifics. May I now add a few rhapsodic comments.

As Newmark says, there can be no theory of translation without a theory of language. Mariano García Landa has stated, and I tend to agree wholeheartedly with him, that the (not 'a') theory of translation **is** the theory of language. When Newmark denies the possibility of a single theory, when he refuses to accept the existence of translatology, when he predicts that there will never be a science of translation, when he speaks of the two 'methods' of translating, when he says that there's no distinction between linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic sense, when he goes on to say that thinking is akin to writing rather than speaking, he is refusing to tackle language as *langage*, as the specifically human second signal system, socially generated and developed, regardless of its individual, apparently 'non-social' use (I say apparently, because language is social even when we use it to talk to ourselves or to lucubrate). We could not objectivate our experience without it. No one can develop language on his own. If Newmark were shipwrecked in a desert island without books, he would not know English any better when rescued.

In criticising Seleskovitch, Newmark points out that a translation theory that cannot account for the translation of literature is like *Hamlet* without the Prince. He is right. But a crucial corollary of what goes above is that a translation theory that excuses itself when it comes to interpretation is *Hamlet* without the Prince, Polonius, Ophelia and half the rest of the characters. Translation and interpretation are different ways of performing basically the same task: mediate in bilingual communication, conveying sense across languages. The specificity of interpretation resides in its orality. I submit, therefore, that the freest translation of *Hamlet*, such as the one quoted above is a perfectly valid -i.e., adequate- one in that situation; valid because of two criteria: first and foremost, it conveys the sense and does it quite clearly and idiomatically, if by no means poetically or in all its nuances; second, because it is the best possible compromise **under the circumstances**. A theory of translation must account for such a compromise and such circumstances. If it does, there is nothing to prevent it from accounting for a much more faithful translation under the 'normal' circumstances. It will point out how the **same** translator is expected to solve the problem in **different** ways according to the situation. It will also add that sense is what is never negotiable. It will add further that sense is not necessarily semantic; it can be purely aesthetic or purely emotional or, more often than not, a diverse mixture of everything.

A theory of translation must start by explaining what are languages used for and how. Only then can it proceed to assess the possibility and necessity of transfer between them in general and in different circumstances. Stating that a word that is repeated in the same sentence or the next one should be also repeated in the translation does nothing to further the theory or the practice of translation and sets the student upon an extremely dangerous path that, for fear of excessive freedom, ends in total bondage. Rather than slavishly abiding by a quantitative criterion, the translator has, first of all, to ask himself why is the word being used to begin with, and then why is it repeated, what is sought with the repetition, what is actually achieved by it. He must then determine whether repeating it is indeed the best -let alone the only- way of achieving the equivalent effect in the TL. The translator must engage in an earnest imaginary dialogue with the author. He must probe for the answers to all his queries.

I have never ever met any student or beginner -and not that many veterans- who were not too literal. For every excess of freedom I have encountered, I have run literally into thousands of inverse cases, not least among the UN translators, who must take what could well be the most demanding exam in the Spanish-speaking world. I am convinced that excessive liberalism is much more difficult to catch and much easier to cure than obsequious servility. I find Seleskovitch a bit too adamant in her rejection of 'words' and 'literalness', but I think it is Newmark who poses the greater danger.

No matter how many times a given pair of words or phrases or whatever units do actually coincide in both the TL and the SL, it will always -absolutely always- be a simple statistical coincidence. The translator will, of course, be duly mindful that chances are his text will not be one of the exceptions, or the sole exception, for that matter; but he will constantly remind himself that it is actually possible. Every translator, and most definitely every beginner will tend to go blindly for the statistically regular equivalent. He needs no prodding by anybody to do just that. The teacher's role, instead, is precisely to make him aware that he must watch for the possibility, however remote, that in this particular case the traditional -and by no means forever 'fixed'- equivalent may not be advisable. In any text, of any sort, whatever the 'method' followed, everything, absolutely everything below textual equivalence is negotiable. This does not mean that, provided the broader textual equivalence is achieved, then anything below that goes. It does mean, however, that, below textual equivalence, no rule can or should be formulated *urbi et orbi*. I could take Newmark's 'rules' as general observations that will normally apply more often than not. He tells us that such is the way he himself sees them; but by the time he starts dictating them, his initial disclaimer *cum caveat* has long been forgotten by the unsuspecting reader, and he never ever qualifies them enough. I am sure that Newmark and I would go pretty much the same way about translating any text. But not our students. With the best intentions in the world, Newmark does nothing but tighten up the grip of 'the word'.

Newmark advocates modular translating. If it is true that texts -and their translations- are definitely put together word by word, the way symphonies are written out note by note and cathedrals erected stone by stone, it is equally and more importantly true that writing, translating, composing and building have nothing to do with stringing words or notes or piling up stones. There is always a master plan, a global conception, a statement to be made presiding over. Indeed, sometimes in and by the process of actual writing or composing or building, the plan can be modified, but it always remains global and larger than the sum of words or notes or stones. In our case, that global edifice is sense, manifested, of course, through the parts of the whole. But if the student is not taught from the very beginning to

approach any text as a global and, within its materiality, both self-contained and situated whole; if he is not taught to analyse each sentence, clause, word and morpheme as a function of that globality; if he is not taught to seek to come up with an equivalent globality, which demands that he himself also choose every word, clause and sentence as a function thereof; if, in short, he is not taught to translate texts or parts of texts, as opposed to words, sentences or even paragraphs, he will find it very difficult not to end up a transcoder.

As Newmark states, justificative analysis's purpose is to verify the exactitude of the (provisional) solution retained. One is after an adequate functional equivalent, i.e., an equivalent performing the function relevant to the translator, which in the case of semantic translation is the same as or very close to the one performed by the original relevant segment (from a sound -not even a phoneme- to the whole text). But the translator has to think in terms of functions. If it so happens that a ready equivalent performs the same function in **that specific context** (and situation), then **that** is the right choice; if it does not, then it is the **wrong** choice, it is that simple. The translator must never choose a ready equivalent because it is the 'same' word: it is not. **Ever**. One should teach the student to fill the function and see whether it so happens that the ready equivalent does the job and not to try the ready equivalent and see whether it happens to perform the same function. This is crucial, since the beginner will **instinctively** go for the ready equivalent and the parallel construction, very much like the infant reaches out for his mother's breast. Only this time around it is the wrong instinct. It must be strenuously combated. One's conditioned reflex must be to de-verbalise, i.e., forget about the SL words. Once the teacher has succeeded in creating it, then 'literalism' can be judiciously re-admitted; but **starting** by it is, in my experience, pedagogically suicidal.

Newmark's bibliography does not mention Snell-Hornby, Mossop, Lvovskaya, and a few other sources that have deeply influenced my thinking. I presume he has not been able to read the Russians; he has, instead, abundantly read the Germans. Unfortunately, I do not know German, so all I have managed to read are the few works listed in my own bibliography. Still, from what I have read, I can see that the Leipzigers see very much eye to eye with the Parisians and the Muscovites. I am amazed that Newmark remains so adamant in not accepting the distinction between the concepts of sense and meaning and therefore the crucial methodological, and above all pedagogical, value of deverbalisation (if nothing else, as a sheer momentary 'forgetting' about specific words). My amazement is in no way disrespectful; it is obvious to me that Newmark is an erudite scholar, a deep thinker and a gifted practitioner. More often than not I find myself agreeing with him on many important points — grudgingly at first, but then almost invariably wholeheartedly. But in this crucial of all crucial issues - nothing short of the general theory of language, and therefore speech, and therefore meaning, and therefore sense, and therefore translation- of all my sources (not that many, perhaps, but definitely wide-ranging), he and Wilss stand brilliantly alone.

A Closer Look to Semantic vs. Communicative Translation

There is much juicy meat in Newmark's works for the theoretician and the practitioner. Basically, I am in agreement with our author's poles, his main -and capital- contribution to our discipline, but even here I have my quibbles. Newmark speaks of a putative readership. I am not so sure he is right. Does he really think that Shakespeare addressed his sonnets to himself, or that he wrote his plays for his own pleasure without minding a hoot really how his clientele at The Globe might react? I can buy that a few lyric poets may write solipsistically, but not

the likes of Dickens or Pushkin. No one writes a play, a novel or even a love poem without caring whether it can or will be understood. I am not saying that authors write exclusively, or even mainly, *pour la gallerie*, but they do normally have a reader -albeit an ideal one- very much in mind. They want, basically, to move their audience. We cannot hope to be moved by Shakespeare the way the Globe audience were moved; but we are moved. A translation of Shakespeare must also aim at moving, that is the essential equivalence of effect the translator should attempt; and this is why any translation of a great work of art ought to be itself a great work of art. When Newmark asserts that a CT will be better than a ST, that a CT will normally be better than the original, whilst a ST will be more awkward, that a CT tends to under-translate, whereas a ST tends to over-translate in search of a nuance of meaning, the -I would bet unwanted- implication is that a CT of Hamlet would be better, if not than Hamlet, then than a ST of Hamlet. Why?

He states that ST over-translates. How can a sonnet in English, with its shorter words, be over-translated in the same amount of Spanish syllables? He avers that a ST will be worse than the source text. If a good poet translates a bad one, the translation is bound to be better than the original. I cannot pass judgement, but it is said that Poe sounds better when improved by Baudelaire (Newmark mentions Baudelaire's Poe as well, but he does not say the translations are better). If we do not have many more examples it is due to the fact that not many first class poets have condescended to translate their colleagues.

In the case of authoritative statements and literature, Newmark advocates the semantic approach. You may recall that between the word-for-word/literal and the semantic, we had the faithful translation (although, as we have seen, Newmark rarely makes any stopovers between the word-for-word and communicative approaches). A semantic translation differs from 'faithful translation' only as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the SL text, compromising on 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars the finished version; it may make other small concessions to the readership, admits exception to the 100% fidelity, and allows for the translator's intuitive empathy with the original. Above, I had suggested a communicative translation of 'To be or not to be'; but what would a semantic translation sound like? '*Ser o no ser, esa es la cuestión*'? That, for starters, is no hendecasyllable (the closest formal equivalent to the English five-foot iamb); but let us stick to *cuestión*. *Question* is, on the one hand, a 'problem,' an 'issue' that is posed, and, on the other, an 'interrogation,' a 'question' that is asked. Obviously, both 'meanings' are relevant. So far, so good. *Cuestión*, for its part, is more an 'issue' than a 'problem' and has nothing to do with 'questioning'. *Cuestión* is, then, very much out of the question. (I am sure Newmark and I see eye to eye so far.) A much better rendition would be '*Ser o no ser, he ahí el dilema*'. No dictionary that I know of (and I have specifically checked several before writing down this sentence) gives 'dilemma' as a synonym of 'question,' or *dilema* as a synonym of *cuestión*. But that is what Hamlet faces, is it not? — a dilemma. The sense, though, is perfectly and aptly clear with *question*. Shakespeare could have written, for instance, 'To be or not to be, that's the dilemma,' except the whole effect is lost: 'dilemma' is too long; the line consists neatly of nine monosyllabic words and the final dissyllable, the inverted foot in *that* loses much of its power by becoming *that's*. Shakespeare chooses *question* for the very reason he would certainly have rejected it in Spanish. True, '*Ser o no ser, he ahí el dilema*' is not hendecasyllabic either. I, nevertheless, would leave it. The inverted fourth foot is already a departure from strict form in the original (a very convenient alibi), but even without it, I suggest any addition to my version would spoil the music to keep the notes.

The syllables in anacrusis, though only three, rather than the required six, end in such abyssal a caesura that the ear does not even realise it's been short-changed. (The ear! So much for written speech.) A possible hendecasyllabisation would be achieved by a most otherwise acceptable archaism — '*Ser o no ser, queste es el dilema*'. Look at all we have accomplished: a neat ST, a by all means suitable archaisation of the language via a very much normal demonstrative in classic Spanish, and an unimpeachable classic hendecasyllable to boot... At what price? The stretching of the acoustic arc óooo // óooooó as opposed to the abrupt óooo // oóooo (as close to Shakespeare's as you can get in this specific instance) wrecks the whole exercise. (A better possibility is '*Ser o no ser, he ahí la disyuntiva,—*' but the problem of the extended acoustic arc after the caesura remains.) I do not know whether Newmark would call my translation semantic or communicative, nor do I really care what the label might eventually be. The point is global coherence and cohesion are best served this way than the other, and the most important truth, that of poetry, takes precedence over that of poetics. Newmark demands fidelity towards Shakespeare; I submit that one cannot be faithful to Shakespeare without being also faithful to poetry.

In all probability, my translation can be improved — by a better poet applying the same method, and not by an equal poet through a better method. And that method has been a) having a clear notion of the purpose of the translation; b) understanding the words and analysing thoroughly the semantic and formal features of the original, c) making sense out of them, which in turn necessitates resorting to the situation (Hamlet is pondering suicide, whether to kill himself or not; if he is of **two** minds about **whether** to do **either** of **two** things, he is very much in the (**two**) horns of a dilemma), a sense hinted at by the words, but lying outside of them; d) re-expressing that sense trying to find the best and closest formal and functional equivalence. In this particular instance, the translator has seen and understood that he is dealing with a five-foot iamb with fourth foot inversion, that the only dissyllabic word is 'question,' that the inversion produces an unexpected caesura, which gives enormous force to 'that'. He has tried -and failed- to find something parallel in Spanish. He decides -in all conscience- to make some formal concessions, the most important of which is the abrupt breaking of the metre. He is not happy with it. He invokes as a justification the fact that the metre is also done violence in the original — in that particular line and elsewhere in the monologue. And he submits and defends his translation as the best possible under the circumstances (one of which being his limited talent); e) collating the final version with the original for accuracy, coherence and cohesion. It has been the same method this translator has been applying and teaching for years, the same he uses in the interpreters' booth at the U.N. Security Council and helping his mother buy the right Revlon cream at Macy's: assess his specific communicative task for the specific text in the specific situation, understand the words, decide what weight to give to the specific form, make out the sense, and re-express it in the most suitable form (semantic, communicative, faithful, idiomatic, literal, free) that can be found in the time at his disposal; in short, make the right extra-linguistic sense the right linguistic way.

I shall now try to illustrate my assertion with two widely dissimilar texts. One that cries for a communicative approach (or even an absolutely free one) and another demanding utmost attention to form. Both were analysed earlier this year in my seminar with the faculty at the translation department of the School of Foreign Languages, Havana University.

- 1) *Happy the Man, and happy he alone,
He, who can call to-day his own:*

*He, who secure within can say,
To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day!*

- 2) *Restricted area
Only ticketed bus passengers beyond this point
Violators will be prosecuted*

The first is the beginning of Dryden's paraphrase of Horace's Ode, the second a notice posted throughout Manhattan's Port Authority Bus Terminal. One is a beautiful piece of XVII-century English poetry, the other a prosaic and threatening specimen of XX-century US public English. I suggested the method required respectively to come up with the proper translations is one and the same: deciding on the translator's goal, linguistic analysis of the text, formal analysis of the text, selection of its relevant formal features (both linguistic and aesthetic), analysis of the situation, interpretation of the linguistic message in order to extract sense, re-verbalisation of that sense according to the translator's goal and trying to reproduce as adequately as possible all relevant formal features, and collation of both versions. Let us see.

Text 1

a) Purpose: The stanza is, for my didactic and polemic purposes, a self-contained poem. I want to come up with a poetic translation that will do at least some justice to the original, pay special attention to what I actually do as I translate so I can show my colleagues how I show my students that poetry can indeed be translated, as well as the different processes involved.

b) Formal features: classical combination of four-, five- and six-foot iamb, *aabb* rhyme scheme. All rhymes oxytonic, but that is typical of English verse, no meaning should be assigned to the fact that there are no paroxytonic endings. The language is quite modern, save, perhaps, for 'Thy.'

c) Sense: a) Macroproposition: The only true happiness lies in intensely living the present. B) Propositions: True happiness lies in 1) enjoying the present; 2) having the certainty that one has lived the present; 3) not fearing the future.

d) The sense as semantically structured: Only that man is happy who can claim possession of to-day, and fearlessly defy destiny or fortune or any personification of the future (a rather 'fickle' and even 'cruel' person at that), by telling him "No matter what doom you may choose to castigate upon me to-morrow, you cannot take away this day from me, and to-day I have lived." Key words and syntagms: 'happy,' 'alone,' 'call,' 'to-day,' 'his own,' 'secure within,' 'thy worst,' 'I have lived.' There is a progression from 'Happy the man,' through 'Happy he alone' to 'He, who can call to-day his own;' and a somewhat parallel one from 'He, who secure within can say' to 'To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.' The whole load of the stanza falls upon the last line. The lines carry a proposition each. The macroproposition is repeated in lines two and four.

I shall exert myself to come up with the best piece of Spanish poetry I am capable of to convey that sense. I shall also try to find equivalent key words and expressions, since they

so beautifully, precisely and economically convey that sense in Dryden. I know beforehand that I shall need many more syllables than those 38 to convey as much semantic information. In the case of the five- and six-foot iamb Spanish offers me, ready-made (and that is a good 'coincidence,' nothing else), the roughly equivalent meters: hendecasyllable and alexandrine, themselves masters of our poetics. However, the closest equivalents to the shorter meter - octosyllable or enneasyllable- will not mix well with their elders and betters. The heptasyllable, on the other hand, is way too short. The last line being the whole point of the original, it must also be the crowning of the translation. Everything else is, then, more or less negotiable; everything else will therefore depend on this line, will have to lead up to it and rhyme with it. This line should be attempted first. An almost literal translation comes readily to mind: '*pues que he vivido hoy*' (I can see Newmark smiling in triumph). Good! It makes exactly the same sense as the equivalent fragment in the original and it is, blissfully enough, a perfect alexandrine hemistich. Maybe I can complete it backwards. 'To-morrow do thy worst,' who? Obviously Fortune (fickle, capricious, reckless, cruel...) What could 'her worst' be? Non-life; metaphorical or actual death. '*Me matarás mañana, pues que he vivido hoy.*' Only the de-verbalisation of 'thy worst' can lead to 'You may kill me to-morrow.' *Pues que* sounds weak and convoluted; better a simple *pero*.

The last line has come off so neatly that I will endeavour to preserve it no matter what. I desperately need a rhyme for *hoy*'. Forget 'meaning': aside from pilfered words such as *convoy*, there are only four rhymes, all of them first person singular present indicative: *doy*, *estoy*, *voy*' and *soy*. Either I stick one of them into any of the lines or I have to relinquish my gorgeous fourth line. Suddenly I see light: the man who can claim to-day as his own says 'I am the owner of this day'; 'I am' = '*soy*'; hallelujah! Now, I have to manage to end any of the other lines with that. (I legitimately discard the aabb scheme; I do not feel bound to keep it, since any other two-rhyme scheme will do — *abab* or *abba*.) Now for the next more important feature: the beginning, the 'Happy' that will resolve itself in 'To-day'. I have basically two options, the hendecasyllable and the alexandrine. The hendecasyllable will demand a stress on the sixth syllable or, possibly, on the fourth and eighth. '*Feliz del hombre o-o-ó-o soy*'... '*Feliz del hombre que se dice 'Soy...'*' that *se dice* could do for *within*, but it's too weak; no, not *to* himself, but *within*, *secure*... '*Feliz de aquél que puede decir 'Soy...'*' Better. But 'alone' is missing; make a note of it. '*Feliz de aquél que puede decir 'Soy / el dueño de hoy'...*' not quite. *Hoy* is too much resounding (one of four -oy words in Spanish, remember?) Peter Newmark's assertion notwithstanding, never mind whether Dryden repeats it three times, it is the last one that really matters so I save *hoy* for the last round.

I need an expression that will denote or connote the present. I think I have got it: '*el dueño del día que me toca*'... Wait, I'm one syllable short (that anacrusis always gets me); how about '*el dueño de este día que me toca*'? Much better; and 'this day' brings us closer to 'to-day' than simply 'the day'. So far I've got '*Feliz de aquél que puede decir "Soy / el dueño de este día que me toca" /... / "Me matarás mañana, ¡pero he vivido hoy!"*' Not bad; not bad at all! Can I fill in the blank decently enough? For that, I need an -oca (whatever, in principle, the semantic meaning). If you find my procedure somewhat pedestrian, my only disclaimer is that when I am wrestling with a sonnet of my own, I go about it exactly the same way, except that I can always write whatever I please, rather than mind Dryden or anybody else. (In this I am consistent with my principle that one should translate the way one writes; I use language the same way whether I want to communicate my own sense or someone else's.)

So I must look for a suitable *-oca*. *Loca* dawns upon me. I think I know why: Somewhere in the back of my mind I know that I'm talking about Fortune (later on I'll be checking my translation against the original and discover that Dryden is indeed referring to Fortune; it must have stuck with me, or, more probably, it's the most plausible personification); anyway, now I have *fortuna loca*. My basic sense will doubtless be 'y decir a la Fortuna loca;' but this man must say it so that it will be obvious that he is very much 'secure within.' He must aver bluntly, daringly, defiantly, assuredly... *Espetar* is an apt verb. '*Espetar en la cara*,' or, more nobly, '*en el rostro*.' Let me see: '*Feliz de aquél que puede decir "Soy / el dueño de este día que me toca" / y espetar en el rostro a la Fortuna loca / "Me matarás mañana, ¡pero he vivido hoy!"*' Good boy! Now, remember about the 'alone'; perhaps '*Feliz sólo de aquél que puede decir "Soy..."*' My first version respects the metre; this one turns the first line into an alexandrine; also, both hemstitches are oxytonic; it would sound better if the first one were not (to my ears, of course, but then those are the only ones that count for the nonce). A possible solution is becoming more literal and go for '*Feliz solo del hombre que puede decir "Soy..."*,' but *el hombre* is too specific. I listen to all three variants repeatedly in my mind and decide that 'alone' adds a crucial element: there is no happiness **but** the present one; I had not quite grasped it initially (too much attention to words and sounds, probably). The third line also turns out to be an alexandrine. It would not be a problem, but that now, instead of the last line standing out, the second one gets short-changed. Can I shorten it, so that symmetry is restored? I think of '*y decir fiero a la Fortuna loca*'; maybe Spanish had at that time kept the meanings of 'proud' and 'fierce' side by side with that of 'wild,' as opposed to to-days's 'ugly,' No such luck. I put back my Martín Alonso disappointedly on its shelf. I rummage through my inner files, I run into *altivo*... hm... Back to the dictionaries. On my way to the bookshelf, I ponder *gallardo*. Julio Casares will probably have an adjective meaning both 'proud' and 'valiant'. Sure enough: *bravo*. My search is over... until further notice. (Newmark is again right when he warns that a translation is never really finished!) So my latest update becomes:

*Feliz sólo de aquél que puede decir "Soy
el dueño de este día que me toca"
y espetar bravo a la Fortuna loca
"Me matarás mañana, pero he vivido hoy!"*

*["Happy only he who can say "I / Am the the master of this day that's been allotted to me" / And bravely say
to fickle Fortune / "You may kill me to-morrow, but I have lived to-day!"]*

With it, my last line also stands out. My next step will be cutting that first alexandrine short. By the way, Peter Newmark hits the nail one more time squarely on the head when he asserts that the translator seeks basically to reproduce the effect the poem had on him rather than on its readership. I wish I had been the one to write those lines; through love and gratitude I've made them my own, and that is why I wanted to translate them in the first place, and that is how I want to translate them, as my own, so that others will be able to understand, marvel at and be moved by them.

Text 2

a) Purpose: Again, I want to show my students how to approach this other kind of text.

b) Formal features: A public notice. Its sole aim is to keep non-ticketed people from entering the platform. It must accomplish the same goal in Spanish. It must also fit the roughly two-by-two foot area and legibly so. Everything else may be negotiated.

c) Sense: You can't go through unless you have a ticket.

d) Sense as semantically structured: A general 'title,' the notice itself with a host of redundancies, a threat.

If with Dryden I was after an equivalent piece of poetry with the equivalent effect of aesthetically sensitising the reader to the same sense, now I will seek an equivalent piece of public noticing with the equivalent effect of keeping the un-ticketed off the platform. The original has the typical American 'Or else' tagged along. Notices throughout Spain and Latin America are less ominous. 'Restricted area' is redundant. Spanish lacks the universal label. We do indeed have *Zonas restringidas*, *Zonas de acceso restringido*, *Zonas vedadas* and the like, but very seldom do they encompass bus platforms; we tend to reserve them to spaces more consequential, such as military bases and atomic plants, where you cannot just buy a ticket and get in. Putting anything 'equivalent' in our notice will *ipso facto* spoil global adequacy. We must follow text typology and be guided by equivalent notices. We therefore do blithely away with 'Restricted area'. Next, the meat: 'Only ticketed bus passengers beyond this point'. 'Bus' is, again, situationally redundant: no, an ocean liner ticket or a ticket to a movie will not do: you need a **bus** ticket (presumably -it is not explained- a ticket for a bus leaving from **that** platform and on **that** day, only **later**). We will give our readers the benefit of the doubt and trust them to make all of those inferences all by themselves. How does Spanish normally go about saying that only ticketed passengers may go through? By forbidding the rest from passing: '*Prohibido el acceso sin boleto*' - or *billete*, or *pasaje* [No access without a ticket], depending on who one is translating for (the notice applies exclusively to people, and people without a ticket are not 'passengers'). What about the 'Beyond this point'? Again we will trust our readers to guess that it is not beyond the point twenty yards behind or that other one thirty feet yonder, but this point, exactly where the notice hangs, or, rather, the gate next to it. And the 'Violators will be prosecuted'? Again, that is the typical American 'Or else!' (the sense meant by the meanings carried by the words). Spanish tends to show its fangs less. Besides, it lacks also this time around the hypernyms 'violators' and 'prosecuted'. The closest 'semantic' equivalent would be *infractores* and *enjuiciados*, but it sounds so preposterous in Spanish that something different is called for, such as *so pena de multa*, or *todo infractor será multado*. I, for one, would leave it at that and be done with it; but if my client insists, I would add, for instance, the friendlier *evite multas*. My translation, then, reads:

*Prohibido el acceso sin billete
Evite multas*

[No access without a ticket / Avoid fines]

Newmark would call my first translation semantic and this latter one communicative (or perhaps even 'free'). He calls these opposing approaches 'methods'. Once again, I suggest they are indeed different approaches, but not methods. I prefer to reserve 'method' to

characterise the sequence of operations involved in each case: taking stock of the translator's purpose; appraising the situation; analysing the text globally; analysing its linguistic form, lexically, syntactically, stylistically, acoustically, etc. as relevant; extracting the overall sense (the macroproposition) and its constituents as well as the relationship between sense and meaning, meaning and form; retaining for the nonce the de-verbalised sense, i.e., sense independently of any specific linguistic objectivation in any language (the explanation of sense above could have been in Spanish or German or Korean); the re-verbalisation or re-expression of that sense in the target language under the guise of a suitable text (another poem or a new notice, since adequacy is ultimately measured text to text); the comparison of the translation with the original to double check for sensic (and not only semantic) accuracy and formal fidelity, as well as for inner coherence and cohesion.

So the translation of Dryden is semantic, that of the notice -communicative. I am sure Newmark would agree with me and my versions (or at least the approach behind them) in both cases. This, I think, is a crucial point. I do not really believe Newmark and I would go about translating any text differently, but, again, I am indeed very much afraid our students would. I do not start by saying Dryden should be translated semantically no matter what; what I am saying is that **if** the translator's purpose is to do justice to Dryden the poet, he must come up with his best poetic effort. I am also saying that, although in the original every single word weighs, they do not carry the **same** weight. I am saying further that the translator cannot but take complete stock of every single SL word in itself; indeed, but much more so as it relates to the poem as a whole, since it is there for a purpose larger -if not other- than its own semantic or acoustic semblance. I am stressing, moreover, that the translator ought to assume that Dryden was not merely after rhythm and rhyme, but was using both to stress and give emotive and aesthetic power to a communicative intention, itself based on reason and emotion. I call it sense (Newmark would probably insist upon naming it 'meaning,' but that is a matter of 'semantics'). That 'intention' or 'thought' or 'sense' or 'meaning' must be thoroughly grasped and assimilated. Only such a comprehension will make the translator realise the importance of the last line, and particularly its very last word. He must then try to keep that balance in his version.

Trying, of course, does not assure being able to. In Spanish, *hoy* is conveniently monosyllabic (a genuine exception). In Russian it would be *sevédnja*; whatever the translator's prowess, he will never achieve the **same** effect (and, yes, we are very much after equivalent effect - aesthetic effect, that is). That 'reason' will further tell the translator that between 'Happy' and 'to-day' well nigh everything is more or less negotiable. He is on his verbal own. He must find a suitable poetic bridge between those two shores. De-verbalisation, forgetting the 'words' in the original, is absolutely essential: they will but hamper one's own search. In my version, neither *Fortuna*, nor *loca*, nor *espetar*, nor *rosto*, nor *matar* is 'semantically' connected with the original; *soy el dueño de este día* is an extremely free rendering of *call to-day his own*; nowhere do we find any semantic vestiges of 'secure' or 'within' or 'thy' or 'worst'. Indeed, if Spanish and my talent had allowed for a semantically closer translation I would have definitely gone for it. But semantic closeness should never be the **main** purpose of the translator - let alone the only one; what he should at all times strive for is equivalent aesthetic effect: A compromise between linguistic meaning and linguistic form that will bring him closest to the symbiosis of truth and beauty every work of art represents.

*que a la cita no acudiste
y mi pobre cuore no lo
alcanza a paliar con nada.
No es lluvia de afuera la que
empaña ya mi mirada
y los versos que me saque
sabrán a pena mojada.*

[Sorrow licks my hand / at my feet it is lying. Me / it looks at with tender eyes / that only me can see. Us / unites this grey afternoon. You / I remember silent and sad, / sad, silent, grey and lonely, / for you did not keep our date / and my poor heart not it / can sooth it with anything. / It is not an outside rain that which / bedims now my gaze / and whatever verses it may bring out of me / shall have the taste of wet sorrow⁶⁴.]

No match for *mólot i stikh* / *mólodosti*, I dare say! Of course, a poet of greater calibre might astound us, but will he be able and willing to translate Mayakovski? As a poet in his own right, he would -I dare venture- try and put himself in Mayakovski's shoes and guess how the great Russian would have gone about making the same sense had he had at his disposal the possibilities offered by Spanish while being denied those available in Russian. And one last thing. Suppose such a Spanish language poet *cum* translator from Russian did come along; he still will not be able to make *martillo y verso* [hammer and verse/line] rhyme with *juventud* [youth/youthfulness]. What would a 'semanticist' do, go for fidelity to meaning, choose faithfulness to form, or compromise in the name of poetic sense? I wish I met Newmark and we could discuss; he must be a fascinating person to share ideas and a bottle of Bordeaux.

Conclusion

Newmark refuses to acknowledge any distinction between linguistic meaning an extra-linguistic sense, whence his hopelessly naïve theoretical outlook. To boot, he also adamantly refuses to admit the basic insights of *skpostheorie*. Therefore, his distinction between semantic and communicative translation, although useful in some elementary aspects, does not help very much in actual translation.

IN MEMORIAM PETER NEWMARK

You may –I hope– have remembered our first encounter in Trieste, at which Clyde, Maurizio and Chris (were you there too, Franco?) saw their hopes to see us locked in mortal combat frustrated. We agreed to transfer our Sumo contest to the *Rivista*, and then had one of those meals at *Blagutta*. I saw you twice more, once in Buenos Aires, and later on at your place, somewhere in the outskirts of London – a library with a kitchen, I thought. Then we parted physical ways, but you were always there, with your occasional stab, *à la* Socrates, to keep me perky. When the formidable Danica Seleskovitch passed away, someone –if memory serves me right, Fortunato Israel– remarked that “we all thought she was immortal.” Now I have just found out that you were not immortal either, dear cranky old archrival. I, who

⁶⁴Notice that this and the one above are strictly meta-linguistic translations, since my purpose is not the same that governed the original writing (as Newmark put it, the author's was to affect, mine to inform).

always have used many more words than my thoughts required, am to-day at an appalling loss: May you live eternally in a Paradise of blissfully semantic translations!

DO YOU HAVE A THEORY OF TRANSLATION? YOU BET YOU DO!⁶⁵

Let us go directly to the point. Which of the b) texts can be considered “translations” of the relevant a) texts, and, if more than one, which may be considered the “better” translations?

Texts a):	Texts b.i):	Texts b.ii):
The problem has troubled translation theory historically. People practiced translation, but were never quite sure what they were practicing.	<i>El problema ha perturbado históricamente la teoría de la traducción. La gente traducía, pero nunca estaba totalmente segura de qué estaba practicando.</i>	<i>El problema ha aquejado a la teoría de la traducción durante toda su historia. Los traductores traducían, pero sin estar jamás totalmente seguros de qué estaban haciendo.</i>
Los documentos deben estar verificados fehacientemente.	<i>Documents must be verified so that there is no doubt about their authenticity.</i>	<i>Documents shall be duly certified.</i>
No smoking	<i>No fumar</i>	<i>Prohibido fumar</i>
Do not lean on the doors	<i>No se apoyen en las puertas</i>	<i>No apoyarse contra las puertas</i>
Every cloud has a silver lining	<i>Toda nube tiene una capa de plata</i>	<i>No hay mal que por bien no venga</i>
The goggles that will not make a spectacle of yourself.	<i>Las gafas que no lo pondrán en ridículo</i>	<i>Las gafas protectoras elegantes</i>
Dear President Pérez,	<i>Querido Presidente Pérez:</i>	<i>Excelentísimo Señor:</i>
The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plain.	<i>En España, la lluvia cae principalmente en la pradera.</i>	<i>El rey que hay en Madrid se fue a Aranjuez.</i>
The price you’re asking is highway robbery.	<i>El precio que pide es un robo a mano armada.</i>	<i>El precio me parece francamente excesivo</i>

There are several possible answers:

- (Some or all of) the texts in column b.i) are not, strictly speaking, translations of the texts in column a): they are simply literal “transpositions.”
- (Some or all of) the texts in column b.i) are all (better or worse) translations of the texts in column a).
- (Some or all of) the texts in column b.ii) are not, strictly speaking, translations of the texts in column a): they are too “free” – even if they do work.
- (Some or all of) the texts in column b.ii) are translations of the texts in column a) regardless of their “liberties.”

Each of these answers and sub-answers (i.e., if not all, then which b.i) / b.ii) texts?) will be based on a different theory of translation; so, if you think you have an answer, then you do have a theory — much as the sheer idea may displease or surprise you. If you had not

⁶⁵This paper was presented at the IAPT Conference, Valencia, 29-30 September 2018.

realised it, it is because your theory is not explicit. That does not make it “wrong,” but it does prevent it from being “criticised,” that is, confronted with practice, compared with other theories and –crucially– being perfected and developed if basically right, or discarded if totally wrong.

Why would the b.i) texts not be considered translations? They say “the same thing,” i.e., they convey the same propositional content; moreover, they do so in a way that is not ungrammatical –or even awkward– and they can be perfectly understood by any minimally sophisticated reader. If you agree, then, as mine, your theory says that the main –if not necessarily the only– requisite of translation is “sameness of meaning,” understood basically as sameness of propositional content:⁶⁶ no “sameness of meaning” – no translation!

In this light, then, “*El problema ha aquejado a la teoría de la traducción durante toda su historia. Los traductores traducían, pero sin estar jamás totalmente seguros de qué estaban haciendo*” is as much a translation of “The problem has troubled translation theory historically. People practiced translation, but were never quite sure what they were practicing” as “*El problema ha perturbado históricamente la teoría de la traducción. La gente traducía, pero nunca estaba totalmente segura de qué estaba practicando.*” The difference is that the former “sounds” better, which in turn has necessitated some liberties, but not too many: a little cheating is always to be expected. This means that this latter text would also count as a “translation.”

If you agree to both points above, then according to your theory a translation is such by virtue of its saying “the same thing” as the original, and, barring translational “mistakes,” it will be better the better it “sounds” — i.e., the better it is as a text in the target language.

But, as it happens, b.i) translations are “better” for my specific purposes than b.ii) ones, since my point is, precisely, to show that they would be not as apt as the latter if their purpose had been the same as that of the originals.

If you agree, then your theory says, also, that translations are not good or bad, better or worse in the abstract: What makes translations better or worse is not necessarily that they “sound” better, but that they better fulfil their intended functionality, or, less pretentiously, that they better fit the purposes pursued by the translator (on his own or on somebody else’s behalf). The speaker’s lapses normally corrected must be reproduced (*n.b.*: reproduced, not translated!) in judicial interpretation when the accused is being interpreted before the court. *Ditto* many factual or formal mistakes in sworn translations. If your theory made no allowance for this *caveat*, I suggest you better accommodate it.

This brings us to the translations of “*Los documentos deben estar verificados fehacientemente.*” In this instance, “Documents shall be duly certified” may be deemed too “liberal” with respect to “Documents must be verified so that there is no doubt about their authenticity.” But the latter is too verbose *vis-à-vis* the original and, although it “explains” “*fehacientemente*,” it does not quite “say” it (because there simply is no equivalent in English). In either case, we can vote for or against either text being a true “translation.” Which posits the rather uncomfortable question: What is a translator to do –especially if absolute sameness of meaning is of the essence– when there is no equivalent, and therefore, no altogether “faithful” translation, and he still wants the job? If some cheating is to be expected, how much cheating is tolerated? If your theory allows for as much cheating as

⁶⁶“Sameness of meaning,” of course, can be defined much more broadly or minutely – but, luckily, as I hope to show, this need be no concern of ours.

necessary in order to convey “the same thing” (even if with the crooked walking stick of a footnote or a clarifications in brackets), you are in business. If not, then either you switch theories or give up the job.

On its part, there is, in principle, nothing wrong with “*No fumar*,” except that such notices in the target language/culture normally read “*Prohibido*” + infinitive. Functionality advises, rather than necessitates a minor “manipulation” — the kind of “cheating” that is, more than expected, welcome or even demanded.

What about “*No se apoyen en las puertas*” / “*No apoyarse contra las puertas combo*”? Which one is a better –or, if you prefer, more idiomatic or functional– “translation”? If you answered b.ii) then you have never taken the Madrid *metro*. If you chose b.i), take the Buenos Aires *subte* and be disabused. What may be idiomatic or functional to some users of a language may not be so to others, and the divides (there are quite a few) are not necessarily geographical: they can be social (professional, age- and class-related, etc.), or individual.

So far, then, most theories will converge on defining both texts b.i) and b.ii) as “translations,” whilst functional theories will deem b.ii) renditions “better” in the relevant context and linguistic theories will vote for their b.i) counterparts regardless of it.⁶⁷ Your answers so far will tell you which theoretical pole attracts you the most.

But you may also deem that sameness of meaning is not enough: meaning has to be conveyed in such a way that it is properly understood. This will lead you into rather murky waters. Are “*Toda nube tiene una capa de plata*” or, even more so, “*Las gafas que no lo pondrán en ridículo*” understood “properly”? I submit not. Not, that is, if “*Toda nube tiene una capa de plata*” is meant to work colloquially and understood “on the go” (the semantic⁶ translation is not opaque at all, but it will take some additional time and effort to process, plus it is pragmatically marked in a different way: as bizarre rather than colloquial!). Not, indeed, if “*Las gafas que no lo pondrán en ridículo*” is meant to work as a caption in an advertisement whose purpose is, precisely, to “sell” the product to consumers in the second language/culture. But, regardless of whether they work better as a rendition of a popular saying or a recreation of an ad, are “*No hay mal que por bien no venga*” and “*Las gafas protectoras elegantes*” a “translation” of “Every cloud has a silver lining” or “The goggles that will not make a spectacle of yourself”?

If your answer is “yes,” then your theory says that, provided function is maintained, well-nigh everything goes, since the only equivalence to be found between those two pairs of texts is the “goggles”/“*gafas*”.

Things can get quite rougher. As pointed out, “Dear President Perez” was the actual heading of a letter addressed to then Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez that I had to translate for a client, a PR company retained by the President to boost his rather threadbare public image. In it, the experts explained the strategy they had developed to that effect. Now I bet any minimally competent translator would be caught dead before formally calling “dear President Perez” “*Querido Presidente Pérez*” — and not only because this is not the way to address such a personality in the Spanish-speaking culture(s): It is not simply a matter of perpetuating tradition, but of not antagonising the potential reader — lest he will be “angry”

⁶⁷In the case of “*No se apoyen en las puertas*”, it is not functionality in the Iberian context that would be the criterion, but “faithfulness” to the original.

⁶⁸Peter Newmark distinguishes it from literal translation in that literal tends to be un-idiomatic. See, for instance, his *A Textbook of Translation*, Prentice Hall, London, 1988,

and not pay due attention to the translated message, or, worse, chastise the translator!⁶⁹ Maybe you had not quite thought of it this way. But why is it, in fact, that translators tend to “manipulate” form, almost invariably –in Spanish-speaking cultures, towards a more formal style– if not to cater to the potential reader’s acceptability criteria in order to ensure smooth communication — or protect their own butt? In this specific case, most Spanish translators would write “*Excelentísimo Señor*,” or, even, “*Su Excelencia, el Presidente de la República de Venezuela, Don Carlos Andrés Pérez*,” next, in a separate line, “*Excelentísimo Señor*,” and then the letter proper. The letter itself would be thereafter “manipulated” into a more formal style than the one we can surmise would follow such a heading in the original. This, as we know, is basic stuff... or is it?

Let us leave the answer in abeyance for a while. Next, by virtue of what theory can “*El rey que hay en Madrid se fue a Aranjuez*” be considered a “translation” of “The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plain”? Either a very, very lax one... or none at all, I submit. Nothing whatsoever of the original “meaning,” except, perhaps, the indirect allusion to Spain (which plays no function at all: “*El pez que hay en La Paz no tiene paz*” (“The fish in La Paz has no peace”) would have worked as well!) remains in the target text. All that counts here is function: a) The text must be “singable” to the same melody, b) it must make some (any!) kind of phonetic point for c) a (in this case Spanish-) language professor to teach to a (in this case lower-class Spanish-speaking) low-class girl. Provided these three conditions are met, literally anything goes. It is not, as some theoreticians –and practitioners!– mistakenly think that this text is “untranslatable.” There is absolutely nothing untranslatable about it –witness text b.i). The problem lies elsewhere. To wit, that a translation –any kind of “translation”!– would be absolutely a-functional — i.e., completely useless on stage. Sure, you may say, everybody knows that too! Do they? Then why do so many translators adamantly seek to translate texts when their “translation” is absolutely useless –if not altogether self-defeating!– for the purposes in hand?

As we can see, the theory governing this “translation” is akin to the one we followed when rendering the goggles ad – except that here there is no sameness of meaning at any level whatsoever. Still, one can find theoretical refuge in the fact that, one way or the other, what counts in either case is function, and function is preserved in both cases – even if at the cost of sameness of propositional content or, less euphemistically, at the cost of “translation.” But have not all b.ii) texts striven to do just that: preserve function in their context — the presumed original contest? And have not all b.i) texts sought, also, to do just that: preserve function in their context – i.e., the context of my argumentation? Would we not –wittingly or unwittingly– be falling prey to a theory according to which, provided function is preserved, anything, literally anything goes — whereby sameness of meaning is not a requisite of translation? And if you now backtrack with a disingenuous disclaimer to the effect that “everything goes sometimes” or that “not quite everything goes all the time,” it will take you a lifetime to find a way out of the theoretical maze: Imagine Newton having discovered that most things are attracted to most things sometimes: he would have come up with the Law of Occasional Gravitation! You may, of course, retort that you could not care less, since you will blissfully continue doing what you do and let obsessed theoreticians like me lock abstract horns on it.

⁶⁹At the Nuremberg Trials, many a –most notably female– interpreter simply could not bear reproducing the foul language by some of the accused nazi criminals... Mind you, this was a trial and they were judicial interpreters!

But there is worse to come.

Take “The price you’re asking is highway robbery”: Let us assume that, in the interpreter’s analysis, this could be a good deal for the buyer/client if only his client (the buyer) can negotiate cunningly. What if the interpreter faithfully renders this outburst as “*El precio que pide es un robo a mano armada*”? The seller takes offence, the communication breaks down and the deal is off. Is this in the client’s interest? Hardly. The interpreter would be doing him no favour by interpreting “faithfully.” A rendition like “*El precio me parece francamente excesivo*” would be definitely better for the client’s purposes in hiring the interpreter in the first place: Not simply understanding what the potential seller says or having him understand what he says, but buying the apartment at a reasonable price. A few paragraphs above I spoke of “self-defeating” translations: here is a glaring case in point!⁷⁰ Of course, the interpreter would be assuming full responsibility for his “manipulation” — but certainly no more than, say, a physician who, bearing the patient’s interest in mind, decides to amputate his leg. This case brings clearly out the interest a good mediator should take in the metacommunicative purposes and, therefore, success of communication — regardless of what he may actually do on this basis. Here, loyalty to his client⁷¹ (an ethical concern) takes clear precedence over faithfulness to his “text.” My question is: Is this case of “manipulation” different from the “Dear President Pérez”/“*Excelentísimo Señor*” example? I suggest it is, in essence, a matter of degree. In both instances the translator/interpreter would be catering to the interlocutor’s acceptability criteria in order to ensure smooth, and eventually successful, communication. If your theory does not make room for such interventions, I, for one, would never trust you with a letter to a potential employer or hire you to help me buy an apartment.

I submit, then, that all b.ii) texts “work” better in their presumed context than would b.i) texts, regardless of whether we consider them translations. Insofar as you stop agreeing somewhere down the list, then your theory diverges from mine. This would be a simple academic matter were it not for the fact that, governed by such different strategies, our “translations” would become themselves ever more different — which shows that every translation, or, more strictly, “act of translation,” good or bad, is the practical incarnation of a theory — more coherent and apt or less, conscious or unconscious, explicit or not. I venture to posit that your disagreement would be not so much on whether these renditions “work” better, but rather on whether they theoretically are, indeed, translations, and whether it practically behoves a translator to produce them *qua* translator (i.e., *qua* “translations”) if they are not; that is, whether a “translator” has the “right” to do something other than “translating.” What would the company addressing President Pérez, the translation agency hiring the translator, President Pérez himself, “My Fair Lady”’s producer (or the public!), the buyer or the seller think? Would they appreciate your “manipulation” or take you to task for it? Your theory, I submit, ought to be a function of the hypothetical answer. If it is not, you may be wise to revise it.

As you can see, unless you stepped down at the first stop, no matter how far you may have followed me down the list of examples, you are amidst a theoretical conundrum (which may not have bothered you at all until now). If we assert that translation must ensure

⁷⁰You may recall Brazilian president Lula’s interpreter saving his boss’s face by claiming —at the expense of his own— that he did not “understand” Lula’s potentially embarrassing statement to the effect that Namibia (the country he was visiting at the time) was so clean it did not look like Africa.

⁷¹See, for instance, Nord, Christiane: Skopos, Loyalty, and Translational Conventions, Target 3:1, pp. 91-110?

sameness of meaning and, therefore, “yes” can only be translated as “yes”, the jacket is way too straight. If we say simply that, depending on context, yes can be “translated” as “no,” it becomes way too loose. Is there a way out? I think so. We can, indeed, aver, with those who left our train of thought at the first dilemma, that a “translation” is such when it says “the same thing” in a different language, whereby, since some ways of saying the same thing are better than others (in the same or different contexts), some translations will be better than others. End of story.

Anything else, regardless of functionality, is not a translation but an adaptation, a recreation⁷², a completely new text with the same functionality or simply nothing. End of story.

A translator’s job being to translate, everything else is done by somebody else. End of story.

So if you want to localise your software don’t seek a “translator,” but a computer specialist with bilingual and bicultural competence; if you want to adapt for singing the lyrics of a song, don’t look for a “translator,” but a lyrics (re-)writer, and if you want the interpreter to help you buy a cheap apartment, don’t hire an “interpreter” but a sly negotiator who speaks both languages.

Needless to say, translators, including you and me, my unknown friend, do not normally relinquish all those “non-translational” jobs and blissfully adapt, recreate, add, clarify, make explicit, turn implicit, write something completely new or decide to omit altogether whole chunks of information at every turn... My theoretical question is: do we stop being translators? Are we only intermittent translators? I so, what are we when we decide not to “translate”? And my practical corollary is: may we “legitimately” do so, and, if so, up to what point and under which circumstances?

We can compromise: Understood in its widest possible sense, as the product of a translator’s work, as a “translational act,” “translation” may or may not entail “sameness of meaning” at any specific level — it may end up in complete “absence of meaning,” for instance, when the innocent joke that becomes offensive if translated or information that is useless or redundant for the new reader is simply omitted. We, professional translators, on our part, would know that in this case we would be speaking of “translation” *pour la galerie*, since the client will probably not notice or care about the difference. But we would also know that whenever we shirk from sameness of meaning we would be doing something other than “translating.” Can we give it a name? What are we **always**, even when we depart from translating?

My answer: interlingual mediators, who, as such, basically translate, since, basically, what is expected of a “translator” is that he say (more or less and, again, basically) “the same thing” in his new text. But by far not always. Of course, if it is necessary or convenient that the reader understand what the original says warts and all, then we will try and reproduce in our texts all the warts (as a judicial interpreter does when interpreting the accused before a court); but then, if it is necessary or convenient that the new reader understand that the goggles are not unbecoming and no rendering of the semantic meaning proves functional, we may simply say that they are elegant. If we consider essential that the reader find the text funny, then we will try to make him laugh whatever it takes. If we think that he ought to understand the semantic meaning of a text, then we will decide to stick to the semantics of the

⁷²Which, again, pushes the definition problem but one step away: what is, now, an adaptation or a recreation.

original, no matter how awkward the result. If we feel that what counts is not what the song “says,” but the point it makes, then we shall endeavour to make the same or a similar point any which way. If, in our judgement, it is not the point that counts, but what the song “says,” then we will not give a hoot about “singability” but would not go for an awkward semantic translation either (as is the case with supertitles in opera). Obviously, not all translators will agree on any specific way of “translating” any specific texts, (we ourselves may think one way at one time and another at a different time — for instance, when editing our translation) but they will always –if unbeknownst to them– end up saying, on the basis of the original, a) what the intended interlocutor is meant to understand b) the way it is meant that he understand it — regardless of whether it is the same, a similar or a different thing, or none at all. That is the “constitutive”⁷³ rule of interlingual mediation; the name of the game translators play always, even when they cannot or choose not to “translate.”

Naïve translators will systematically think that the new reader must become aware of “the full meaning of the original”: what the original says, all that the original says, nothing but what the original says, and –God willing, the target language permitting and their acumen enabling– as the original says it. Most inane, awkward or, at best, not altogether functional translations are symptomatic of such theory. More sophisticated practitioners will be less awed by the original and more mindful of the larger metacommunicative context. Insofar as they are, they will be less afraid of “departing” from the original and ever bolder to (re-) “create” their own texts – provided such “freedom” and boldness are best for the purposes in hand.

If you are one of the latter ilk, this is what you would normally do: First and foremost, you would (try to) determine the required functionality in the target language/culture (on your own, or in consultation with colleagues or the author/commissioner/reader). Second, you would establish clearly whom you are beholden to professionally — where your loyalty lies, whose interests are to be prioritised by your rendition. Thirdly, you would determine the deontological limits of your discretionality under the specific circumstances (there are certain things that you will not do because your professional ethics will not allow you to). And, fourthly, you would be ready, then, to be as literal or to take as many “liberties” as you professionally deem fit. In other words, you would be ready to exercise your professionally liable discretion (you may, indeed, call it “freedom”).

Vis-à-vis the original, the exercise of this professional discretion will lead you at every turn to say something more, something less, something different or nothing at all. “Translation” proper, saying “the same thing,” will be an ideal ground zero, a point of reference from which you will have no qualms in departing even if you could stick to it, provided departing from it is the best option for the task in hand. This will not, in itself, guarantee that your “translation” will be apt as a chunk of speech or text (that is a matter of talent and ability), but, unless these pre-requisites are in place, no amount of linguistic prowess or terminological precision will carry the day.

To sum up, then, if (as, incidentally, mine does!) your theory says that a “translation” is such if and only if it says “the same” as the original, but that, as a “translator,” you ought not, therefore, do anything but “translate,” you will soon be replaced by a machine: they are

⁷³See Searle, John: *The Construction of Social Reality*, The Penguin Press, London-New York 1995 (see, also, <http://ontology.buffalo.edu/smith/articles/searle.PDF>).

getting dangerously close to doing just that as well as you, but much faster and cheaper. May I urgently suggest that you switch theories.

If, on the other hand, your theory says simply that a “translation” is such by being duly functional, and that, therefore, (in some contexts) anything goes, many a client will take you to task for not having “translated” and you will be at a loss to defend your choices.

If, instead, your theory says that a “translation” is indeed such by saying “the same thing,” but that “saying the same thing” is a different game from “saying the right thing under the circumstances,” and that what behoves you, even if you call yourself a “translator,” is precisely that, you stand a much better chance of a) making the right choices⁷⁴, and b) come up with a coherent explanation thereof — one, moreover, that will help educate the less obdurate clients into accepting our own professional norms⁷⁵ the way they have no problem in accepting those of dentists or plumbers. More transcendently, you will be propounding a new vision of your professional endeavour: not any longer simply to enable communication, but to facilitate it a hell of a difference!

POST MORTEM

This theory brings with it what, to my mind, is a revolutionary insight: At whatever level one seeks it or tries to define it, equivalence, the bane of translation theorists and practitioners since time immemorial, is not the condition of translational activity, but its consequence, and, therefore, a sheer post facto statistical coincidence, made more rife, precisely, because so many translators fall prey to its myth. I dare say that most “bad” translations are such not because they lack a sufficient degree of equivalence, but because they pursue it to the most outlandish, nay, ridiculous lengths.

One last thought: There is no human activity that is not governed by an implicit or explicit theory. The problem with implicit theories is that they cannot be criticised, compared, checked against practice and developed. A theory is pretty much like a map: it will not “take” you anywhere, but it will help you find the best way according to your needs: the shortest, or the easiest, or the fastest, or the most scenic, or the cheapest, or the most challenging. The decision is always yours. But only a map that shows describes and explains all the possible roads will allow you to make a knowledgeable, educated choice.

⁷⁴The right choices are strategic (whether or not to say “the same thing,” or add, omit or otherwise “manipulate” content and/or form), and tactical (what actually to say in the target language). A mistaken strategic choice will not be saved by any number of right tactical choices, whereas a right strategic choice may be marred by wrong – or simply awkward – tactical choices. .

⁷⁵See Chesterman, Andrew: (1993).

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT AUTHORITATIVE OR DOCUMENTARY TEXTS THAT WE CANNOT MANIPULATE THEM AS IF THEY WERE BY SHAKESPEARE?⁷⁶

Introduction

In my *General Theory of Interlingual Mediation* (forthcoming, I hope), I point out a rather puzzling paradox: A literary translator is more or less free to tamper with his original at will (to “manipulate” it as the euphemism has it), but fie the mediator that dares “manipulate” a birth certificate, a *résumé*, or a UN draft resolution on the establishment of dates for an international conference on biodiversity! Is it the very concept of “manipulation”? Is it the nature of literary and non-literary texts? Is it the nature of literary versus non-literary translation? Or is it the nature of literary as opposed to non-literary translators?

We cannot begin to answer the question unless we have a clear notion (read “theory”), on the one hand, of speech and, based upon it, of literary speech, and, on the other, of translation and, based upon it, of literary translation: No theory — no dice!

García Landa describes speech as the mutual production of social perceptions in a specific social situation governed by a specific *exponential field*⁷⁷ consisting of subjectively internalised and systematised linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge that -in order for communication to succeed- both interlocutors must activate. This linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge (including the relevant social praxis) activated in order to produce or comprehend speech he calls the *hermeneutic package*. The object of a speech perception is meaning meant, a *linguistic percept* (*intended -LPI-* or *comprehended -LPC-* as the case may be) consisting of a *noetic plaque* effable in propositional form and an *emotive relief*; this comes to the speaker’s awareness⁷⁸ clothed in second-degree, speech signs⁷⁹. It is essential to bear in mind that the relationship obtaining between the cause or object of both a natural and a speech perception and the resulting percept is one of *identity*. A percept is identical to its object, not similar, analogous or equivalent to it: I perceive -however imperfectly- that tree, not one like it; similarly, I perceive that which I wish to convey, not something like it. And you will have understood what I wish to convey if you also manage, on the basis of the sensorially perceptible stimulus that I am producing to that effect, to “see” that which I wish to convey, not something like it. In other words, communication will have succeeded between us if *LPI=LPC*. Still, you -or even I- may have an imperfect, skewed or partial perception of my intended meaning. Insofar as such is the case, communication fails totally or partially.

⁷⁶ Published in *Rivista Internazionale di Tecnica della Traduzione* 6, pp. 1-18.

⁷⁷ All the terms -whether my own or pilfered- that are relevant to my own concept appear in bold italics.

⁷⁸ A moot question that both García Landa and I trying to resolve. If, as I tend to think at present, meaning meant comes to the speaker’s mind as a perception, then an *LPI* is the object, or cause, of it and it is perceived by the speaker himself as an *LPC* (the first and often only perception of his *LPI*, which need not be made manifest externally for an interlocutor to perceive in turn). In this case, the interlocutor’s *LPC* would be a **second** perception of the same *LPI*.

⁷⁹ Second-degree in the Pavlovian sense, i.e., as opposed to first-degree or natural signs, which we share with other animal species.

It is also crucial to note that both the linguistic signs that produce the percept and the emotive relief that envelops it vanish from awareness almost at once, so that only the noetic percept is stored in medium- and long-term memory. In most cases, for instance, we can remember what the poet “said,” but hardly the words he used to say it; we can also remember that what he said affected us in a certain way, but we cannot actually re-experience the effect unless we re-perceive the stimulus. The same happens with natural perception, we can remember that a certain wine was velvety and that we found it exquisite, but we cannot re-experience the actual feeling unless we taste it anew (of course, the newly experienced feeling may well not be as we remembered it). The great difference -and the enormous advantage- of speech percepts over natural ones is that we can memorise them: we do not need the actual reproduction of the natural, first-degree stimulus to re-evoke noetic content, nor do we actually need the acoustic stimulus to “(re-)hear” the words. This manipulability and re-effability of speech percepts, i.e., of our representation of the world, our feelings, our will, our desires, by means of a second-degree signal system of signs with conventional semantic value -the product of biosocial evolution- has ensured the survival of the species, and, at the same time, its uniqueness. It made possible, for starters, the synchronisation of hunting and, generally, that which Searle (1995) calls “collective intentionality.”

The fact that noetic content can be verbalised without much ado is essential for communication and translation: The species has survived against all natural odds because we can communicate “what we think;” the relative ineffability of “what we feel” has not stood in the way of our discovering penicillin, figuring out the speed of light, guessing at the existence of anti-matter, building the pyramids, putting together the Space Shuttle programme or devising *penne alla arrabiata*. This ontological difference between the noetic and the pragmatic (let alone between the noetic and the poetic) explains, for instance, that there is but one science, effable in principle in any language, and as many literatures as there are social groups and lects — and it specifically explains why literary translation has long remained a breed apart, stubbornly remiss to theorisation (not anymore, however). García Landa’s revolutionary insight of speech as a social perceptual process opens wide the door for a new, refreshing look at speech and translation. Indeed the primary social function of speech is the mutual production of noetic perceptions; and that is, also, the primary social function of translation - a language game the constitutive rule of which, quoth García Landa, is the reproduction of the same percept by means of a new linguistic vehicle in a new social situation. Since our social perceptual apparatus consists of both our first-degree natural ability to hear what speakers say and our second-degree hermeneutic ability to “make sense” out of the noises they proffer, in order for a speech percept to be successfully produced, the subject of comprehension must be equipped with the relevant sensorial⁸⁰ and hermeneutic wherewithal, and be able to activate it in the specific social situation and apply it to the specific act of speech.

This revolutionary concept, however, has two limitations:

If we take it literally, then comprehension is a binary, all-or-nothing proposition: either you “see” what I mean or you do not. This is, indeed, the way that things work out on line, at

⁸⁰Needless to say, the initially acoustic stimulus has now been transmuted into visual images, whilst the deaf literally “see” speech, and the deaf and blind actually “feel” it as tactile pressure on their nervous terminals. The nature of the first-degree perception (acoustic, visual, tactile) does not stand in the way of second-degree percept — although it certainly imposes its own limitations and opens its own possibilities: acoustically produced speech is 100% linear, visual and tactile speech is both linear and spatial.

the micro level of the units of sense that progressively amount to speech comprehension (and production). Linear comprehension, however, is further processed -even on line- ending up in an integrated, systematised and **critically analysed** metarepresentation of globally intended meaning.

Here, at the level of metarepresented meaning, operate the socially relevant contextual effects of comprehension: *cognitive* and *qualitative*, i.e., the impact of noetic comprehension on the subject's assumptions and what that impact "feels like" - i.e., the cognitive and emotive reverberation of noetic comprehension. It stands to reason that informative texts are functionally less dependent on non-cognitive effects than expressive or appellative ones, and even more so that literary texts swim or sink on their qualitative effectiveness, which is ultimately aesthetic. Functionality is, in this context, synonymous with relevance: Each subject decides (mostly unconsciously) the relevant degree of sameness of propositional content and the adequate quality of effects that are sufficient or optimum for his nonce purposes: Regardless of the journalists' and the editor's concept and intentions, no reader reads all the newspaper, nor does he read what he does actually read with the same degree of intellectual interest or emotive involvement (which ultimately determines intellectual interest, of course).

The critical (often unconscious and more or less immediate) meta-analysis of meaning comprehended, moreover, is performed exclusively on the basis of the subject's intellectual ability and interests as fuelled by his emotive involvement. Whereby hangs a tale: It is not enough for the subject of comprehension to be equipped with the relevant sensorial and hermeneutic tool kit — he must be ready to apply it properly. All too often, it is not the case. It is not enough to be able to understand: one must be **willing** to understand. Since one cannot simply refuse to understand the way one can refuse to speak, resistance to understanding only works "innocently" if it is unconscious. The same applies to one's resistance to speak: the only way we can "innocently" not say what we really mean is when we are not aware that we are hiding it.

And why would a speaker be unwilling to speak or an interlocutor unwilling to understand if not for the fear of the **effects** of comprehension? In order for communication to succeed both parties need, for sure, a shared hermeneutic package, but they also need what Toolan (1996) calls *mutual orientedness* — a Gricean conscious and, above all, unconscious, emotive disposition to cooperate, to make themselves understood and to understand, i.e., aptly to apply their hermeneutic ability. This cooperation can only be ensured if the interlocutor's emotive feathers are not ruffled the wrong way. The speaker may well wish to do exactly that, of course: if he manages, he succeeds; if he does not, he fails. Depending on a party's motivations and intentions, then, metacommunicative success may equal communicative failure and vice versa. In any event, communicative success is measured on two levels: noetic and pragmatic. García Landa's model applies only to the noetic level (which, let me repeat, is the core one). But communication may well succeed noetically and sink pragmatically — or the other way around. Interpreters know it very well: if you want them to laugh, you better change the joke! At the pragmatic level, we thus have the counterpart of the shared hermeneutic package: mutual orientedness and the ability to apply it successfully. We need to have the will and ability to induce and experience feelings — the success of the poem depends both on the poet's literary skill and on the reader's literary sensitivity. In the case of aesthetic effectiveness, we could speak of a shared *emotive package* — otherwise, the reader remains unmoved or, worse, gets irritated.

Human communication aims, then, at more than the sheer exchange of *LPs*. Between speaker and interlocutor there travel many different layers of meaning — even though in communication through speech all these different layers are grounded in noetic meaning and are “peeled off” as metarepresentations on the basis and as a consequence of noetic comprehension. A crucial branch of this process has to do with metarepresenting the speaker’s motivations, intentions and feelings. It is not enough, in other words, for two people to understand what they are saying to each other in order to ensure metacommunicative success. Metacommunicative success necessitates what I term **relevant identity** between meaning meant and comprehended, i.e., such a degree of noetic comprehension between meaning meant and comprehended that is **sufficient** (from barely enough to optimum to full), and of pragmatic correspondence between intended and achieved contextual⁸¹ effects that is **adequate** (from barely acceptable to optimum) for the larger social stakes at hand. Successful metacommunication, thus, entails both more and less than sheer perceptual identity between meaning meant and understood.

This, so far as non-mediated, monolingual communication. Similarly, if we look at translation as the sheer reproduction of noetic meaning in a second speech act, we are describing only part -if a crucial one- of what translators actually do. I think it more practical, therefore, to think of translation as interlingual mediation, the constitutive rule of which is not simply to reproduce meaning meant but actually help achieve this relevant, second-degree cognitive *cum* pragmatic understanding. Since the metacommunicative stakes and purposes may not be totally or partially shared by all participants and “stakeholders” in the mediated event -the author, the originator, the mediator himself, or any particular (group of) addressee(s)- it is up to the professional mediator **expertly** to decide -on the basis of his deontological loyalty to his client as well as to the profession at large- the degree and nature of noetic identity and pragmatic correspondence that counts as relevant at each moment for the larger social stakes in hand.

In other words, unless we take stock of the metacommunicative motivations that lead both speaker and interlocutor to speak and to try to understand, and of the effects intended by the former and experienced by the latter, we end up with an extremely impoverished picture of human communication, let alone translation: True, speech is produced and comprehended as a sequence of percepts, but, as we have seen, the metacommunicative **purposes** that lead people to produce and comprehend speech and the effects they expect thereby are too decisive to be ignored. For simplicity’s sake, we can amputate the speaker’s motivation preceding the double act of speech by the speaker-translator-addressee triad and the effects on the addressee(s) after its end, but the effects on the translator as a first subject of comprehension and his motivations as a second speaker cannot possibly be excised from the middle. This explains the translator’s **inescapable** if mostly invisible “visibility.”

In direct communication, speaker and interlocutor have no one to help them communicate, but a mediator (a friend, the bartender, a lawyer, a marriage counsellor) has a chance -and in the case of a professional mediator, a deontological **obligation**- to cater more

⁸¹Let me remind you that by contextual effects I understand both cognitive and non-cognitive, emotive or **qualitative** (from strictly pragmatic to aesthetic) effects. Non-cognitive effects are not related to a change in the subject’s assumptions but to the subject’s feelings about those assumptions and are not equal to propositional enrichment or any other kinds of metarepresentation. Qualitative effects are, however, the by-product of cognitive effects, themselves a by-product of noetic comprehension. Qualitative effects, in other words, are produced **by** and (more or less immediately) **after** noetic comprehension.

specifically to either notion of relevance and acceptability depending on where his loyalty lies. When speaker and interlocutor need not just any mediator, but an interlingual one, and when, to boot, the act of speech production is separated in time, space and culture from that of speech comprehension, the thing gets so complex as to become at times unmanageable. Given the new social coordinates and, especially, the systematically more marked asymmetry in social and individual experience, interests or individual sensitivities and hermeneutic ability, the interlingual mediator must establish, as I pointed out, what counts as relevant identity of meaning under the new circumstances for the larger social stakes (larger than any isolated *ad hoc* understandings of individual segments of the arch-act of speech). This insight allows us, finally, to understand “manipulation”: The mediator “manipulates” the original in order to achieve a new balance between cognitive and qualitative contextual effects. Depending on the new balance intended (intended by the mediator — if normally at the behest of someone else: the speaker, the mediator’s addressee(s) or the translation’s originator), the mediator may, nay, must, “tamper with” both form **and** content.

Similarity, isotopy, equivalence and representation

My contention would be that what a literary or documentary translator -as opposed to, say, an adapter or a localiser of a pragmatic text⁸²- would normally seek to achieve is to **represent** a text in the target language and culture. In that respect, I cannot but agree with Goodman (as quoted by Ross 1981) that similarity is totally irrelevant to representation. In order to represent a three-dimensional image in perspective, for instance, the artist must distort it; this distortion is, precisely, what makes it look **real**. Something analogous happens when a translator seeks to represent a foreign work in a new linguistic and cultural medium. As Goodman stresses, the goal of a literary (or, add I, documentary) translation that is meant to represent the work in the target language and culture is maximal preservation of what the original **exemplifies** -whether a sonnet or a death certificate- as well as of what it says. Ross adds that this emphasis on the importance of exemplification in translation is salutary, for we must indeed be concerned not only with the meaning of a work, but also with the kind of text of which a work or any of its components is an example (1981:13).

Similarity must, then, defer to equivalence; except that equivalence has also been traditionally understood as a one-tier proposition (semantic, lexical, metric, effectual, etc.). If global identity of perception is pursued, then equivalence itself must defer to a package representation, in which well-nigh nothing may end up being similar or strictly equivalent in the end. The same applies to isotopy: any statistical and other analyses of what becomes what in parallel or translated texts or corpora must always bear in mind that isotopy and inter-textual synonymy and isonymy, important as they indeed are for different pedagogical or professional purposes, are **secondary** with respect to the relevant perceptual identity pursued -and achieved- in each case.

There is, then, an added factor about the literary (as opposed to merely “informative”) translation of a literary piece that of its **representativity** *vis-à-vis* the original. In this respect, literary translation abuts, as we know, on the documentary. Of course, most readers are “innocent” and have little if any idea of what the original “looks like.” I, for one, learned

⁸²A hybrid case would be that of an adapter (or “localiser”) of a literary text with a view to producing an adapted literary text.

relatively late in life that *Faust* and *The Odyssey* were in verse⁸³, and most people do not know what really makes a *haiku* a *haiku*. It is more or less exclusively the mediator's responsibility to choose how to represent the original by means of his translation. This choice nobody really denies (not even publishers, I am told: in literary translations originators seem to count and meddle less than in truly trivial translations). In translating Dante, for instance, to keep or waive *terza rima*, to give up on verse altogether, to archaize or modernise language, to adapt cultural referents or not, to omit, skip or otherwise "modulate" is, basically, the mediator's socially acknowledged prerogative. A prerogative that most of his pragmatic colleagues, including himself in such an avatar, cannot dream of enjoying. I think this is due to the historical fact that literary translation (including the translation of para-literary works: philosophy, theology, etc.) has traditionally been a labour of love embarked upon by the sufficiently scholarly, leisurely and well off. Once one translates because one damn well pleases, then one is bound to translate as one damn well pleases and that is more or less the end of it (most authors tend to be dead or cannot read the target language anyway). In fact, I have never seen a literary translation criticised on other than target-language and functionality criteria (which is basically all that manipulationists do). I doubt it very much that any literary critic (especially if he is to review one or two books a week) will go through the gruesome task of checking a translation against the original for content — let alone form. This, however, is not how pragmatic translations are judged by "critics" who often are only looking for lexical matches (and screaming whenever they fail to detect them). Both the critics of literary translations and those of pragmatic ones, by the way, tend not to be professional translators - which says a lot about the social status of the profession.

In pragmatic translation, however, the sheer labels "authoritative" or "documentary" seem to shift power away from the mediator, to impose strict limits to his "meddling." In such cases, the kind of formal (including semantic) relationship between original and target texts would appear to be decided upon him — or so many mediators think, and a-critically and meekly accept. But... who decides that a text is "authoritative" or that it is a "document"? Or, rather, who decides that it counts as "authoritative" or "documentary" for the specific purposes? And who decides what kind of special formal relationship is to be pursued as a consequence? Any which way we look at it, the question remains one of social power. Once the mediator "waives" his professional freedom (or, again, his **duty** deontologically to exercise his professional judgement and act accordingly with a view to helping metacommunicative success), once he acts as a physician who accepts to give the injection where the patient wants it, rather than where it is really more effective, all that a mediator is left with is at best powerlessness... and at worst fear.

Just as, in the abstract, out of a specific context and translational purpose, literary texts do not command any specific kind of representativity, neither do documentary nor authoritative pragmatic texts. As with **all** translation, it always depends on the specific communicative and, especially, metacommunicative *skopos*. Take a birth certificate: Its format and the information consigned is mandated by the relevant national authority for the relevant national administrative purposes. The moment such a certificate is needed as a document abroad, however, only the basic data may remain relevant: name, place and date of birth, possibly the parents' names, nationality and a few other (for some purposes, religious or ethnic information may be relevant -even suicidally so- for others not at all). An Argentine

⁸³When I did find out, though, I felt totally abused, insulted, and cheated by the Spanish translators.

translator now based in France is still trying to convince the President of the French Republic that he was not born in “Billinghurst, Postal Code 2457” but in “Billinghurst **Street, number** 2457, Buenos Aires, Argentina.” The problem, as he explains it⁸⁴, is as follows: He was born at Bazterrica Hospital, Billinghurst Street, number 2457; the French bureaucrat -who had before him a “documentary” translation of that most “authoritative” birth certificate- did not know that in Argentina houses can have four-figure numbers (something unheard of in France), he mistook it for the postal code (whilst there was no such thing in Argentina at that time), and entered the information accordingly. A non-literal translation -“domesticated,” if Venuti prefers- that read, precisely: “Billinghurst street, number 2457” would have prevented the confusion, of course, but now that the damage is done, it has cost my poor friend a lot of time, aggravation and money to control or undo it every time. And it also means money, aggravation and time for the French Republic. So who wins by taking authoritativeness and documentarity as synonyms of servile imitation of an original’s form (including, most notably, its semantic form)?

There is worse: A Mexican colleague explained that “When I was asked to translate birth and death certificates for my Government’s relevant institution and proceeded to produce exact copies of the American forms, I was asked to return to the local format and enter just the relevant data. This, they told me, made it easier to find the required information in order to enter it in our local population registry. Nevertheless, the new expert translators enter all the data, whether necessary or not, which delays delivery and increases costs⁸⁵.” The question is why the new translators refuse to translate relevantly (increasing delays and costs to boot!). My educated guess is they are so in awe of “the original” as a document that they refuse to exercise their freedom, nay **duty**, to translate relevantly from the standpoint of the metacommunicative purposes of translation — even though in this specific case they have been more or less begged to do so!

And then there is even worse: A colleague sought her fellow practitioners’ help with the Spanish phrase “*elegido mejor compañero*,” which her client had entered in the *CV* he wanted translated into English⁸⁶. The client, a young Argentine economist who wanted to apply for a postgraduate course at an American university, had consigned as relevant background information that he had been “chosen best fellow student” by his fourth-year college classmates. As an American colleague with vast experience in this kind of translation privately remarked, a *curriculum vitae* is not a *résumé*: The latter must meet different acceptability criteria. Such information is not only totally irrelevant for a US university, but, which is worse, self-defeating, since the mere fact that the applicant considers it worth mentioning will most probably torpedo acceptability by the intended reader, as it seems too childish a claim. A truly professional mediator ought to alert her client to this fact and vigorously advise him to excise it and trust the expert in interlingual and intercultural mediation to decide which facts to mention, how and in what order.

Relevance is universal, and it applies lock, stock and barrel to documentary and authoritative texts and utterances. Do foreign authorities really care to process any

⁸⁴*El Lenguaz* Spanish translators’ discussion forum (el_lenguaz@yahoogroups.com) message #35084, 25.07.2001.

⁸⁵*Uacinos* Spanish translators’ discussion forum (uacinos@yahoogroups.com) message #19073, 3.02.2002.

⁸⁶*El Lenguaz* Argentine translators’ forum, message 39597, 24 January 2002.

information they do not really need? Not any more than the flesh-and-blood people, who are the ones who will have to do the work for their authorities in the first place. What they really need -as does everybody else, whether institutional or organic- is a relevant translation; except that they would hardly let a mediator decide for them. Even though only a truly competent mediator would be in a position to judge relevance of the translated text for the intended user. As we can see, so far the difference between the literary and the pragmatic translator's freedom lies squarely in the latter's lack of social power (and, as a frequent consequence, of individual assertiveness), based on an inherent mistrust of his own expert ability to determine and achieve relevance on the part of both the client and himself. Unfortunately, as we know, many mediators refuse even to try. More than a few simultaneous interpreters, as a case in point, aver that their task is to say all that the original speaker says, whatever the social context, whatever the metacommunicative stakes, however obviously irrelevant for the target interlocutors. Their specious disclaimer is: let the listener process all the information and decide on his own what is relevant and what is not. "Who are we to decide what is relevant and what is not? Who are we to "tamper" with the original? We are just translators: ours is not to reason why, ours but to do and bye!" quoth they. This question, I submit, reveals a biiiiiig problem! A problem that ought to be prevented with healthy doses of (good) translation theory administered precociously at translation school. There are, indeed, situations where any form of active mediation is deontologically taboo, but they are the exception rather than the rule. In any event- the first thing a mediator must determine is, precisely, what his mediating duty *cum* leeway is.

Strictly speaking, of course, in the three cases above, the mediator would not be "translating": he would not be striving for total identity between meaning meant and meaning understood, but for *relevant identity*, actively manipulating his text on the basis of the specific metacommunicative purposes of his translation. In this, he would be "tampering" with the original in a way analogous to his literary counterpart — with a crucial difference: In the latter's case the metacommunicative *skopos* (to inform, to move, to make the reader comfortable by "domesticating" the translated text or to shake him out of his cultural doldrums by "foreignising" it) is normally established by the translator out of his own ideological agenda and artistic outlook (see, for instance, Venuti 1995 and 1998, Robinson 1991 and, most glaringly, Nabokov 1975). The pragmatic translator, on his part, is providing a professional service. His purpose is not really his, but his client's — except that often the client is not even aware that, as any human action, translation (as well as its reading by the intended and other addressees) is a purposeful activity and therefore purpose-dependent. Establishing the metacommunicative purpose of his commission and identifying the best means optimally to serve it is -or, rather, ought to be- **the** decisive component of any professional mediator's expertise. Fie the mediator who cannot or dare nor do anything but "translate"! The problem, then, is not translational at all, but social and, by extension, psychological (*n.b.*: not the other way around). It is not that literary translation is inherently different from pragmatic translation, or authoritative or documentary translation from instrumental or literary translation: The problem lies in the originator's (and, alas!, many a theory-deficient practitioner's) a-critical concept of representativity, fidelity and, generally speaking, "similarity" between the original and the translated text's forms (including, most notably, semantic form) — the root cause of which misconception lies in turn in a thorough ignorance of the workings of speech and relevance. Neither the originator nor all too often the mediator himself is aware that relevance is always *ad hoc*, and that the specific

metacommunicative social purpose that a translation is meant to serve may advise for different kinds of similarity - i.e. for different kinds of formal and content relationships between original and translation. Prevented from using the original, the originator -more often than not unconsciously- expects, as unavoidable second best, **the** translation of **the** original, i.e., a translation that will be, in so far as possible, the mirror of the original. If most originators have come to realise the inadvisability -let alone the impossibility- of such an approach for instrumental texts, they do stick to their uncouth guns when it comes to what they perceive as authoritative or documentary originals. And since they pay the piper, they are adamant about the tune — which normally ends up in the mediator having to play tango on the bagpipe to jarring effect. Again, a most flagrant case in point is the simultaneous interpreter who is closely monitored by the speaker-turned-critic listening for the last cognate. As we know, the implacable speaker is normally a very poor judge of interpretation quality, and his suggested corrections tend to be at variance with actual functionality for the rest of the audience — or worse. Unless initially the mediator (and eventually the originator) has a clear notion of what makes the text relevantly authoritative or documentary for the target user, the intuition that a translation thereof ought to say all that is in the original, as closely as possible to the way it is said in the original, and nothing that is not in the original, whatever the metacommunicative consequences, will lead straight into less than optimum functionality, non-functionality or outright nonsense. We are, thus, back at the need to establish, uphold and promote truly scientific **professional norms** and to have them extrapolated as **expectancy norms** (see Viaggio 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000)

If you find my apostrophising too uncomfortable for comfort, dear reader, pause and look around you: You would not deny that it is up to the physician to ascertain what is best for the patient, whether prince or pauper, and -if necessary, in consultation with and with the consent of the patient- proceed accordingly even if, as any human being in general or professional in particular, he can be wrong, and he assumes thereby social -and legal- responsibility for his analysis, his decisions and his actions. It should not be any less up to the mediator to ascertain what is best for the client (whether author, originator or end-user, whether flesh-and-blood or institutional) and -if necessary, in consultation with and with the consent of the client- proceed accordingly, assuming thereby social -and legal- responsibility for his analysis, his decisions and his actions. Nobody would suspect that a physician might “arbitrarily” amputate a limb: it is assumed that he is always exercising his deontologically accountable professional criteria (in other words, his professional freedom). Why are users of translation afraid of the mediator’s exercising his own equally deontological and equally accountable professional freedom? Worse still: why are so many mediators equally afraid of exercising it? The answer, I submit, is that the profession is not professionalised — i.e. that it is not socially recognised as such. There is, in other words, no institutionalised social recognition of and trust in the mediator’s extra-lingual, cultural and generally communicative and metacommunicative expertise, nor the consequent legal liability for the betrayal of such socially institutionalised trust.

The pragmatic Dr. Jekyll and the literary Mr. Hyde

We have thus entered the murky waters of power. I am sure that things are changing, and not always for the better: Most literary translation is now being performed by anonymous salaried mediators who are every bit at the mercy of originators as their pragmatic colleagues, which

cannot but tend to blur the social divide. Be that as it may, a traditional literary translator (the translator of literature *qua* literature) is moved by his quest for perfection; his *angst* is, always, “How do I reverbalise this in the target language so that my reader, upon understanding, feels what I felt as I understood?” not, “What will happen to me if I translate this or that other way, if I omit, adapt or add?” He needs no financial cajoling or blackmail to translate this way or that for the simple reason that he is not really doing it for money. In fact, most people who translate literature do it for fun and without even the shadow of a hope to be published (I know whereof I speak!). Theirs is mostly a labour both of **selfless** love and respect, of love and respect for literature, the original and the target languages and cultures, the author, his text and the potential readers. A literary masterpiece is, no doubt, both much more “authoritative” and much more important a “document” than any speech by any politician, than any marriage certificate or than any law, except that nobody decides unto the translator what to do about it in his translation. **That** is the difference, even though for his well-nigh absolute freedom, a literary translator pays a heavy price in blood, toil, sweat and tears invested and meagre profits reaped — if any.

The mediator who, come midnight, will grow literary fangs and hair not to be daunted by Shakespeare himself, wakes up, however, a pragmatic hypochondriac, all professional meekness and humility before the greedy translation agency or ill-tempered speaker, especially if he is called upon to translate authoritative or documentary texts.

To begin with, in present day society, we, translators -or interpreters- of pragmatic texts are hacks who have, for all practical purposes, no social power whatsoever (so much so that good old Schleiermacher did not even bother calling us translators at all!) We are, by definition, hired hands working willy-nilly and against time at understanding things we do not give a hoot about, from people we do not give a hoot about, in order to say things we do not give a hoot about to people we do not give a hoot about. Indeed, the first thing that we ask ourselves is, “How do I reverbalise this in the target language so that my client, upon understanding, is not affected too negatively, so that he may then trust me with my next commission?” And next, “How do I go about it without spending too much time and effort so as to be able to tackle the next job or have that drink?” As any worker who is not going to be the direct beneficiary of his own labour and has no emotional stake in its usefulness to others, he may well fall into the assembly-line mentality or take undue liberties, always with the secret purpose of working less! Such a mercenary is best closely watched, his words counted and his punctuality monitored. Such a mercenary hand is, thus, wisely mistrusted and closely watched! A pragmatic translator then, is objectively dependent on his users or, at worst, a client who simply pockets the difference between what he pays the mediator and what he bilks out of the commissioner. He is objectively bereft of the relevant social power to exercise his deontologically responsible expert freedom (the “freedom” that a physician has to amputate) that can only come with the socially acknowledged status of the profession. (It stands to reason: if anybody can claim to be a translator or deign to translate, if there is no socially regulated access to the profession, then there is simply no such profession.)

This does not mean that a truly professional mediator has no ethics. He does, of course. He makes his best effort out of genuine love for the profession and the target language and culture (and, perhaps to a lesser extent, for the source language and culture), and mostly out of strictly **professional** respect for the author, his text, the client or the potential reader. In this, the pragmatic translator is akin to a lawyer who knows that his client is a crook or to a physician who is aware that his recovered patient will resume beating his wife. As other

professionals, thus, the pragmatic translator is moved by professional pride, by love for the profession itself, not necessarily for its *ad hoc* beneficiaries. His ethics are deontological. Except, of course, that since the profession is not socially acknowledged, neither is its deontology. In many countries, most people who translate for money are not truly professional mediators, and clients are not about to give them or anybody else the benefit of the doubt. The situation will persist until such time as truly professional mediators succeed at separating the wheat from the chaff — exactly as other liberal professionals have done before them. Paradoxically, literary translation is, if anything, definitely much less of a profession, but since it is as difficult as it is ill paid, the social controls on a literary translator are much less strict. As a rule, a “professional” literary translator’s only “superior” is the editor -no longer an ignorant client, for starters- whom he will normally feel less intimidated to convince of his choices, or eventually send packing. A literary translator does not have a professional deontology: he has ethics, pure and simple, and needs no one to acknowledge it for him. He has the socially recognised power to exercise the same expert judgement that is normally accorded authors themselves. As is normally the case with authors, moreover, his judgement is acknowledged as expert, but **not** as professional: it is not considered to be subject to a deontology. Again, a literary translator is bound by general humanistic and intellectual ethics alone. In fact, he is almost totally free precisely because his ethics are both trustworthy — and cheap. Here we have the psychosocial combo that explains the literary translator’s “freedom to manipulate.” The mystery, then, lies not so much in texts, but in the psychological profile of the mediator, itself a consequence of the social context of his craft. So much so that excellent literary translators have often proven poor pragmatic ones. Indeed, unless he has become internationally recognised (and works for editors who can pay him accordingly), the literary priest must make his living as a pragmatic peddler. Rumour has it that the great Julio Cortázar -not only a master of XXth century literature, but also an excellent translator of Poe- was rather mediocre when chained to the UNESCO assembly line (a job more rewarding financially, withal, than his royalties at that time). I know personally quite a few talented writers who churn out execrable pragmatic translations. I think that my analysis explains why.

Literary and pragmatic translation

And then, of course, there is the literary component of literary translation. Most pragmatic texts -even appellative and expressive ones- can be relevantly reduced to the comprehension of their noetic or propositional content. Qualitative effects count only negatively, i.e., a mediator strives **not** to produce unwanted ones — which is all that the new reader expects. Let the instructions be clear, simple and short enough; let the birth certificate be translated functionally enough; let the speech by President Chirac sound presidential enough. In pragmatic translation, any competent mediator manages to produce without much difficulty texts that are good -i.e., functional, i.e., relevant- enough for the purposes in hand. A literary translation, on the other hand, is never good enough — that, in the end, is the **only** reason that literary texts are more difficult to translate. As the original itself, its translation is never really finished — it is abandoned.

The great practical difference between literary and pragmatic translation is, in other words, the same obtaining between literary and pragmatic speech; to wit that in the latter noetic content tends to weigh much more heavily than qualitative effects, (which explains why the translation of advertisements and, generally speaking, appellative and expressive

pragmatic texts tends to shift toward the literary end of the spectrum): All I care to find out of my owner's manual is how to use my camera, but I expect more of Dostoyevsky's masterpiece than finding out who actually killed that old bastard Karamazov. The threshold of quality, the sum total of attributes and their articulation that counts as a socially relevant -i.e., functional- text in one case and in the other is different. That is also the difference in translation. The translation of literature is not inherently more difficult (more difficult for whom?). If I am exonerated from producing anything remotely resembling similarity of qualitative effects, I will take a sonnet of Shakespeare any time if the alternative is a piece on nuclear energy!

Conclusion

The problem is that literary translation -as literary writing itself- is never good enough. In other words, pragmatic texts are "easier" because by the very nature of their readers' interest in them, they are subject to less strict aesthetic criteria. Translating homoscopically and homofunctionally a literary piece, on the other hand demands literary acumen. A translator does not have to be a dentist to translate -and most aptly, at that- an article on root canal therapy, but he cannot hope functionally to translate a poem if there is no trace of the poet in him... and there most people -including most mediators- cannot but fail. Literary translation is "more difficult" or "complex" only inasmuch and insofar as literary writing itself is "more difficult" or "complex" than other forms of speech. This outright artistic side of the craft is the heuristic counterpart of the psychosocial translational divide. What would be left of the artist if he were not allowed to "manipulate" his material — even if such material is none other than a great masterpiece by a great master? In the end, however, a literary translator manages "manipulation" not by virtue of the kinds of texts he is translating, but, mostly, because, psychologically, he dares tamper with the original and, socially, he can "get away" with it.

TO TRANSLATE OR TO MEDIATE? THAT IS THE QUESTION!⁸⁷

Second Lord - *He must think us some band of strangers i' the adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: chough's language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic*⁸⁸. William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, Act IV, Scene I.

The wherewithal of successful communication: the hermeneutic package

According to García Landa (1995, 1998 and 2001), in order to produce and communicate meaning, a speaker activates two series of cognitive “kits”: the linguistic systems (phono-morpho-syntactic, semantic, prosodic and register) he has internalised (however imperfectly), and relevant entries of his encyclopaedic and thematic knowledge. Meaning comes to his mind as a percept that is an “amalgam” of ideational content and language signs. He then proceeds to make this meaning manifest by initiating a speech act. The act is always situated, with the general and specific personal and social experience and practices of both parties gravitating upon it. In order for communication to succeed, the interlocutor must activate an adequate representation (*n.b.*, not knowledge but representation) of the linguistic systems applied by the speaker and the same encyclopaedic entries. This means two things: 1) The speaker must speak a language or dialect or sociolect or mixture of languages or dialects that the interlocutor can understand, and 2) the interlocutor must share the same “chunks” of encyclopaedic knowledge activated by the speaker. To these two cognitive perquisites I add two other critical emotive ones: 3) The speaker must be willing to make himself understood, and 4) the interlocutor must be willing to understand. Insofar as these four conditions are not fully met, communication fails fully to succeed. These four conditions constitute the cognitively governed emotive **hermeneutic package** that both parties must fully share in order for communication to succeed fully. Now, this, of course, is seldom possible and never necessary: what counts is that the package be shared “enough”-enough for communication to succeed relevantly, i.e., in a way that is apt for the metacommunicative stakes involved. Since relevance is never identical for any two subjects at any given time or in any given situation (or for the same subject in two different situations) success need not be mutual or equal for both parties to an act of communication. I define such success (for either of the parties or for both) as a sufficient (from minimal, through optimal -which, as we shall see, may be zero!- to total) degree of identity between ideational meaning (i.e., sense) meant and comprehended coupled with an adequate (from barely acceptable to optimal) correspondence between effects pursued and achieved. This means that communication may have metacommunicatively succeeded even if there is no total identity of ideational meaning meant and understood or fail even if there is. What metacommunicatively counts as successful communication is what I call **relevant identity** between meaning meant and understood.

⁸⁷An update of the paper presented at the II Congreso Latinoamericano de Traducción, Buenos Aires, 23-25 April 1998.

⁸⁸By the way, dear reader, did you manage to comprehend the Bard’s direct intended sense spontaneously? It took me several strenuous readings, and I am not quite sure that I have managed.

If translation proper consists in ensuring sameness or identity of ideational or prepositional meaning meant -let us call it *sense* and be done with it!- comprehended across the language barrier, regardless of the metacommunicative social consequences, interlingual mediation consists in something somewhat different: Ensuring *relevant identity* between sense as meant and as understood, i.e. in achieving such sufficient degree of ideational comprehension coupled with an adequate correspondence between effects pursued and achieved. The big difference is that here, the mediator, as second speaker, may pursue different effects (either at his own initiative, or, more often than not, on the basis of the client's brief) to those pursued by the original speaker. Relevant identity, in the end, is always a function of what the mediator assesses it to be. This, fundamentally communicational declarative -i.e., *theoretical*- expertise, this, and not his linguistic knowledge and ability, is what specifically distinguishes the true mediator from the bilingual secretary or the amateur translator. That is why his utmost responsibility is adequately to establish it: all the rest depends on this strategic choice — his linguistic abilities will come into play later, once what counts as relevant identity has been established.

Let one example suffice. This is an announcement that takes up well-nigh a whole wall at the luggage retrieval lounge at Fiumicino airport in Rome:

AL FINE DI EVITARE SPIACEVOLE DISGUIDI, SI AVVISANO I SIGNORI PASSAGGERI CHE POSSONO ESSERE EFFETTUATI CONTROLLI DEGLI SCONTRINI DI IDENTIFICAZIONE DEL BAGAGLIO IN LORO POSSESSO, PER VERIFICARE LA CORRISPONDENZA CON LE ETICHETTE APPOSTE SUI COLLI RITIRATI [36 words]

It may be difficult to believe, but this is the translation that best reveals the form of the Italian original (the kind of translation that merely requires adequate *linguistic* competence):

IN ORDER TO AVOID UNPLEASANT CARELESSNESS, [OUR] DISTINGUISHED PASSENGERS ARE INFORMED THAT CONTROLS MAY BE PRACTISED ON THEIR LUGGAGE IDENTIFICATION TAGS, SO AS TO CHECK THAT THEY MATCH LABELS AFFIXED ON THE PIECES THEY ARE TAKING OUT [37 words]

The text could have been written by Don Corleone himself! Fiumicino Airport people are telling us ‘*You’re a family man. You donna wanna take no luggage that donna belonga to you.*’ The institutional authors’ pragmatic intention is to have passengers keep their luggage stubs... Except that, they never say it for a moment — and it takes them half a wall! The threat, on its part, is veiled: the stubs are not checked to “avoid mistakes” but to dissuade or nab thieves. Such control, in any event, does not prevent mistakes (which will have already been made anyway), but it “remedies” them. But if that were the real intention, the control would be systematic and not random. What the institutional author wants to convey but never brings himself round to say is, quite simply:

KEEP YOUR LUGGAGE STUBS: THEY MAY BE CHECKED [8 words!]

The (approximately) English sign next to the Italian “canonical” verbalisation (boldly ignoring the marked contrast) reads as follows:

IN ORDER TO AVOID BAGGAGE MISHANDLING, PASSANGERS ARE REQUESTED TO SHOW THEIR BAGGAGE CLAIMS TAGS FOR CORRESPONDING MATCH WITH LABELS ON COLLECTED LUGGAGES [23 words]

Obviously, it was written by a non-native speaker (witness the spelling havoc), but his mediating effort in the search for greater relevance by doing away with the obsequious threat is praiseworthy indeed. It is obvious that the “translator” did not have the required linguistic ability to qualify as one of us. But I submit that, linguistic warts and all, his announcement is a thousand times more functional than the “faithful” and linguistically impeccable translation above. He is a better mediator than he is a translator. Now all he needs is to learn some English!

And now to something completely practical

Let us analyse several parallel texts. The first one I found in the parking lot of Ottawa’s Conference Centre:

<i>Unauthorized vehicles will be towed away at owner’s risk and expense</i>	<i>Les véhicules non autorisés sera remorqué [sic] aux risques et frais du propriétaire</i>
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As can be observed, barring the glaring grammatical mistake, both signs interpretively resemble each other so much that it is difficult to determine which is the original (in all probability the more correct English text, but who really knows?). In any event, and again barring the obvious mistake, this is an archetypical case of translation if there ever was one.

The next case is more instructive. It is to be found on a cruise boat used for short excursions on the Ottawa River around Canada’s capital city:

<i>PROTECTION DES ENFANTS NOUS VOUS PRIONS DE SURVEILLER VOS ENFANTS EN TOUT TEMPS, SURTOUT DURANT L’EMBARQUEMENT ET LE DEBARQUEMENT. XXX BOAT LINES N’ACCEPTE AUCUNE RESPONSABILITE AUPRES [sic] DES ENFANTS LAISSES SANS SURVEILLANCE. MERCI</i>	<i>CHILD SAFETY XXX BOAT LINES WILL NOT BE HOLD RESPONSIBLE FOR UNATTENDED CHILDREN. ASSIST YOUR CHILD DURING THE CRUISE AND WHEN BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING. KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE DURING THE CRUISE. THANK YOU</i>
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An interpretive version of the French sign would read:

Protection of Children

We ask you to watch your children at all times, especially upon boarding and disembarking. XXX Boat Lines do not accept any responsibility for children left unattended. Thank you.

There are notable differences between these two texts that go beyond sheer explicitness: First and foremost, whilst the French sign thematises children’s safety, its English counterpart thematises the company’s exoneration from civil liability. Pragmatically, the English text can be more or less paraphrased as ‘*Listen, if something should happen to your little brats, don expect us to pay for it; so if you care about them, you better watch them, OK?*’ whilst the French sign conveys something more like ‘*Please take care of your kiddies, because if something untoward should happen to them, we cannot, alas!, take responsibility*’ — some hell of a difference! Now, the legal culture and system to which both groups of potential addressees belong are the same (it is, after all, one, if bilingual, country) and, moreover, the relevant urban area itself (Ottawa+Hull) strides English-speaking Ontario and French-speaking Quebec, so that the signs are not really addressing two culturally

compartmentalised readerships, the question thus arises as to why the respective authors (or the translator producing the second text) chose to shift pragmatic emphasis. Another difference is in the French ‘*surtout*,’ which, again, stresses, as it were, the humanitarian slant of the sign. Needless to say, I have no idea whether either of the texts served as original (if so, then probably the English one, since the company’s name appears in English in both texts), or whether its counterpart was arrived at through translation. On the one hand, the differences look too “arbitrary” whatever the hypothesised direction. In other words, the texts do not resemble each other enough *interpretively* to be the work of a “translator.” But then, on the other, how did these two texts come about? By spontaneous parallel generation? It is even less probable. My personal bet is that one of them was produced by a translator bent, not on “translating,” but on producing, precisely, a parallel text resembling the original in its two main purposes (to advise and to warn), but with a markedly different pragmatic orientation. In any event, if the second text was arrived at by a translator who, for justified or unjustified pragmatic reasons, decided consciously somewhat to depart from interpretive use, then what did he do? The answer is simple: he chose to mediate actively — to *manipulate* the original. This is what our forefathers, Vinay and Darbelnet (1957), could not see back then, and went the convoluted way of abstracting and describing all manner of linguistic procedures to explain *post mortem* a phenomenon that has no relevant linguistic explanation whatsoever.

The third case is a sign to be found at Heathrow airport:

TO TALK TO CUSTOMS LIFT UP THE RECEIVER

*SI DESEA HABLAR CON LA DIRECCIÓN DE ADUANAS (CUSTOM'S EXCISE OFFICE)
ALCE EL AURICULAR Y UN OFICIAL LE ATENDERÁ*

[If you wish to speak to the Customs Directorate (Custom's Excise Office)
lift up the receiver and an official will talk to you]

These are very different texts: The Spanish version is much more explicit (as is the French one below it), presumably because its intended addressees are not familiar with the UK ways. As the one before, instances such as this are rife and merit no special attention, other than for the fact that the Spanish (and French) signs were certainly produced by translators, who, according to Gutt's definition, chose not to translate but to come up with a presumably more functional (i.e. more relevant) sign for foreign travellers arriving in Britain: Both texts resemble descriptively the same state of affairs in the world, but there is little interpretive resemblance between them: they do not “say the same thing” and are, therefore, the second one is not a translation of the first. As the one before, the Spanish announcement was presumably written by a translator, except that here mediation is both active and overt: the texts are openly different. A definition of translation as sheer second-degree interpretive use does not help in explaining this instance. Indeed, this translator did something more than interpret: he chose to “describe” the same state of affairs on his own.

All that translators do is not translating

Without beating excessively around the theoretical bush, I submit that we all could accept the definition of translation I have been using: Saying by means of a second act of speech in a second language that which has been said in a first act of speech in the original language. If we accept this definition, then translating would entail saying what is in the original, all that is

in the original and nothing but what is in the original -plus, less obviously- as it is in the original. In this case, if a translation fails to achieve the same effect as the original presumably achieved or intended, tough luck: the translator is not there to judge the original but to “reproduce” it and the mirror ought not to be blamed for the face. Paraphrasing Tennyson, a translator’s is not to reason why: a translator’s is to do and... bye!

It is not, of course what Nida teaches us: Ideally, a translator should also strive for equivalent effect, and if equivalent effect necessitates “tampering” with the form and even the ideational content of the original, so be it. And it is not what Reiss and Vermeer (1991) tell us: it is nowhere written that a translation should necessarily perform the same function -i.e., have the same effect- as its original. It is up to the translator -on his own or on the basis of the client’s brief- to determine his translation’s function. Nida places on us the onus of deciding to tamper with the original in order to achieve the same effect (and how are we to know what that effect is?). Reiss and Vermeer make things worse by telling us that the original effect may be of no consequence, that we must decide, ourselves, the kind of effect that our translation is to achieve. Ours is no longer not to reason why, much less to do and bye: We have become responsible for the metacommunicative social consequences of our translation. This is why we need a moral substitute for the God/author who hitherto decided for us the difference between right and wrong; and Nord (1997) provides it: *loyalty*. Faithfulness to an immutable, rather dead text is superseded by loyalty to flesh-and-blood people: to the author/speaker, to the mediator’s reader/interlocutor, the client who orders the translation and to our colleagues — to the profession itself, which is implicitly judged, upheld or defeated with each professional act by each and every one of us.

Translation as a modality of interlingual mediation

In real life metacommunicative and pragmatic factors -motivations, pragmatic intentions, interest in or resistance to understanding, and the effects of comprehension- provide a decisive frame for speech production and comprehension and, therefore, translation. An act of communication is but a moment in the relationship between two human beings that has a history behind and consequences after. By distinguishing between the communicative and the metacommunicative levels, and by introducing these inescapable subjective elements, I have tried to develop a general model of human communication through speech. This is essential if we want to discuss translation practically, since in actual reality there is no such thing as prototypical translation: Every act of translation is, at the same time, an act of mediation. The translator’s transparency, no matter how desirable in certain contexts, is a myth: Translators are human beings who cannot help bringing to their own actions -including their speech acts, and, more specifically, their speech acts qua professional mediators- their subjectivity, history, emotions, ideology, tastes, preferences, likes and dislikes. They may have a professional duty to speak “as if” they were totally impartial, whatever their personal views or feelings, and they may succeed at preventing them from standing in the way of their professional performance, but they cannot stop being the human beings they are. In this respect, they share the boat with psychoanalysts, judges, detectives and other professionals who must strive for absolute objectivity and impartiality. Indeed, behind every act of mediation there is, first and foremost, the persona of the mediator, and the mediator is a complex subjective prism, not a pellucid glass pane. He too understands and speaks on the basis of relevance — he cannot possibly do otherwise, because he too is a product of evolution and natural selection. What he can -and now that the insight is available, should- do is become aware of it and put it to

efficient professional use: He can and must ponder how relevance may be at work in the case of the speaker and of the different interlocutors - direct and indirect, co-present or absent, present or future. Most especially, of course, he must ponder how relevance may be at work with his own interlocutors: he cannot mediate effectively otherwise, wherever his loyalties may lie. If he is working for the speaker, then he can only mediate on his behalf if he is attuned to the possible mismatches between relevance for him and the people he is trying to communicate with. The same applies if he is working for the interlocutor(s). And the same applies if he is working for a third party. If all we have as a translational criterion is sense identity, we can, true, distinguish translation from everything else, but we are powerless to assess degrees of success, i.e., of metacommunicative success — and therefore of translational quality. Any number of methods and strategies, any number of different actual translations can ensure sameness of meaning in a given situation or hosts of situations. Are they all equally valid? Some differences, of course, must be more relevant than others in some contexts — but which, where, why?

If in order for speech -and translation- to succeed there must exist a shared and activated wealth of linguistic and encyclopaedic knowledge, of pre-comprehension schemes and passing theories governed by a sufficient degree of *mutual orientedness* (Toolan 1996)- i.e., a shared emotively governed hermeneutic package- it is obvious that, *contrario sensu*, whenever these different kinds of knowledge are not shared sufficiently or at all, *or* whenever the participants are not adequately “attuned” to each other, speech communication becomes progressively more difficult or even impossible. These hermeneutic and, above all, psychological discrepancies are rife in monolingual communication and even more so when communication is mediated and interlingual. Luckily, in most circumstances these insufficiencies can be remedied (otherwise predators would have taken care of us rather than the other way around): All that is required is that at least one of the interlocutors understand that a) communication will not succeed or is not succeeding, b) in which part of the hermeneutic package lies the problem, or, c) failing that, whether the problem lies in an insufficient degree of mutual orientedness. It happens every day: We speak assuming that our interlocutor both knows enough and is willing enough to produce on the basis of our semiotic stimulus a meaning that will be identical to that which we mean to convey to him, and sometime afterward (because of his expression, feedback, or the very development of the conversation) we understand that he has not understood. At times, such comprehension of incomprehension happens much later, even too late; at other times, it never materialises and we go to our graves perfectly happy that we have understood or that we have made ourselves understood. The same thing happens when we are spoken to and we are the ones who understand that we have not understood (and that our interlocutor does not see it), and we take ourselves the initiative to ask for clarifications. In both cases, the remedy lies either in establishing a sufficiently shared hermeneutic package, or in overcoming our own inadequate orientedness or helping our interlocutor to overcome his. Cognitively, this can be achieved in two ways: a) by simplifying or modifying the originally necessary exponential field (speaking in simpler terms, accommodating the encyclopaedic and linguistic lacunae or the psychological and cultural idiosyncrasy of our interlocutor), and/or b) by enriching his hermeneutic package — which is, by the way, what the translator’s prologues and footnotes do. Pragmatically, the thing becomes more complex: It is hard enough to work on one’s own psychological black box; helping fix someone else’s is an even trickier proposition. Basically, however, it can all be explained in relevance-theoretical terms: We must strive to accept our

interlocutor's (mostly unconscious) concept of relevance despite our own (as we do when we patiently listen to a child's rambling story), or try and attune ours to his (as we do when we realise that our interlocutor shows signs of boredom, irritation or whatever pragmatic effect we do *not* want to have upon him).

At the ideational level, then, normally the responsibility of the speaker is to become more explicit, i.e. to transfer more of the elements of intended meaning from the implicature to the syntactico-semantic explicature or to articulate his utterance with particular attention to the choice of lexemes and syntactic constructions, register and elocution — for instance, when speaking to a foreigner who does not know the language well, or to a child, or to a less knowledgeable or sophisticated adult⁸⁹. The interlocutor's responsibility, on his part, is to make clear that he has not understood or is not sure to have understood properly. I insist on the fact that either procedure cannot but be governed by a conscious and, above all, unconscious predisposition to cooperate in order to achieve mutual relevant understanding. The big hurdle comes when on either side the problems with orientedness are unconscious, because insofar as they cannot be consciously accessed, they cannot be consciously addressed either.

Other things being equal, of course, as is usually the case with any act of ostensive communication, the speaker bears the main responsibility for communicative success, since he is the one with access to his meaning meant (i.e. he is the first one to understand what he means), and, moreover, he is the one who chooses both to initiate the speech act and the semiotic stimulus; but, as we know all too well, other things can be most unequal. In many other cases, the main responsibility falls on the more skilful communicator, who is not necessarily the one with the most knowledge or wielding more power. In the case of the physician and his patient or the mother and her child, it is normally the first of each pair who manages communication. But it need not be so: the more skilful communicators can be the patient or the child. When speaking of the more skilful communicator, the emphasis is displaced from the pre-comprehension schemes and shared knowledge to the psychological disposition and ability to understand and make oneself understood.

Whenever for objective or subjective, cognitive or emotive reasons both interlocutors cannot understand each other, the only remedy is the bridge of a mediator who provides, on the one hand, his greater ability and disposition to understand either of them, and, on the other, his greater ability and disposition to make himself understood by either of them. When predisposition to understand or to make oneself understood vanishes altogether, when the animosity is such that no conscious effort will be more powerful than unconscious emotions, when there isn't even an iota of symmetrical orientedness at either end of the speech event, direct communication becomes impossible, no matter how shared the hermeneutic package. There, either a mediator steps in or communication fails. If the barrier is not too insurmountable, any friend or even a passer-by who is not emotively tainted can do the job. But when the barriers are also cultural, encyclopaedic and whatnot, what is needed is a *professional* mediator: one whose job it is, precisely, to remedy or, at least, palliate such

⁸⁹Needless to point out, the reverse is equally possible: Our interlocutor's hermeneutic package is much more refined than we estimate and we are giving him much more information than he needs. The same applies to any information that our interlocutor has no interest whatsoever in processing. Our responsibility as speakers, in this case, is to become less explicit. There is a fundamental difference, however: Superfluous or parasitic information is indeed a nuisance, but it does not necessarily hamper ideational understanding. In any event, our responsibility as cooperative speakers is to see always to the maximum relevance of what we say, and, as interlocutors, to make it clear in a pragmatically effective way when whoever is speaking to us does not quite manage it.

discrepancies. In different circumstances, the professional mediator can be anybody from the foreign minister of a third country to a community worker. The dialogue that husband and wife can no longer hold directly can be managed by a marriage councillor or, at worst, can be maintained by their respective lawyers.

Whenever to these objective or subjective, cognitive or emotive reasons the fact is added that the interlocutors do not even speak the same language, let alone understand each other, then the professional mediator *must* be both interlingual and intercultural — in a word, us. The interlocutors need an interlingual mediator because they do not sufficiently share the linguistic components of the hermeneutic package: either they speak different languages, or the speaker speaks a lect that his interlocutor cannot understand (which is the same, practically and theoretically). Indeed, unintelligibility may arise out of a lectal variety: the physician may need the mother in order to understand the child and make him understand; a British lawyer may need a Caribbean colleague's mediation to understand or get across to a Jamaican peasant. If the only mismatch between the interlocutors is the linguistic exponential field (say, between physicians wishing to discuss medical problems but lacking a common language), prototypical translation is enough. All they need is someone to ensure ideational identity across their respective languages — which is why many clients do not appreciate the extreme difficulty of simultaneous interpreting: they believe that it is all a matter of substituting an utterance by another. By comparison to that of any other mediator -most notably the literary translator and the dialogue interpreter- the mediating role of a conference interpreter (and most especially in the simultaneous mode) is almost nil — almost, but not quite. Actually, this is how translation has naively been seen and is still seen from the clients' lay eyes or from the theoretically obsolete concept of so many practitioners who, nevertheless, know their languages and terminology to the hilt. A considerable number of conference interpreters see it just that way, unaware that, no matter how important, the linguistic barrier is never the only one standing in the way of *efficient* (i.e., *optimally relevant*), as opposed to merely effective, communication.

In other words, if objective and subjective, cognitive or emotive conditions between the interlocutors are symmetrical enough, and all they need is a common language but do not have it, direct, simple, prototypical translation, with almost zero mediation, is, in principle, sufficient — sufficient, indeed, but almost never optimally relevant. Statistically speaking, however, such cases are most rare: For all its visibility and prestige, conference interpreting at strictly political or even specialised international institutions, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, represents a minute fraction of all mediated events⁹⁰. Even at the most rarefied and formal diplomatic encounter, translation is always mediation, since communication is not addressed by an abstract speaker to an abstract interlocutor, but by a flesh-and-bone human being to another, in an all too real situation. Of course, any normal monolingual speaker with a “natural” ability to speak (i.e., a social ability, socially acquired together with speech, but that soon becomes part of his “nature”) also has a “natural” psychological ability to mediate. It follows, therefore, that any normal bilingual speaker will have a “natural” ability to mediate inter-lingually. This is exactly what Harris (1992) and

⁹⁰For reasons of social prestige, it is simultaneous interpreting -and then at international organisations- that has hitherto tended to be the yardstick and standard-bearer. It is understandable, of course, as it is understandable that most murder mysteries take place among the landed gentry, but as there are many and more typical crimes committed in the shanty towns of the Third World than in the manors of the First, there are many more typical cases of mediation outside the *Palais des Nations* and the European Parliament than there are inside.

Toury (1998) point out. The problem is that between this “natural” ability and the one professionally necessary there is a distance that can only be spanned by dint of learning and practice on the basis of a sound theoretical understanding of the phenomenon in hand. As Déjean Le-Féal (1987) so rightly comments, the “natural” bilingual can only mediate effectively in his “natural” environment, not, for instance, at big international conferences, or in court, or in any other professional event. Even a cultivated bilingual -say, an architect- can be an incompetent mediator outside his sophisticated “natural” environment, outside the ensemble of worlds with which he is familiar; for instance, if he should have to mediate between an illiterate refugee and an ignorant, obtuse and bullying police officer. The “natural” bilingual, who, to boot, faces the need to attend to syntactico-semantic articulation, register and elocution in two different lects of two different languages finds himself in even stormier waters — especially if at stake is the immediate and irreparable lot of a vulnerable human being (a responsibility that I, as a professional conference interpreter of thirty years, have never had to face — not even once).

As soon as the scales tip more towards one interlocutor or the other, prototypical translation is not enough: it becomes necessary to mediate more or less actively.

That I know of, the notion I have been developing before you encompasses, describes and explains each and every act of interlingual mediation and clearly delimits interlingual mediation from all other activities. May I stress that this notion is purely descriptive, as is biology, which describes the human being and the maladies that afflict it. As a praxis, on the other hand, mediation is more akin to applied medicine, in that it is the heuristic application of descriptive knowledge with a view to overcoming a specific pathology: the impossibility of direct communication. The description of a pathology is indeed indispensable in order to find and apply an effective solution. However, mediating speech, as a therapy to the pathology that is in-communication, cannot stop at description: Pathologies are not cured just by having been identified, described and understood — even if they become visible only from and with respect to a theory that describes them. Nor is it enough impartially to look at and describe what practitioners actually do, because even if they all did exactly the same (which they do not), it still would not necessarily mean that they are doing the most effective thing. Bell says it brilliantly:

“Would it be true that individual lawyers or doctors are ‘mere objects of study’ by legal or medical specialists? Translators are practitioners just as lawyers and doctors are” (Bell 2001:157).

It is therefore not enough simply to describe and explain the world of mediated interlingual communication: It is high time to help develop and improve it by determining and fostering the best possible practical approaches. Specifically, the pedagogy of mediating speech aims to allow and promote that a student a) detect all problems as quickly as possible, and b) understand them ever better -i.e., by skilfully applying adequate descriptive methods- in order to c) rapidly determine the best way to solve them within the relevant objective and subjective circumstances, and d) apply more effectively that better way — i.e. by following adequate, scientifically arrived at normative and even prescriptive criteria. Since it is a matter of distinguishing adequate or more efficient from less efficient or inadequate practice, pedagogy cannot but advise for or against such or such other methods to solving the problems faced by mediation, practitioners and students. Now ‘*Do it right!*’ or ‘*Do it better!*’ are injunctions or suggestions that can only make sense within a theory that allows to explain why that other way is wrong or worse. But let me make two short stopovers.

The problem of style

Bakhtin (1978:268 and foll.) distinguishes *first* (simple) and *second* (complex) discourse genres. The former are constituted within spontaneous verbal exchanges whilst the latter - novels, dramas, scientific and ideological discourse- are relatively more evolved, having absorbed the first ones. The distinction is theoretically crucial: utterances must be elucidated and defined by an analysis of these two genres — only thus can we have a clear idea of their nature and, most particularly, of the correlation between language, ideologies and world visions. To ignore the nature of an utterance and the genre peculiarities marking the variety of discourse in any specific domain leads to formalism and weakens the link between language and life. This affects, first and foremost, style. Style is organically linked to an utterance and to the typical forms of utterances, i.e., of discourse genres. The sheer selection by a speaker of a specific grammatical form is already a stylistic act. An utterance is individual, by virtue of which it can reflect the individuality of the speaker (or writer) — an utterance has, therefore, an individual style. But -and this is essential to translation and mediation- ***all genres are not equally apt to reflect an individuality in the language of an utterance***; all are not equally propitious to individual style. The most propitious ones, of course, are those akin to literature. In most genres, however, individual style is not a part of the utterance's design, does not serve exclusively its purposes and becomes an epiphenomenon, a supplementary feature. The indissoluble, organic link between style and genre shows more clearly in the cases of functional style, which is but the style specific to a specific activity domain: Each domain has its genres, adequate to its specificity, and specific styles to match. Wherever there is style — there is genre. Although style is a most visible component of primary genres, in oral mediation it is one of the things that is more negotiable — in most cases there is simply no time to “do justice” -let alone “imitate”- a speaker's style — nor does the speaker himself have the time spontaneously to work on it. This is the reason why the Parisians and García Landa, who develop their concepts on the empirical basis of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation, underestimate the importance of linguistic form: Indeed, except in its broadest sense, style tends to be practically irrelevant for most kinds of oral communication, whether mediated or not. In written texts, on the other hand, style can, in principle, be a) rehearsed, and b) imitated. But, as Bakhtin warns us, its functionality varies from genre to genre.

The dialogic nature of texts

Also, second genres, in most cases, take for granted a delayed-action responsive active comprehension.

“La compréhension réponsive active n'est rien d'autre que le stade initial, préparatoire à une réponse (quelle que soit la forme de sa réalisation). Un locuteur postule une telle compréhension réponsive active : ce qu'il attend, ce n'est pas une compréhension passive qui, pour ainsi dire, ne ferait que dupliquer sa pensée dans l'esprit d'un autre, ce qu'il attend, c'est une réponse, un accord, une adhésion, une objection, une exécution, etc. La variété des genres du discours présuppose la variété des visées intentionnelles de celui qui parle ou écrit.” (Bakhtin 1978: 275.)

[Active responsive comprehension is nothing but the initial, preparatory stage to a response (whatever its form). A speaker posits such an active responsive comprehension: what he expects is not a passive comprehension that, as it were, would but duplicate his thought in the other's mind⁹¹; what he expects is a

⁹¹Which is another way of saying identity between intended and comprehended sense.

reaction, an agreement, an adhesion, an objection, an execution, etc. The variety of discourse genres presupposes the variety of intentional designs of the speaker or writer.]

Second genres are no less dialogical than first genres, except that the obvious finitude of their utterances seems to isolate texts from the vast chain of which they are but a link (whence the accrued relevance of linguistic form, including, most notably, style). Written utterances are always units of a verbal exchange — they too aim at an interlocutor's active responsive comprehension, even if he is an unknown, abstract addressee. In all cases, the writer will take into account his interlocutor and his perceptiveness; in some, the latter's influence on the utterance's structure is reduced to the scope of his specialised knowledge, whilst in others his reaction will be assessed in a more pluri-dimensional way. If we lose sight of this fundamental fact of human communication, if we neglect a speaker's or writer's relationship to his interlocutor and to the latter's own utterances, we cannot understand genre, style, or discourse — consequently, we cannot translate effectively.

An unnatural act

Written mediation is, in fact, the most unnatural. It is indeed paradoxical that whenever we think of translation at the most abstract it is written translation that serves as a model: oral translation is the “marked” concept. That we, textified mortals, cannot see it, that we even think that the written word is the translational and communicative truth and that orality is but a fleeting if interesting epiphenomenon, has led to the greatest problem besetting us. Only if we see the “text” as the inert circumstantial evidence of a living act of speech, an act that was born as the speaker wrote, that became immediately frozen in time and will culminate many times in as many acts of reading await it, an act that, for starters, is subject to the same conditions as any other speech act — only then can we understand, approach and practise translation effectively. Indeed, translation is successful only insofar as it works effectively as communication — i.e., as it is functional for its reader, whilst practice has historically been adequate insofar as translators have understood -if mostly on the basis of serendipity and intuition- that such is indeed the case. Successful literary translation provides living empirical proof: Unless it actually “works” as literature, i.e., unless it actually works as literary speech, regardless of its mistakes, translation fails to make a lasting imprint in any target literature. On the other hand, whatever its philological authenticity and all manner of fidelity marks, if translation does not “work” as literary speech, it subsists, if at all, as an object of curiosity or even devotion to the initiates.

Translation as a form of interlingual mediation

As communication itself, translation has, then, basically two sets of problems: cognitive and emotive. Cognitively, the difficulties lie in a hermeneutic package that is not sufficiently shared between original speaker and the translator's interlocutor. There are a myriad forms in which a translator may compensate or palliate such imbalance: footnotes, explanations in the text, generalisations, omissions, and whatnot. It is emotive problems that pose the genuinely difficult hurdles: Because what really counts for us, humans, is not what is said or how it is said or what we understand, but what it feels like to have understood — much as is what it feels like depends on what is said and how.

The cognitive problems are obvious in the case of legal translation. Given the formal differences in stylistic conventions and the ideational differences in legal concepts, how is, say, a British law to be translated into Spanish: transparently, covertly, domesticadely, communicatively following the target language conventions, or murkily, overtly, foreignisingly, semantically following insofar as possible the source culture conventions with target language marks? And even if the source conventions are discarded in favour of the target ones, what about the semantic differences between, say, *murder*, *assassination*, *manslaughter* and *homicide* as different legal concepts specific to the English language and Common Law, and *asesinato* and *homicidio* which are the two lexicalised concepts in both the Spanish language and Roman Law?

In most cases, however, this kind of problems is relatively easily solved, or at least palliated, since ideational content is always verbalisable -if often not economically or idiomatically- whatever the language, whilst conventions are only noticeable when they are flouted. The fact that all manner of legal and other conventionally marked acts of oral and written speech get successfully -i.e., relevantly- translated every day should be, I submit, sufficient proof of the more or less universal translatability of more or less all pragmatic utterances.

The real translation problems appear when the formal trappings of the original text acquire additional, non-propositional, non-ideational value, i.e., when the qualitative, phenomenal content of what is being expressed is foregrounded, and such foregrounding is managed through the specific marking of the original text. Because, invariably, the new language will not offer the same, or even equivalent marking possibilities, and because there is no systematic correspondence with any particular kind of marking and the *qualia* relevantly communicated. Those *qualia*, which I have subsumed under contextual effects, become particularly sensitive when they are the product of aesthetic perception — the perception, as it were, of the *qualitative* features of a text.

In the original speech act the speaker, in conceiving and/or formulating his intended sense with a view to achieving his metacommunicative purposes, imposes upon himself certain more or less relevant formal constraints. These constraints can be related to the social norms governing the specific type of act (a legal document, a casual encounter, and academic gathering, a love letter) and will linguistically reflect themselves mostly as conforming to them. In other words, the original text will be consequently marked at different levels. If a translation is to perform the same function, this poses two sets of potential problems: 1) the way the target culture norms relevantly affect the new speech act, and 2) the kinds of marking that cannot, may not, should not, should better or must be introduced into the new text.

If communication, and therefore translation, always is to speak in order to say something, to convey sense, it is also to speak *in a certain way*, in accordance with or with reference to certain conventional and/or individual aims, and this entails automatically specific kinds and degrees of marking at all levels. These social conventions manifest themselves in different kinds of constraints, as those having to do with the power relations between the interlocutors (governing, for instance, the use of social distance markers such as pronominal forms in the second person in Romance and Slavic languages). The greater the specific weight of the ideational content, the lesser the specific weight of formal marking and vice versa. There are cases where, outside the wider limitations of register, marking is totally irrelevant, and there are cases where marking is the very name of the game. In everyday exchanges with family, friends, colleagues and other fellow human beings, the minutiae of

marking are irrelevant. In most speech acts to be professionally translated (of necessity more formal than everyday exchanges), the sheer need to convey ideational meaning across the linguistic and cultural barrier necessitates more attention to (*n.b.* more **attention to**, not more **imitation of**) marking if mediation is to be pragmatically effective. In pragmatically loaded speech acts, marking can be of the essence. Advertising comes immediately to mind: Any effective advertisement must be catchy, and catchiness is a *qualitative* phenomenon that will depend on a myriad formal elements (including, most notably, first-degree percepts, such as, image, colour and, generally, graphic design), rather than on propositional content alone. If homofunctionality is of the essence, effective mediation must make prevail these qualitative aspects over propositional content, and that is why it is often asserted (and rightly so) that advertisements cannot be **translated**. Indeed, when it comes to this kind of *ultra*-ideational mediation, traditional models of **translation** are totally powerless.

Interlingual mediation as more, or less, or something other than translation

Interlingual mediation as more than translation

Much has been said about losses in translation, but little about gains. Indeed, gains are more the province of mediation, since they are seldom “induced” by the original. Once upon a time, I was commissioned to translate a brochure for a key ring *cum* remote control device that allowed the user to lock or unlock his car at a distance, whereupon the car lights would start flashing (a feature that is standard nowadays in most models but was a novelty back then). The sales pitch was more safety than comfort, and the typical situation exploited was that of a dark and lonely parking lot late at night. Rather than looking for the car and then fumbling for the keys and then trying to fit the key in the hole, a lady could have the car tell her where it was and wait for her with its lights on and doors unlocked. The translation posed no problems at all. But I realised I had a golden opportunity to get back at English and take advantage of the fact that Spanish does **not** distinguish *safety* from *security*, so I added a title of my own: “*Está seguro?*” (which can be interpreted both as “*Are you sure?*” and “*Are you safe?*”). Perhaps not all too surprisingly, the commissioner hesitated to present his client with such an “unfaithful” translation, but I prevailed upon him. Needless to say, the client was delighted: in that particular respect the Spanish ad turned out to be more effective than the original English - for once, the target language proved more “suited” than the source language. It is not, of course, a matter of the source language being by definition more suited to the communicative purposes in hand than the target language, but that the author, as any other speaker in any other language in any other situation, verbalises his **direct intended sense** using the specific means specifically offered by his language, which, of necessity, will be different from those offered the translator by the target language.

Interlingual mediation as less than translation

A typical case is that of translation constrained to a limited space (newspaper articles, titles, epigraphs, subtitles, etc.). Since English is more concise than romance languages, for instance, the same “semantic” information takes up more space in the latter. The first thing to be determined, in such cases, is what information to do away with altogether, beginning with what is redundant and proceeding to what is less relevant. For that, no green light from the client is normally required: a good mediator knows exactly what is negotiable and what is not in each specific case. But even if there are no constraints necessitating greater concision, there

are many cases in which a good mediator knows it is better not to translate everything, be it in order not to impede intended functionality or, ultimately, to save his client an unnecessary expense. A trivial case would be that of bureaucratic formulae such as the Spanish “*publíquese y archívese*” [to be published and filed] or “*en cuanto ha lugar conforme a derecho*” [insofar as apt and according to law] that often have no functionality in the translated document. But there are more delicate instances. Not long ago, an Argentine translator elicited the help of her colleagues in the *El Lenguaraz* forum with the phrase “*elegido mejor compañero*,” which her client had included in the CV he wanted translated into English⁹². The client was, if I am not mistaken, a young Argentine college graduate who wished to apply for a postgraduate course at an American university, stated that he had been “*elected best fellow student*” by his fourth year class. As an experienced American colleague commented privately to me, an Argentine CV is no an American *résumé*: they follow very different acceptability criteria. This kind of information is not only totally superfluous for a US college, but, worse, it is self-defeating, since the sheer fact that the applicant considers it worth mentioning may well end up torpedoing the intended addressee’s acceptability: It is too childish a reward⁹³. A genuinely professional mediator should alert his client and advise him most strongly to suppress this piece of information and leave the expert at interlingual and intercultural mediation decide what information to enter, how and in what order.

Interlingual mediation as other than translation

A typical recurring case of mediation as something other than translation is that of titles: where is the meaning identity between *À la recherche du temps perdu* and *Remembrance of Things Past* (which is a quotation from Shakespeare)? Movie titles, as we all know, are seldom “translated.” Take this ad for weldinggoggles I had the privilege of being trusted with:

The Goggles that Won't Make a Spectacle of Yourself!

The goggles in question did not look like goggles at all: they were quite similar to regular spectacles, whence the pun. The problem is that the pun cannot be reproduced in Spanish at all. I did not have the model at that time, but my intuition was well placed: I understood that the correlation between pragmatic intention and the effects of comprehension had to carry the day, whatever the semantic “costs.” I reasoned that the obvious advantage of the goggles -the manufacturer’s selling pitch- was, precisely, that they did not look like what they actually were, but much better. I embarked then on an independent search: How would I sell if it had been my job not to translate but to develop a Spanish ad? I will spare you the black box noise and give you my end solution:

Las gafas protectoras elegantes.

[The elegant protecting goggles]

⁹²El Lenguaraz (forum of the *Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*), message #39597, 01-24-2002.

⁹³Mi answer (message #39657, 01-29-2002) was: “For *mejor compañero* (at high school) I’d say *best fellow student*. (And I wonder whether whoever reads this CV will not crack with laughter at the applicant: If an interpreter sends me a CV stating such [nonsense], he does not set foot in Vienna! If you are a friend of the chap, tell him to take it out forthwith.)”

Here, the only remaining linguistic connection lies in “*gafas*.” I had to choose a “name” for the object that would be readily understood by US Hispanics and throughout the Spanishspeaking world. If the ad had been meant for the Argentine public, I could have safely used “*antiparras*” or “*anteojos*” (the former would not have been understood by many US Hispanics, the latter is a dialectal use in the River Plate). I finally decided to put “*gafas*” (which would make an Argentinean or Uruguayan cringe, but not run away). The play on words being, then, most decidedly untranslatable, I could not find one in Spanish (nor did the meagre compensation make it worth my while and that too is a formant of the situation!). So I chose to convey the same **indirect intended sense** (“the glasses don’t look at all like goggles”) as laconically and effectively as Spanish and my talent (yet another decisive factor) would allow me. The “*elegantes*” I thought of injecting, needed to make clear that those specific “*gafas*” were otherwise expected not to be very comely, necessitated an extra marker to distinguish them from regular “glasses.” And thus “*protectoras*” was cabooseed along. None of the choices was “linguistically” motivated by the English text; all of them were imposed or at least suggested by the metacommunicative framework: what my client expected (perhaps even unbeknownst to him) was, in fact, not a translation of “*The Glasses That Won’t Make a Spectacle of Yourself*” but an effective slogan, based on the same attribute of the referent, for a Spanish ad addressed to Hispanics in the US and possibly abroad — he did not want me to translate, to go for meaning identity: He wanted me to mediate in order to achieve optimum correspondence between his intentions and the effects of comprehension on his prospective clients. **He** did not have to know this — but **I**, the mediator, had the professional duty to know it and mediate accordingly!

Here, as you can see, we have exited translation altogether — i.e., there is no identity of ideational meaning. This is a typical case where adequate correspondence of intentions and effects is achieved **at the expense of** sameness of sense, i.e., at the expense of translation itself.

The concept I propose is -that I am aware- the only one that can explain all these different cases, which is its great advantage, since translators are required to “not translate” very often. This, a machine can never hope to do (not in the foreseeable future, anyhow).

Interlingual mediation as more, or less, or something other than translation

Interlingual mediation as more than translation

Much has been said about losses in translation on translation and interpretation held in Buenos Aires in September 1996, Ruth Simcovich, a star Argentine interpreter, told two interesting stories: She is sent to receive an important European ministerial delegation. After the usual formalities, visitors and hosts leave the airport in several limousines. Ruth must accompany the local and visiting ministers’ wives. Despite the screaming sirens, the caravan has difficulty negotiating the dense traffic blocking the 30 odd kilometres separating the airport from the hotel where the visitors will be lodged. The Argentine lady tells her counterpart in her precarious English, ‘*Do you know that there is a polo match and we are both invited?*’ Her interlocutor replies ‘*Is that so? When?*’ ‘*This very evening, at 4:00 p.m.*’ ‘*At four?*’ At this moment, the interpreter, who is sitting next to the driver, confirms her suspicion that neither lady is too keen on going to the field, but neither dares say it first - lest one or the other lose face. She then turns around and asks: ‘*Excuse me, but at what time will the match end?*’ ‘*At seven or so,*’ replies the host. ‘*then you will scarcely have time to change*

clothes and make it to the dinner reception.’ ‘*You’re right. In that case perhaps we should skip the polo.*’ The interpreter thus intervened on her own to save both her clients’ day and face. This was possible because in this case both interlocutors had **convergent face**: their social interests and stakes coincided⁹⁴.

It would have been most didactic if the second story had happened that evening between the respective husbands. Alas, apparently it was not so. Anyway, this time around the European and Argentine delegations meet in Buenos Aires to negotiate a momentous agreement. The Argentine Minister says to his counterpart through the interpreter ‘*I’m sure you’re all very tired. If you wish, we can meet this afternoon.*’ To which the European Minister replies ‘*You’re most kind. But don’t worry: we’re used to it.*’ My fellow citizen insists: ‘*Oh no! You **must** be exhausted, and jet-lagged to boot.*’ Which is met with ‘*Not at all! We are aware that you must be a very busy man and we would not wish to mess up your schedule.*’ It was obvious, says Ruth, that the Argies were as eager to postpone the meeting as the Euros were bent on having it there and then, although (face again, but **divergent**) neither wanted to put his cards on the table. This time around the interlocutors’ interests and stakes did not match — to help one would have been *ipso facto* to torpedo the other, so the interpreter limited herself impassably to organise the traffic of insurances and refusals — in something very much akin to prototypical translation.

We can already see the decisive role that face plays in communication, and most especially in mediated communication, where it is basically up to the mediator to guess or determine its nature.

For the purposes of effective mediation, I find it useful to distinguish convergent from merely compatible face: The interlocutors’ faces converge when they are both actively interested in the same outcome. In such cases, a mediator can decisively help communication. A typical and endearing case is that of young people who have fallen in love and shyly try to overcome the perceived but ultimately inexistent threatens to their face. A Polish movie comes to mind that I saw ages ago: a collection of short stories about hands. In this particularly touching scene, a young man and a young woman are sitting next to each other at a concert. They do not know each other, but it is obvious that they have been reciprocally smitten. The young man is dying to touch the woman’s hand, and we can also see hers impatiently awaiting his touch. All this is observed by an old man who is sitting directly behind them, next to his wife. Suddenly, he slides his own wrinkled hand between the young people’s seats and swiftly caresses the young man’s hand. The latter’s face is filled with elation and he then boldly “answers back” and grabs the girl’s hand. It is now her turn to blush with happiness. The camera leaves their hands tightly clutched. Now that’s a mediator for you!

Short of being convergent, face is nevertheless compatible when the interlocutors’ interests do not necessarily coincide, but are not at odds with each other: The husband suggests going to the movies; his wife would much rather go for a stroll in the park, but she does not want to impose upon him. Except that he could not care less one way or the other, so that his wife’s preference does not threaten his own face — nor would he wish to make her lose hers by refusing. We see that every day when we reassure or seek reassurances that it is *OK* to do or not do such or such thing.

⁹⁴For an excellent analysis of negative and positive face in conversation, see Tzanne (1999)

Active and passive mediation

In the Ottawa and London signs above, we were dealing with obviously active mediation. Regardless of how legitimate or felicitous those acts are, what makes active mediation socially acceptable? A mediator will ‘dare’ take it upon himself to let go of interpretive use and squarely assume ‘authorship’ for his translated text or utterance if he is reasonably assured that he will not be stepping on anybody’s pragmatic toes, i.e. when he can confidently assume that the speaker (if available for comment) and/or originator are consciously or unconsciously willing to accommodate the new addressees’ acceptability criteria and ability to understand. The most obvious example is the translation of children’s literature. Defoe and Swift may be writhing in their graves, but Spanish publishers of children’s literature and their hired translators of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Gulliver’s Travels* do not give a hoot. Nor do translators of opera libretti, the relevance of which entails optimum singability, or those of commercial comedy films, the relevance of which lies squarely in being funny to the target audience. Active mediation is the name of the game wherever interpretive use takes the back seat, and descriptive use either grabs the wheel, or it too is relegated to the rear: active mediation may at times completely disregard both the ideational and the formal features of the original.

Let us go back to the two Mrs. Ministers. The interpreter has mediated actively without infringing her deontology. She has helped her clients on the basis of her global vision of their converging interests and motivations. In this case, the mediator has proceeded without consulting the client who has hired her and whom she owes her loyalty⁹⁵. Ms. Simcovich told me another experience of hers that I find even more telling: She is mediating between two groups of Argentine and foreign businessmen who cannot manage adequately to express their positions. She decides to take over her role as a mediator interrupting the dialogue and asking leave to intervene. The parties, who trusted her totally, accept. She then addresses each group: “*If I understand correctly, your position is such and your objections to theirs such and such.*” Both parties approve the interpreters understanding while understanding themselves that the new verbalisation thereof is more apt. Ruth goes on to explain to each party the other’s position and objections, whereby the negotiation now proceeds more efficiently and amicably, with everybody’s face saved. Let us now analyse another case: During the first planning mission to Palermo with a view to a UN conference to be held there a few weeks later, it behoved me to act as mediator between my team and our Italian hosts. My loyalty, of course, lied squarely with my own administrative kind: at no time was I an impartial mediator. At one point, our programme for the following day was being discussed: Our group were supposed to travel by helicopter to Corleone, and then proceed to Catania, and then return to Palermo by 16:00. My Chief (a stern, non-nonsense Scandinavian) said that we must leave at 9:00. Before interpreting, I asked him, ‘*Do you want me to say that we must leave at 9:00 or do you want us actually to leave at 9:00?*’ Since he trusted both me and my professional judgement, he replied ‘*You say whatever you like, provided we manage to leave at 9:00.*’ So I “translated” ‘*We are leaving at 8:00.*’ It then took a series of face negotiating moves to get the Italians to agree (it was way too early for them!), which I made more or less on my own. Needless to say, we ended up leaving at 9:00. Indeed, there are several reasons that explain a) how I realised the best way to achieve my client’s ends (which were shared with the other

⁹⁵Which is what, acting against all deontological rules and survival instinct, the main character in Javier Marias’ *A Heart So White* does when mediating between the British and Spanish Prime Ministers! What makes his active mediation totally out of place is the power that he usurps.

interlocutors: after all, they wanted to accommodate us, so that face was compatible at worst and at best convergent), b) how I assessed both (groups of) interlocutors' face, and, perhaps most importantly, c) how I *dared* mediate actively, plus d) how I managed to "get away with it" to the satisfaction of all concerned. I think they are all more or less evident. I can hear a choir of protestations to the effect that this was a very special case, that I was not a *bona fide* mediator, that I just happened to apply my professional skills to a situation where I was, too, part of one of the negotiating teams. All of this is undoubtedly true, but it corroborates the theoretical point that I am trying to make.

An even more blatant example was narrated to me by an interpreter who used to work at the highest level in his government. He was accompanying his Minister of Agriculture on an official visit to another country, there was to be an official reception that evening and the Minister, a no-nonsense man of humble peasant origins was extremely ill at ease at the fact that he was expected to make a speech of sorts. *'What shall I say?'* he asked his interpreter. *'Just thank them for their hospitality and say how truly important this visit is for both countries and a few other niceties'* was the reply. *'You know what'* then said the Minister, *'I'll just talk and you interpret whatever you think I should be saying.'* As you can see, this colleague's minister told him exactly what the Lord had told his interpreter: *'I'll gabble enough and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic.'* Old Will Shakespeare had it all right a good five centuries ago! The instructions "to be politic," moreover, may not come from the speaker at all, but from the originator or commissioner, witness the following item from the front page of *The Herald Tribune* of June 14, 2002:

"The failing health of [the prime minister and crown prince of Kuwait]... causes him to lose track of what is happening around him for long periods of the day... He drops the thread of conversations to such extent that the royal interpreters are periodically instructed to tell visiting statesmen anything except his inarticulate meanderings."

Now, this shows an exceptional trust in the interpreter, and it also shows how, when in doubt, an enlightened client will let the mediator make the professional choices that serve his, the client's, best interests⁹⁶.

We can see the importance of **face** when it comes to choose between active and passive mediation: When face is convergent, both parties (or, if we count the client, all three, and if we count also the mediator, then all four of them) are interested in the best and smoothest possible flow of communication. This, in principle, ought to at least give the "translator" a green light actively to help communication — by mediating actively, he is not being more or less loyal to any of the parties: None of them will take him to task if they perceive that the mediator's initiative and interventions actually help communication to the benefit of all concerned. More importantly, this ought actually to *prompt* him to mediate actively. When face is not convergent, however, the mediator's initiative and interventions may be perceived as —and objectively be— a 'favour' to one of the parties at the expense of the

⁹⁶These stories, which I hold to be 100% veridical, tie in with what a legendary League of Nations interpreter is alleged to have replied to a diplomat who took him to task for not having interpreted him faithfully: *'Monsieur, je n'ai pas dit ce que vous avez dit, mais ce que vous auriez du dire.'* ["Sir, I didn't say what you said, but what you should have said."]. *Se non è vero, e ben trovato*, although I, personally, do very much hope that this particular anecdote is apocryphal. Of course, if it is true, then the interpreter's hyperactive mediation would have been more than ethically questionable... whilst providing a plausible explanation of the fact that some of those legendary interpreters seemed to manage forty-minute long consecutive without notes.

other. Particularly in this case, the party who actually pays the piper will normally expect all interventions to be in its behalf — it may request or even demand such interventions.

Covert and overt mediation

Mediation can be overt or covert. When the mediator -no matter how active- remains “invisible,” his mediation is covert. When, on the other hand, his mediation is openly such (as is most notably the case of dialogue interpretation in which the mediator actively and visibly assumes the role of “traffic cop”), it becomes overt. It can happen that only one of the parties (normally either the most sophisticated or the one to which the mediator owes his loyalty) is aware of the mediator’s active role. In such instances, the mediation would be active and overt for that party, while remaining passive and covert for the other — we can see it in the case of the royal Kuwait interpreters: for their commissioners (and anybody present who speaks both languages), they would be mediating most actively and overtly, whilst for the visiting dignitaries who did not guess what is going on (a rather unlikely case, I presume), they would be mediating as passively and covertly as theoretically befits a turjuman caught between two VIPs.

It is all a matter of power

What these anecdotes prove is that the crucial prerequisite for a mediator 担 effective active mediation is the trust of at least one of the parties, preferably both — i.e. the mediator must be socially *empowered* to mediate actively. True, such trust and, therefore, empowerment are sadly wanting most of the time. I submit that this is so because clients have no idea of the specifically mediating role that mediators can play in the interests of communication. And I further submit that they do not because mediators themselves are either not fully aware of their possible role, or not all too sure of the social recognition of their professional credentials. In any event, as we can see, the choice between the two poles is a matter of face and trust and, therefore, empowerment. Also, active mediation, as we have seen, can be overtly or covertly so. In the first case, the interpreter mediated both actively and covertly: most probably, neither lady was aware of the interpreter’s actively taking over the communicative traffic. In the Palermo and the Ministers cases the mediation would have been overtly active to his empowering interlocutors even though it would have appeared as passive to the other party. In the case of the Kuwaiti prince, instead, the mediation would have been overtly active for the originators -as well as, most probably, for his guests- whilst His Highness would have not noticed anything. Needless to add, mediation may be overtly active for both parties when the interpreter literally takes over, as in the case of the businessmen above and many other quoted in the literature. In this latter case, of course, all parties agree to empower the mediator, who has thus earned everybody’s trust and can then mediate much more effectively.

As we can appreciate, traditional models of translation apply most aptly to cases such as the mediation between the Argentine and European ministers as actually carried out, without any need to delve into motivations, intentions, interests and effects. But they are too strict when it comes to explain all others, most especially the last one — and for a very simple reason: the other interpreters *do not translate*! They don’t even bother achieving anything remotely resembling identity of meaning. All that traditional concepts can help us with is to say that, indeed, whatever the interpreters do, it is not translation. That, I submit, is far from

enough - if not from the heights of a general theory of translation, at least from inside the polluted marshes of everyday practice. Had the ministerial and princely interpreters done otherwise, they would, no doubt, have translated well, but they would have been poor mediators. This leads us to the following question: Does the mediator have the right to modify (and, especially, to improve upon) the original? For the nonce, let me stress that, as the cases above show, mediation is a wider notion than translation. The moment very often arrives when the mediator chooses not to translate, consciously renouncing any attempt at producing any kind of meaning identity.

The competing claims on the mediator's loyalty

Loyalty is the compass that allows a mediator to chart his strategic course. Specifically, loyalty will help him establish what counts as relevant identity of meaning under the specific circumstances. Basically, a mediator's loyalty, like that of any other professional, is owed first and foremost to his profession. Professional deontology governs all ethical and technical options down the line. Within this supreme loyalty, and again as with any other profession, a mediator's loyalty is owed to whoever hires his services. A mediator may be recruited by the speaker/author, his interlocutor(s)/reader(s) or a third party. The latter is normally the case. There is, however, a difference between paying the piper and calling the tune. The mediator's loyalty to the profession -and through it, to society at large- poses its own, I submit, supreme imperative to uphold, foster and develop ever more scientific professional norms. As a part of his loyalty to society at large, for instance, I think that a mediator should be at the forefront of good language use — although never at the expense of intelligibility. As an expert linguist, he has a mission to uphold, foster and help develop his language. Mediators are at their language borders and should play a decisive role in regulating -insofar as possible- incoming traffic. Spanish -as well as, I presume, most other net importers of translation- is rife with moronic calques and ill-derived or parasitic neologisms. I am not asserting that mediators should be a conservative force, not at all: I am asserting, though, that, next to the great masters, and on a par with other professionals influencing use and taste (journalists, non-literary writers, politicians, celebrities and, generally speaking, public personalities) they should help manage change and evolution. In this respect, mediators should be neither behind their users nor so far ahead of them as to become irrelevant. They should, I submit, remain with their users, but leading the way. Ideally, a mediator should be an expert linguist in the broadest sense of the word: an authority on his languages, an expert grammarian and a consummate communicator — in short, a true *professional*. We are still far away from it, but this is the only right, progressive way. And there is something else: Functionalist approaches have rightly been taken to task for implicitly accepting an a-ethical, "everything goes." Yes, a professional mediator, as any other professional, owes his loyalty to the client -once he has accepted him as such, that is- and accepting a commission is both a deontological and generally ethical act. Loyalty, however, is not to be confused with obedience or submission — let alone obsequiousness. As any other human being, a mediator should be more than a mercenary fighting other people's wars. There is, always, a non-mediation specific higher moral instance, which almost alone among translation scholars, Peter Newmark has always upheld explicitly. This, of course, escapes our subject, and that is, I am sure, why other authors have not dwelt upon it. But I think it ought to be remembered: professional deontology reigns supreme as the

profession-specific manifestation of ethics. No other claim ought to supersede a mediator's loyalty to the profession, itself subject to his overall ethical posture as a human being.

Conclusion

From the standpoint of relevance theory, mediation (whether interlingual or not) would initially appear as a synthesis of both descriptive and interpretive use. The mediator will privilege either pole according to his assessment of global optimal relevance not so much of his utterance, but of the totality of his speech act and its social consequences as assessed on the basis of the cognitive *and* qualitative effects of his mediation on his addressee(s), the client, the original speaker, and whoever may have a legitimate claim on his loyalty, including his peers and, generally, the profession itself. Since the mediated speech act is always induced by the original act, this relevance, of course, will be mainly a function of the ideational content of the original and/or of the cognitive and qualitative effects sought and/or actually achieved through it in the original addressees in the original situation — *mainly*, indeed, but never *solely* or *wholly*. This opens a daunting Pandora's Box. But I think its theoretical modelling is a relatively simple task.

Relevance is universal and applies fully to all utterances in all situations, including documentary and "authoritative" texts and utterances. Foreign administrations, as a case in point, have no interest in processing more information than they require. Nor do the flesh-and-blood people who will have to take the trouble on their behalf. What they really require - as any other institutional or biological being- is *relevant* information — except that they will hardly trust a mediator to decide for them, even though only a genuinely competent mediator would be in a position to judge a translated text's relevance for the intended user. As we see, the problem lies squarely on the mediator's lack of social empowerment (and, as a frequent corollary, on his excessive timorousness). Both are, in turn, a function of an inherent suspicion on the part of the client and the mediator himself, of the latter's ability expertly to assess communicative relevance — let alone achieve it. Unfortunately, as we know all too well, many mediators do not even try. More than one simultaneous interpreter, for instance, asserts that his duty is to say all that the original speaker says, whatever the social situation, whatever the metacommunicative interests and purposes, no matter how obviously superfluous for the mediator's interlocutors. This specious washing of hands can be resumed as follows: *"Let the interlocutor process all the information and decide himself what is relevant and what is not; and if he does not like it, tough luck! Who are we to decide for him? Who are we to "manipulate" the original?"* These questions, I submit, reveal a monumental problem, a problem that should be prevented with a healthy dose of (good) mediation theory precociously administered at translation and interpretation schools. There are, no doubt, situations where active -let alone overt!- mediation is anathema, but they are the exception rather than the rule. In any event, the first thing that a mediator is to determine is, precisely, his duty and consequent leeway — i.e. to determine what counts as *relevant identity* of meaning in the specific case. A professional mediator renders a professional service. His aim is not, in actual fact, his own but that of the client (whether the original speaker, the intended reader of the translation or a third party) — except that more often than not the client is not aware that, as every human action, translation and interpretation are a teleological activity (as is their processing by their addressees). Identifying the metacommunicative purpose of a job and determining the best way of achieving it is -or, rather, ought to be- the basic component

of a mediator's expertise. Fie the mediator who cannot or dare not but "translate"! And fie the poor students who are only taught to "translate"!

CAN DISCOURSE- AND SOURCE-TEXT ANALYSIS HELP US TRANSLATE?⁹⁷

Although the importance of recipient orientation is commonly acknowledged in translation theory, there is no other factor which is neglected so frequently in translation practice (Nord 1994:117)

Introduction

In his splendid book *The Language Instinct*, Steve Pinker quotes the following example:

Time flies like an arrow

Most mortals will interpret this sentence as a metaphorical way of saying that life is short. Yet, a computer both missed the metaphor and saw in it much more than meets the prejudiced human eye:

1) *Time flies like an arrow*

= time proceeds as quickly as an arrow proceeds

2) *Time flies like an arrow*

= measure the speed of flies in the same way that you measure the speed of an arrow

3) *Time flies like an arrow*

= measure the speed of flies in the same way that an arrow measures the speed of flies

4) *Time flies like an arrow*

= measure the speed of flies that resemble an arrow

5) *Time flies like an arrow*

= flies of a particular kind, called 'time flies', are fond of an arrow (as opposed to Tse-tse flies, who prefer a bow)

⁹⁷Published in the proceedings of the *Third Seminar on Translation Theory and Applications*, United Nations Office at Vienna, 1996, pp. 61-88.

While a colleague of mine came up with yet another possibility:

6) *Time flies like an arrow*

= time has flies, and they are fond of an arrow

Language vs. discourse; meaning vs. sense

What makes all these interpretations of the linguistic surface equally possible is the grammar of English; what makes them progressively less plausible as real-life utterances is our general knowledge of the world, of what people normally consider relevant enough to communicate to us. This corroborates that we do not understand **sentences** as a chain of words saddled with their dictionary-based meanings, but **utterances** and their sense; and that in order to understand them, we bring to bear our non-linguistic knowledge and intelligence. We bring to bear, moreover, our own expectations: we **expect** utterances to make sense, which is more than simply not flouting the laws of logic, but making sense according a) to a plausible world — real or imaginary, to our liking or not, b) to what we deem relevant — they must capture our interest, c) to our own knowledge — they must increase, confirm or otherwise modify our knowledge of facts or people, d) to our own formal expectations — linguistic or compositional, including e) the familiarity of the linguistic expression. If an utterance broadly satisfies these requirements, we will deem it to be relevant to us and we will therefore be ready to spend our time and effort trying to understand it. Conversely, any deviation from these tacit norms will conspire against our willingness to pay any attention to it. If, for whatever reason, we must, then we shall feel irritated at what we cannot but perceive as a waste or, worse, an abuse. Some of you will have now remembered that these norms are the so-called **maxims of conversation**: **cooperation** — your interlocutor expects you to make a useful contribution and is ready to cooperate in understanding you; **quality** — try to make your contribution one that is true; **quantity** — make your contribution as informative as is required or possible, neither more nor less; **manner** — be perspicuous; **relation** — be relevant; and **idiomaticity** — unless there is some special reason not to, speak idiomatically.

Sense is context- and situation-dependent

Under most circumstances, all non-metaphorical readings of *Time flies like an arrow* would be automatically excluded — if entertained at all. However, in the context of this presentation, for instance, not only do all seven make sense, but the less obvious they are the more relevant they become. We see then, that the sense of an utterance is not self-contained, but depends on a whole gamut of textual and extra-textual factors. In our particular instance, it is precisely the nonsensical interpretations that make the more sense as illustrations of this point.

Words and sentences mean; people make sense

A sentence can be correct or incorrect, grammatical or ungrammatical, but it cannot be true or false, make sense or not. Only people can be truthful — or not, and be sensible — or not. What we understand when we understand a text -as opposed merely to the language it is written in- is the propositions in and the intentions behind it: what people state through sentences and words,

and what motivates them (consciously or unconsciously) to state it. Readers of the original, as later on readers of our translations, will be looking mainly at those propositions and motivations, trying to grasp the author's position on the facts he chooses to communicate, or make out the intention behind his choice, or learn about those facts themselves. Only when chasing, as it were, after the author's **intentions**, what he **believes** or intends other people to **believe**, do words, and, more generally, all manner of formal features of a text, including its layout and illustrations (for instance, in a Benneton ad) become relevant, in that they may convey relevant pragmatic information — i.e. information no longer about the stated facts, but about the author and his motivations. Thus, in the UN context, a political or legal document will be scrutinised much more closely for hidden clues -mostly catches- than a factual report (not everybody that reads a political statement or a law is much willing to cooperate). Similarly, such a political or legal document will have been written with more minute attention to formal nuances (so as to overcome mistrust or bad faith and ensure voluntary cooperation or at least impede non-compliance). This is not to say that it will have been written *better*, since the author may be -as is normally the case- rather incompetent at writing, especially if he is doing so in a language he does not master completely. Incompetence, however, is often more than sheerly linguistic; most authors are rhetorically inept, and ours are no exception: they tend to flout all of the maxims of conversation. As translators, we must remember that only an **intentional** flouting of such maxims is perceived as relevant by the addressee — as ironic, dismissive, patronising, etc. **Un-intentional** deviations, when not simply taken in stride, irritate the reader and sap his willingness to cooperate, i.e., to go on reading, to try to understand.

The question thus arises as to what kind of **un-intentional** linguistic or rhetorical incompetence can -or should- be remedied up to what extent in the translation of what kinds of texts, and who may or should decide (the UN through its general policy, each particular translation Section through its norms, the reviser in view of his overall responsibility, or the translator as immediate producer of the translated text?)⁹⁸. Although I have taken a rather boisterous position on this score, I shall not propound it here -in any event, not overtly- but limit myself to pointing out these facts and let you lock horns as to how best to approach them in practice.

Discourse analysis to the rescue

Let us see now, what are some of those facts. For that, we shall lay hands upon the basic notions forwarded by Christiane Nord. Faced with an original, there are basically three approaches a translator can adopt: one extreme would be to strive for a translation formally subordinate to the target text, the other extreme would be to try to produce a text exclusively oriented toward the reader, a *skopos* superior to any standard of resemblance with the source text. A middle-of-the-road alternative would be trying to come up with a translation in which the "source text is restored to, at least, part of its former influence, although not necessarily as far as its surface qualities are concerned" (1991:41). Which of these roads to follow is a strategic decision based on **source-text analysis**, an analysis that must be **pragmatic** (i.e., from the standpoint of the overriding communicative function of the text) and take into account both the **intratextual** and the **extratextual** (i.e., situational) factors of communication (p. 42). The extratextual factors

⁹⁸Let us also remember that even **intentional** features may be **un-intentionally** incompetent (for instance, the author means to be witty — but fails).

concern the author (who? what for? to whom? where? when? why? and, as bottom line, with what function), while the intratextual factors concern the subject matter (what? what not? in what order? in which words? in what kind of sentences? in which tone?). The extratextual factors are analysed before reading the original text, simply by observing the situation in which it is embedded. In this way, the reader builds up a certain expectation as to the intratextual features of the text, but it is only when, through reading, he contrasts this expectation with the actual features of the text that he experiences the **particular effect** the text has on him. The last question (to what effect?), therefore, refers to a global concept, which comprises the interplay of extratextual and intratextual factors (p. 43). This analysis can be effected with two independent purposes: as an 'autopsy' of the original or with a view to determine the kind of text to be produced. The combination of both approaches will lead to a translation strategy, part of which lies in eliciting the source-text features to be retained, modified or suppressed. A crucial distinction to keep in mind is that between the sender's **intention**, the **function** that the addressee will attribute to the text, and the **effect** the text will have upon him. Regardless of the sender's intention, it is the receiver who will assign a function to the text — i.e. will read it in a certain way and for a specific purpose. The **effect** comes with the reading proper. In the case of the translator, he can normally but conjecture the sender's intention, but can anticipate both function and effect and consciously strive to produce a translated text that will make it easier for the new readers to assign it the 'right' function, and experience the 'right' effect — 'right' from the standpoint of the translation's *skopos*.

These notions can be further developed on the basis of *text linguistics* -or *discourse analysis*, as it is also called- as developed originally by our distinguished guest this afternoon, Professor de Beaugrande and his colleague Dressler. Their approach is meant to answer our most basic question: what makes a given stretch of discourse a text? Or, in their words, what are the conditions of **textuality**? The first thing we, as readers, are looking for in a text is its **acceptability** as a message, since the communicative function is the crucial attribute of a text, to which all other features are subordinate. If we reject it, we will not read it as avidly — or at all. We are going to accept it -more or less- on the basis of its **cohesion** with a possible world — its objective truthfulness, as it were, and its internal **coherence** — its clarity. We will normally take it as somebody's **intention** to communicate a finite message. We will expect it to be **informative**, i.e., to relevantly enrich our general knowledge and perception of the world — the more the (relevant) information is unexpected or unknown, the more informative the text will be to us (provided we are in a position to understand and assimilate such information, otherwise informativity is lost or, worse, becomes parasitic). We will approach it as relevant in a given **situation**, such as this seminar, for instance. And we will consciously or unconsciously compare it with **other texts previously encountered**. In the case of UN texts, intertextuality is an essential feature, since most of them teem with cross-references, quotations or paraphrases of other texts. Notice that cohesion and coherence can be said to be properties of the text itself, while intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality are more reader-centred.

As translators, we are readers of a very special kind: our task is not so much to understand the original, but to make our translations understandable. The above criteria we look for not with reference to ourselves, but to our potential readers. We try and read the text with their eyes, bringing to bear what we know, assume or guess are their expectations, assumptions, knowledge and interests. It is in that vicarious light that we detect and assess in each particular case any deviation from any of our maxims. Still, there are certain general principles that tend to apply: on

one extreme, in political, legal or personal texts, the point of view can be as crucial as the object or more. On the other, in technical or generally informative texts, only the object itself tends to count: a particular formulation of Archimedes' principle is irrelevant so long as the principle itself is put across. The text is not taken as a message from Archimedes, but as a statement of objective fact. Most people have no idea of Archimedes' perspicuity — except, perhaps, for the philologist, the formal features of the original formulation are totally irrelevant. Apparently, these two extremes could advice either of Nord's extreme approaches. Yet even in the first case, formal subordination may not be as advisable as it might seem at first glance, as I shall try to illustrate below.

Texts and translation at the UN

In UN textual practice there is a whole gamut of texts ranging between an Ambassador's personal expressions to the Secretary-General and the dry figures in the budget. The translator's position varies accordingly: he will try to place himself closer to the author, the reader or the facts. Some colleagues are more aware of this than others, and some can verbalise it better than others, but the fact remains that -thank Heavens!- no professional translator translates every text **the same** way. The question is, do all these new notions help the translator a) place the text and b) place himself along the above continuum?

A related consideration is whether the translation is going to be taken as such or as an autonomous text to be read in its own right, without reference to an original. In other words, will the reader approach the text as an **indirect** representation of facts/intentions deposited with an absent or inaccessible original, or as a **direct** representation of facts/intentions, straight from the horse's mouth? Or, from a different perspective, what will the reader measure the text's fidelity against: the form/content of another text, or the form/content of a statement about facts? Only in some cases will readers who have no access to the original language be aware of the fact that the text has been translated. The, say, Bolivian delegate **knows** that the Soviet proposal below has been translated and expects a **faithful** translation (although he will probably be at a loss to define exactly what he means by that). On the other hand, the same delegate will only expect the Spanish version of a factual report on demographic growth to conform to the facts: he will not care whether it is a translation at all or, for that matter, from what language. Instructions and notices are typical instances of the strict irrelevance of the original: the formal resemblances between *no smoking*, *defense de fumer*, *prohibido fumar*, and *zdjes ne kuryat* (literally: here [people] do not smoke) do not matter any more than the formal differences or correspondences between the French, English and other versions of instructions manuals for the PCs in our offices — generally speaking, and regardless of how they have been arrived at in any given language, orders, requests and instructions are not read as secondary, **text-induced** texts, but as originals: all that counts is that they be clear, simple and culturally acceptable.

Apart from these two clear-cut categories, there is at the UN a third hybrid type of texts the relevance of whose translations is different at the specific stage of multi-lingual negotiations, where people will discuss and amend not only content but also form, and as finished products⁹⁹.

⁹⁹Thus, after all the editorial squabbles over the definite/indefinite article, the Soviets washed their hands of the then so relevant controversy on the need to establish **The/a new economic order** (there is no article in Russian), while the French blissfully dodged the *Malvinas/Falklands* war by calling the wretched archipelago *Malouines* (historically named after the original colonisers hailing from St Malo). The most quoted example, of course, remains the famous definite article in the French version of resolution 242, demanding Israel to withdraw from *les territoires occupés* as opposed to the more general English injunction to do so from *occupied territories*.

They will be approached as **secondary, indirect, text-induced** texts during the negotiation, and as **primary, direct, autonomous** texts once officially published, when all versions will have equal status and anybody can go by the one that suits their interests best (*occupied territories* or *les territoires occupés*; *Malvinas, Falklands* or *Malouines*): at that time there will have ceased to be an original, and, therefore, translations — even if all six texts have been arrived at through translations by translators, since even the purported original will have ended up as a composite of amendments, many translated from the other languages. As *skopostheorie* would have it, the translator would weigh the respective *skopoi* of original and translation, bearing in mind that his overall frame of reference should not be the original, but the function (or set of functions) the target text is to achieve in the target culture (Nord 1991:31).

The proof of the theory and the pudding of practice

i. A politically relevant, author-centred text

But enough of dry theory. Let us proceed to wet practice. For that, I shall revert to the three texts I used as examples last time around. Each of the following texts has a different function and means to achieve a different effect. In all three cases, the translated texts must serve the same function and strive for the same effect, except that all three originals barely manage their intended function or intended effect. The question is, can/may/should the translator improve their functionality and effectiveness, i.e., come up with translations that are **better** than the original?

As pointed out above, faced with a text, the translator has several questions to pose; to wit:

I) from the standpoint of the **task**:

I.i) With respect to the **author**: a) who wrote/commanded the original? b) for what purpose? c) in order to reach what addressees? d) expecting what effects?

I.ii) With respect to the **translation**, a) who wants me to translate this text? b) for what purpose? c) in order to reach what addressees? d) expecting what effects?, plus e) who is going to monitor the translation? f) with what eyes?

II) From the standpoint of the **text itself** a) what is its type? b) how does or will it relate to what other texts? c) what does it say? d) how does it say it? e) how well does it serve its purposes?

Question c) is often the only question most translators ask themselves consciously, so we might as well start from it. First, we will examine an author-relevant, political text — the Soviet proposal we analysed a year ago. As you may remember, this is the 'faithful' translation of the original Russian - faithful in that it loyally renders all of its infelicities:

In order to help the transformation of military openness into a universal norm of international life it would be possible to agree that measures of openness under the aegis of the UN, in particular, provided for:

- annual submission by states to the UN on a voluntary basis of data about the numbers of their armed forces (globally and pro rata by basic types -land troops, military air forces, military naval forces, other); by basic types of armaments (tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery, combat airplanes and helicopters, major surface ships (including landing ones), submarines); by numbers of troops outside national territory; for nuclear powers — also by launching installations for IBM's, ballistic missiles on submarines, heavy bombers, land based tactical nuclear missiles;

- annual submission by states on a voluntary basis of data to the standardised system of accounting for military expenditures effective at the UN;

- increase of the predictability of the military construction of states-members of the UN by means of mutual assurances of the transparent character of the military budgets of states-members of the UN. [176 words]

This text is a mess. Either it was written by a CIA mole or its awkwardness is unintentional. It ranges from incoherent (how do you submit information *to* a standardised system?) to simply awkward. Cohesion is mostly up to the benevolence of the reader. Intertextuality is flouted by improper lexicon, acceptability — by cryptic acronyms and convoluted syntax, and intentionality — by general fuzziness and obscurity: are the Soviets *suggesting, proposing or requesting*? Of all these obvious flaws, the latter is probably intentional (to be reproduced, then, in our translation). Also, it is the only one the reader can easily live with, since it does not compromise his general understanding of the text. All the rest makes for excruciating reading. And yet, the function is clearly **persuasive**: the USSR's intention is to convince other delegations. It is obvious that the intended function is defeated by the overall awkwardness, which leads to an effect all but opposed to the one pursued. Be that as it may, unlike saner readers, we, translators, are paid to be cooperative; let us assume that the USSR is making a sensible if probably controversial proposal — sensible with respect to its world, that of the motivations of its author. In order to cooperate, we must try to go beyond its unfriendly surface to its intended sense. We shall approach it with the benevolence we would bestow upon a foreigner, whose linguistic ability is no faithful token of his overall intelligence, sanity or honesty. We shall assume that the text expresses one or more basic macro-propositions articulated through several structured propositions, themselves built out of diverse constituents. For this we will bring to bear all our relevant knowledge. The text will tell us something relevant that we presumably do not know about something that we presumably do. What we know -or the author takes to be known by his addressees- is the **theme**. He shall produce a series of comments, additions and developments of the theme through a series of **rhemes**. Our understanding of the text could be summarised as follows:

MILITARY OPENNESS (*theme*)

should be a universal norm

for this (*theme*)

agree following measures under UN

- 1.a **states** (*theme*) submit voluntarily data on strength a) globally, b) per type; c) per armaments; c) troops abroad;
 b. **nuclear states** (*theme*) — also installations
2. **states** (*theme*) submit voluntarily data according to UN accounting system
- 3.a **states** (*theme*) assure mutual transparency
 b [**transparency**] (*theme*) in order to increase predictability of military production

Notice two interesting things: a) our schematic presentation is much clearer than the text itself — i.e. the author is not good at saying what he means; and b) our scheme is uncannily close to a simultaneous interpreter's notes — and for good reason: it condenses all of the matter with none of the art. Within the pragmatic intention of the author, details that usefully expand or develop the theme are rhetorically **good** details; details that distort, obfuscate or confuse the theme are rhetorically **bad** details (thus violating **manner**); and details that contradict or defeat the theme are **wrong** details (thus violating **quality**). Whether they are to be kept, modified or suppressed in the translation is up to you, but they are **not** equal. By faithfully rendering bad and wrong details, you will be betraying the author's intention; by remedying them, you will be betraying the text's form; by sticking to a middle course, you will be betraying both. Your basic

extremes would be the text above or the following version, the one our own editors might have produced¹⁰⁰:

With a view to promoting military openness as a universal norm of international relations, the following measures within the framework of the United Nations could be agreed:

- *The annual voluntary submission by States to the United Nations of data about the numbers of their armed forces (in total and broken down by service — army, air force, navy, other); about basic types of armaments (tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery, combat airplanes and helicopters, major surface vessels (including landing ships) and submarines); about levels of forces outside their national territory; and, for nuclear powers — about launching systems for intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles on submarines, heavy bombers and land-based tactical nuclear missiles;*
- *The annual submission by States of data under the standardised United Nations system of accounting for military expenditures;*
- *Increased predictability of the military development programmes of States through mutual assurances of transparency in their military budgets.*[148 words]

Do you translate the uncouth original, or a mentally edited version? Even if you could seek guidance from someone in the Soviet delegation, you might receive different answers: the author himself might beseech you to be more articulate than he; whilst his subordinates will probably command you to stick to every syllable their boss has written in his wisdom¹⁰¹. In other words, you can't win. Or can you?

ii. A factual, reality-centred report

We shall now tackle a strictly informative text. This time around it is not a delegation expressing politically motivated exhortations, but UN experts describing non-controversial objective facts:

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

51. Biological diversity (or biodiversity) encompasses all species of plants, animals, and micro-organisms and the ecosystems and ecological processes of which they are parts. It is usually considered at three different levels: genetic diversity, species diversity, and ecosystem diversity. Genetic diversity is the sum total of genetic information, contained in the genes of individual plants, animals, and micro-organisms that inhabit the Earth. Species diversity refers to the variety of living organisms on Earth. Ecosystem diversity relates to the variety of habitats, biotic communities, and ecological processes in the biosphere, as well as the tremendous diversity within ecosystems in terms of habitat differences and the variety of ecological processes.

A. Distribution of Species

*52. No one knows the number of species on Earth, even to the nearest order of magnitude. Estimates vary from 5 to 80 million species or more. Only about 1.4 million of these living species have been briefly described. Of these about 750,000 are insects, 41,000 are vertebrates and 250,000 are plants; the remainder consists of a complex array of invertebrates, fungi, algae and other micro-organisms.*¹⁰²[175 words]

Are these facts clearly described? Hardly. Witness the simplicity of the propositional structure.

¹⁰⁰This and the other two edited texts have been produced by my English-speaking colleagues.

¹⁰¹Judging from the published versions (annexed), even the different Translation Sections gave different instructions.

¹⁰²These two paragraphs are extracted from a Report on the Status of the World Environment published by UNEP in 1991.

BIODIVERSITY (*theme*)

- **is** all species + ecosystems / processes
 - plants
 - animals
 - micro-organisms
- **has** three levels
 - genetic
 - species
 - ecosystem
- **genetic** (*theme*)
 - **is** (all) the information in genes
 - vegetable
 - animal
 - micro-organisms
- **species** (*theme*)
 - **is** (living) organisms
- **ecosystem** (*theme*)
 - **is** (big) difference of
 - habitats
 - biotic communities
 - ecological processes
 - +
 - processes within habitats

SPECIES NUMBER (*theme*)

- **is** unknown
- **guessed** at 5 - 80 million plus
- **known** 1,4 million
 - 750,000 insects
 - 41,000 vertebrates
 - 250,000 plants
 - other
- [**other**] (*theme*)
 - invertebrate
 - fungi
 - algae
 - sundry microorganisms

To add insult to injury, besides not being clear where it counts: on its **evaluative** function, these paragraphs are hopelessly repetitive and irritatingly over-explicit. Among other things, in the first one alone *diversity* is repeated eight times (**quantity**); both mentions of the *Earth* are unnecessary (**relation**); *refers* and *relates* are used incorrectly as synonyms of *encompasses* (**quality**); the first sentence in paragraph 52 is a nightmare; while *other* in the last line clearly means *sundry* (**quality** again). To boot, the whole text reads more like a textbook for young students than a report addressed to experts and officials (**manner**), which taxes the reader's patience thus sabotaging his willingness to understand (**cooperation**). Again, intention is torpedoed by rhetorical ineptness, to the detriment of function and effect. Would this edited text not convey that structure better?

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

51. *Biological diversity (or biodiversity) embraces all species of plants, animals and micro-organisms, as well as the ecosystems and ecological processes of which they are a part. It is usually considered at three levels: (i) genes, (ii) species and (iii) ecosystems. Genetic diversity encompasses all the genetic information in every plant, animal*

and micro-organism; that of species comprises all living organisms; and that of ecosystems covers the whole gamut of habitats, biotic communities and ecological processes, as well as the differences within ecosystems.

A. Distribution of species

52. No one has even a rough idea of the number of species on earth. Best guesses lie between 5 and 80 million or more. Of these, only some 1,4 million have been described at all: 750,000 insects, 41,000 vertebrates and 250,000 plants and a sundry mixture of invertebrates, fungi, algae and sundry micro-organisms.[138 words]

Again, your translations can resemble either text or anything in between. Again, you can't win. Or can you?

iii. A negotiating/negotiated text

Lastly, let us approach a negotiating text, to be amended and approved multi-lingually:

2. Women play a major role and make environmentally crucial choices in key areas of production as well as consumption affecting the environment in both rural and urban areas. Women must be engaged in environmentally sound action at the local level and in action which promotes the sustainable use of natural resources at all levels. Women's experiences and expertise of safeguarding the environment while at the same time seeking to ensure adequate and sustainable resource allocations within households and communities must be acknowledged and incorporated into decision-making.

5. The role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the United Nations system and its community of partners for the advancement of women as a means to safeguard the environment is to recognise women and facilitate their environmental education and their access to resources through developing a gender perspective in all the activities of the organisations. The United Nations Environment Programme should develop this role and take women's experience and knowledge on board by offering equal job opportunities and providing gender-sensitive working conditions.¹⁰³ [171 words]

As we had already noticed last time, this is a translator's nightmare: the reeking UN-ese, the sudden plummeting register of *taking on board*, the *ad nauseam* repetition of *women* and *environment*... The intended function is **instructive**, but its effect ends up mangled yet again. We will try to lay bare the propositional tree hiding beneath this atrocious foliage:

WOMEN (theme)

- i (play) major role
(make) *environmentally* crucial choices
in key areas production/consumption affecting *environment*
rural/urban
i.a. **choices** (theme) must a) locally, be sound
b) all levels, promote sustainable use of resources to safeguard environment
- ii have experience/expertise
ensure resource allocations at home/community
ii.a **experience** (theme) must be acknowledged/incorporated in decision-making

UNEP's role (with UN and partners) (theme)

- i (is) to advance women
to safeguard environment
- ii is to recognise women
to facilitate women's access to resources
ii.a. through gender perspective in activities

¹⁰³Extracted from UNEP's resolution 18/6.

UNEP (theme)

- iii should develop its role
 use women's experience/expertise
- iii.a. through equal job opportunities
 gender sensitive conditions

In other words:

2. Women play an important role and make crucial choices in key areas of production and consumption, affecting the environment in both rural and urban areas. They must therefore act in ways that are environmentally sound at the local level and that promote the sustainable use of natural resources at all levels. Their experience and expertise in safeguarding the environment while using resources adequately and sustainably at home and in their communities must be acknowledged and incorporated into decision-making.

5. With respect to the advancement of women as a means of safeguarding the environment, the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the United Nations system and its partners is to recognise women and facilitate their environmental education and access to resources by introducing a gender perspective in all the activities of the organisations. The United Nations Environment Programme should develop this role and take advantage of women's experience and knowledge by offering equal job opportunities and providing gender-sensitive working conditions.[162 words]

Perhaps delegations may prefer a faithful version of the original to negotiate, and, once approved as such, a faithful version of the edited text to show their Governments and their children. You decide, my friends. But please, let the different Sections synchronise their decisions: better one idiosyncratic original and five homogeneous translations than six idiosyncratically heterogeneous parallel texts. After all, most probably the five good translations will prevail by sheer dint of numbers and the original will be amended in their light. It has happened before, and -if I may end with my sales pitch- it should happen most of the time.

Conclusion

An awareness of the attributes of textuality is an invaluable asset when confronted with intentionally or un-intentionally abstruse or awkward texts. This, of course, is an ancillary tool in that discourse analysis in itself cannot and does not “tell” a translator how to go about its task. In most pragmatic cases, however, translating to produce a more relevant text attending to both extra-textual and intra-textual factors, for instance, deciding the relative weight to be assigned to representation (a new sonnet, a locally acceptable birth certificate) and reproduction of ideational meaning.

WHOSE TRANSLATION IS IT ANYWAY? A TRANSLATOR'S CONFLICTING LOYALTIES¹⁰⁴

Traditional models of communication speak of a simple chain whose links are a sender, a message and a receiver. More sophisticated diagrams embed this chain in a situation/culture. On such basis, elementary models of translation simply de-couple the chain into two legs: sender-original-translator (as receiver) / translator (as sender)-translation-receiver.

As we shall see, reality is far from that simple, especially in the case of in-house translators such as ourselves. UN documents, as most pragmatic texts, tend to have no identifiable sender, they also pursue different objectives, perform diverse functions and fit different types: political statements, administrative circulars and instructions, factual reports, etc. From the beginning, the translator is faced with two sources of the original: the delegation or Secretariat department as sender, and whoever has actually penned the piece as author. To make things worse, the translator may realise that the original he is asked to translate violates -or would violate for the readers of the translation- the maxims of conversation¹⁰⁵: it may be repetitive and over-explicit (**quantity**), or tedious, patronising or abstruse (**manner**); it may teem with irrelevant information (**relation**), or be unnecessarily unnatural (**idiomaticity**); and it may thus abuse the reader's willingness to understand and thus conspire against the principle of **cooperation**. A third ghost thus casts its demanding shadow over our translator: the potential readership, whose formal expectations may differ from culture to culture, and therefore from language to language. In this respect, and despite official policy, objectively speaking all official languages are **not** equal: Our translator should be aware that the English, and to a lesser extent the French text will be read more or less universally; whilst, basically, the Russian will be read in the multicultural ex-USSR, the Arabic in the rather heterogeneous Arabic world, the Spanish in mono-cultural Spain and Latin America, and the Chinese just in China. The potential receivers having narrowed down to a single, more or less homogenous readership, the Spanish translator - and even more so the Chinese, I would think- should **in principle** feel freer (or more bound) to produce a more idiomatic text. As always, the main notions to be retained are the *skopos* of the text, the **function** it is to perform in the target culture, and its **type**. Also, since most of these documents are written by non-native speakers (or native speakers who are incompetent writers), the rule of thumb is that translations should be better -and more often than not shorter- than their originals; in other words, translations ought to be **user-friendly**. It does happen, however, that the sender does not see his text's shortcomings and demands that they be respected - a bit like the patient who asserts that there is no need for him to quit smoking, no matter what the physician

¹⁰⁴ Abridged version of a paper published in the *Translation and Terminology Bulletin* 8, United Nations Office at Vienna, 1996, pp. 6-29.

¹⁰⁵ The terms were coined by Grice and picked up, among others, by Austin and Searle; they refer to the principles obtaining in normal communication: **quality** — be truthful and speak whereof you know; **quantity** — say as much as needed to convey your intention, no more, no less (i.e. Neither overestimate nor underestimate your interlocutor); **relation** — say nothing that is not relevant to the sense you want to make (i.e. Don't be a bore); **manner** — say it so that you produce the desired understanding: register, clarity, speed, etc. (i.e. Make your utterance intelligible and acceptable); **idiomaticity** — be as idiomatic and natural as you can (i.e. Don't be a pompous ass). (This maxim is not Grice's, but I find it very valid indeed.) The observance of these maxims is necessary in order to secure that the principle of **cooperation** obtains between the participants in the communicative act — your interlocutor wants to understand you and will make an effort; he is also trying to say something relevant: try to understand him. Naturally, there is little the translator can or must do to improve upon the original's observance of the maxim of **quality** (except correcting obvious un-intentional factual mistakes, such as wrong dates and figures).

says. The translator's role becomes then akin to that of the Galen: he can bring the author to the water, but he cannot force him to drink, especially if the author is the one who pays. But, as the doctor, the translator has the **professional duty** to bring the author to the water and explain the reason for his professional opinion. If he has meekly to accept the author's worse judgment, the translation is no longer his, but the author's, whereupon, as the physician, all he can and must do is decline responsibility.

The above, I submit, applies *mutatis mutandis* to well-nigh every UN text. For translation purposes, I suggest that we divide them into three more or less distinct categories. The first batch is mainly comprised by what Nord calls **documentary** texts; in our case, this category would comprise all manner of political statements, either from the Secretariat itself or from delegations or groups of delegations. A political text argues and defends eminently arguable and attackable positions; it intentionally both shows and hides, speaks the truth and lies, threatens and cajoles. The sender wants it to be as effective as possible; unless ambiguity, obscurity and other formal shortcomings are **intentional** -in which case they must, if possible, **remain** in the translation- they are **unintentional** — in which case they must, if possible, be **corrected** in the translation, since the translator's ultimate point of reference cannot be but the sender's **intention**.

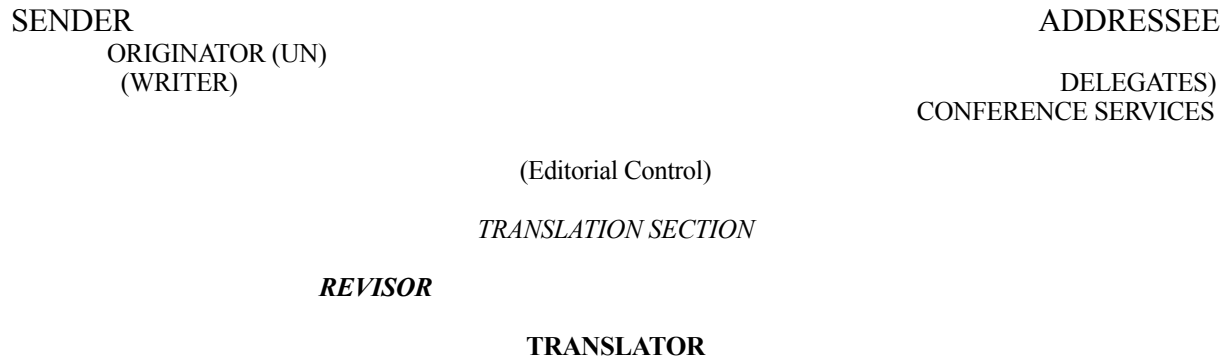
Things get even more complicated if we consider that neither sender nor author of the original has asked the translator to do the translation: the order comes through the Office of Conference Services, and besides, the UN has its own editorial policy, so that the editors may have already tinkered with the original, thus adding a second author of sorts. To boot, different Sections have different explicit or implicit translation criteria or even rules (which, I respectfully submit, seems rather puzzling: surely all translation approaches are not equally valid in all instances). Whatever the text, the French will normally translate **communicatively**, manipulating their language with utmost, at times even obsessive care; barring the 'ORIGINAL: X' legend at the top of the first page, nothing remains below to reveal that the text has not been originally written in French. Their Spanish colleagues, on the opposite extreme, will consciously reject the communicative approach and go for **semantic**¹⁰⁶ translation, generally favouring formal correspondence, again whatever the text. I would bet that no French reviser would approve of most Spanish translations and that all Spanish revisers would reject most translations into French¹⁰⁷. The English and Russian Sections will normally take many fewer liberties than the French and a few more than the Spanish (I am not competent to speak about Arabic or

¹⁰⁶For the reader unfamiliar with the concepts, may I give here a very succinct explanation: according to Newmark (1981) what he calls 'authoritative' statements ought to be translated "as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow [reproducing] the exact contextual meaning of the original" (p. 39). He calls this kind of translation **semantic**, as opposed to **communicative**, where the rendition "attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original" (*ibid.*).

¹⁰⁷When this paper was read at the First United Nations Seminar on Translation Theory and Applications, on 15 September 1995, a senior Spanish colleague from the IAEA argued that an idiotic original ought to produce an idiotic translation. Surely, the content is intangible, and must therefore remain as idiotic in the translation, but why should the form not be improved upon, if possible? If one does not reproduce spelling or grammar mistakes in the translation, why should mistakes at the lexical level not be equally done away with? And why not then simplify and clarify expression? Not even the most adamant advocate of the *trash in-trash out* school will go as far as stating that if an English original is couched in German syntax the Spanish translation should also feel German. In any event, this is exactly the opposite of the criterion followed by the French translators. How come such two glaringly antagonistic criteria may co-exist? Obviously a debate is in order; let whoever is right convince whomever is wrong, or better still, let the best compromise be collectively found. We owe it to ourselves, to the Organisation and to the very profession!

Chinese)¹⁰⁸. Thus, whatever his personal professional convictions, our translator is saddled with a more or less stern immediate originator: his own Section. He then proceeds to translate with all these demons vying for his soul.

But before turning on his dictaphone, the translator must remember that yet another ghost, that of the reviser, is waiting for him. So that at the UN, the translation process roughly follows this rather daunting diagram:



The thing that stands out more glaringly is not so much the myriad intervening 'customs' between writer, translator and reader, as that there is, almost by definition, no direct contact between translator and writer on the one hand and translator and reader on the other: the UN translator is thus a prisoner in his by no means ivory tower. Another interesting feature of our diagram is the peculiar position of the reviser: The reviser is neither the sender, nor the author, nor the originator, nor the receiver, nor the addressee of the translation; yet he is its most ferocious censor, since it is he who assumes responsibility for it. Ideally, both translator and reviser should see methodologically eye to eye, so that the reviser's task is simply to check on accuracy and strive for maximum formal adequacy (note: adequacy, **not** equivalence!)¹⁰⁹. This is more or less ensured where there is a common school of thought behind the twain, since it is extremely difficult to harmonise intuitions. If such basic methodological -i.e., theoretical-agreement is in place, we can safely assume that the translator would not go against his own judgement for simple fear of the reviser. If, however, such is not the case, our translator finds himself with yet another claim on his loyalty. What is he to do?

As any other professional, the translator is called upon to make professional choices and to defend them professionally. His choices will be more or less apt depending on his competence, itself a function of several strains of ability: linguistic, thematic and strictly translational. Stress is made normally only on the first two, yet experience and research show that it is the third one that counts the most. Words can be looked up in dictionaries and specialists consulted on obscure points, the reviser will probably find that elegant synonym, but where does the translator find the relevant criteria to map his way through the myriad conflicting claims on his loyalty? In other

¹⁰⁸Still, may I refer the reader to the proposal of the Egyptian delegation in document A/AD.172?1994/CRP.12, dated 24 August 1994 (annexed). Everything said about therein about translation into Arabic applies *mutatis mutandis* to all languages.

¹⁰⁹In modern theoretical approaches, equivalence (itself an extremely problematic concept) becomes a secondary feature of a translation; what really counts is that the translation be **adequate** (adequate, that is, to its own *skopos*). A translation can be equivalent without being adequate (the literal translation of the Russian draft above as an official version) or adequate without being equivalent (a successful rendering of an advertisement or a poem).

words, what is **fidelity** in translation and how is it achieved each time?¹¹⁰ Is the translation to be faithful to the intention awkwardly expressed in a text or to its expression, no matter how awkward? Is the translation to be mindful of the reader's expectations or should it stick to the original whatever the impact of the new text on the new readership? Is an original that does not formally conform to UN standards to be translated as idiosyncratically or should it be made to fit the mould? And lastly, should the translator defend his principled professional judgement or bow to the wisdom of the reviser, the Section, the sender or the reader? I have heard the same translators argue the case for either horn of each dilemma at different times — which is easily explained, since none of these questions bear a simple answer: it all depends. Fine, but on what, and who is to make the decision?

I stated above that a translator must be ready to explain and defend his choices in his encounters with any judge of his translation: the sender, the UN, Conference Services, the Section, the reviser, the readers. That assumes, of course, that the translator sincerely believes he is right, and that he has the **theoretical tools** to back his choice and refute his interlocutors. This is even more so in the case of the reviser: after all, translations happen on his watch. Besides having a triple loyalty -to the original, to his Section, and to the potential readership- the reviser must be the translator's mentor: He is there not merely to blue-pencil, but to guide his junior colleague up the competence ladder. If -at times, and not that often-talent and experience may be enough for competent practice, they are definitely insufficient for didactic purposes: in order to be communicated and instilled so as to develop talent, experience must become verbalisable: it must turn into awareness. If the translator can, as a last resort, do without theoretical buttressing, the reviser has the professional duty to explain why he has rejected such or such choice and opted for such another one; and that explanation, as any explanation of any phenomenon, whether right or wrong, is a theory, no matter how much some may hate the word and the notion. Translators who assert that translation needs no theory are voicing nothing but a theory of translation. An old and unscientific theory that has the tremendous disadvantage of being utterly sterile, unable to explain or teach anything, and therefore incapable of explaining or defending any choice, and, more often than not, of making the right one.

So whose translation is it, anyway? Ideally - the translator's, under the benevolent wisdom of the reviser. And what about sender, author, UN, Conference Services, the Section, the delegates who think they know better, the potential readers? If the translator and his reviser are truly competent professionals who are aware of all these conflicting claims on their loyalty; who know that -contrary to the layman's conviction- translation is not a linguistic operation but a creative exercise in **interlingual mediation**, wherefore fidelity and equivalence are **dialectical** notions; who understand and can explain that translation seeks identity of content **despite** the unavoidable alteration of form, that what ultimately counts is that the reader understand what the writer means to say, and not so much the linguistic forms by means of which such understanding is achieved, that a text is thus not an end but a vehicle of communication; who are competent at producing natural and idiomatic text-induced texts; in short, if the translator and his reviser translate and know about translation as a physician heals and knows about healing, then -and only then- it is **their** translation, every bit as much as it is the **physician's** patient: the physician's: not the family's, the insurance company's, the Chief of Service's, the Hospital's or the Ministry of Health's.

¹¹⁰May I recommend, in this respect, Amparo Hurtado Albir's *La notion de fidélité en traduction*, even if the author herself considers it a bit obsolete.

Conclusion

Translators have the ethical right to claim their translations as their own when their specifically translational *savoir faire* is firmly rooted and derives from a specifically translational *savoir*. It is true that translation is a practical profession, but even more so is neurosurgery, wherefore it is simply **not** true that whereas a physician needs more than talent and experience to go about his practice, a translator does not. Only when translators -in the wider sense: including revisers and interpreters- the world over become masters of the theory behind their art, pretty much as architects, conductors or lawyers, will their professional, social and, yes, financial status become on a par with those other established and recognised practitioners. It is our translation alright, but no one will accept our claim unless we ourselves prove our right to it.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION: ESSENCE AND TRAINING BASICS¹¹¹

No translation without (implicit or explicit but clear) justification or explanation of the theory applied! J. Vermeer (in Reiss & Vermeer 1996, 9; my translation)

... There is a mode of implicit theorisation within translational practice, since the generation of alternative [translations] depends on a series of at least intuitively applied hypotheses. Even though this theorisation usually never becomes explicit, the ability to develop and manipulate hypothetical [translations]] is an essential part of translational competence. Unsung theory -a set of premises resulting from theorisation- may... be seen as the constant shadow of what translators do every day; it is what improves as student translators advance in their specific craft; it is the mostly unappreciated form of the confidence slowly accrued through the making of countless practical decisions; it is what most competent translators know without knowing that they know it. A. Pym (1992a: 175-6)

A terminological caveat

For the purposes of this paper I shall distinguish translation in its usual sense from **translation** - i.e., any kind of translatorial activity, whether written, oral or mixed, and the latter from *translation*, by which I mean genuinely specialised, communicatively expert (as opposed to simply professional) **translation**. I find the distinction essential, since, as I hope to show, most **translations**, although accepted and treated as *translations*, are a far cry from what our insights into mediated interlingual/intercultural mediation can lead us to expect: even the better ones, while linguistically competent, tend to be communicatively naive.

Introduction

Traditionally, **translation** has been regarded as exclusively or, at least, mainly a linguistic operation. We **translators** know, of course, better. We know that, although knowledge of the languages in hand is indispensable, it is far from enough: knowledge of the subject matter and its terminology is equally or even more essential. As Lederer avers, in our business the encyclopaedia is much more important than the dictionary. Fine. But are the encyclopaedia and the dictionary enough? Does any cultivated person who can understand a language proficiently and write or speak another language competently, and has a sufficient grasp of the subject matter of communication translate? I submit not. What distinguishes us, **translators**, from the rest of mortals is not that we know our languages well enough, or that we can write in or speak our active languages competently enough, or that we know the relevant terminology well enough, or that we are familiar enough with the subject matter: That we have in common at least with many other UN staff members and delegates. Of course, those other people are presumably familiar enough only with their specific topic and its terminology, say outer space, whilst we must be familiar with different terminological fields and subjects; but then, presumably, with a modicum of effort and discipline they too could learn enough of the other terms and subject matters. Is that all it would take them to become translators? Hardly: what we are that they are not is specialists

¹¹¹Paper submitted at the Fourth United Nations Seminar on Translation Theory and Applications, Vienna, 18 April 1997.

in mediated interlingual/intercultural communication. It is this crucial additional competence that sets us apart from everybody else who knows languages, terms and things.

In my few excursions into the outside world, but most particularly by listening to colleagues at seminars and symposia, I have had occasion to marvel at the tremendous impact a mediator (whether translator or interpreter) can have on communication. Dialogue interpreters, for instance, are not only mediators, but facilitators, moderators and, often, managers of communication. At the UN, on the other hand with its rarefied high-heeled diplomatic atmosphere, the intercultural element of our mediation is very much masked¹¹²: delegates at an international organisation such as ours share, for our practical purposes, the same culture. True, interpreters do sometimes get glimpses of the different cultural backgrounds of delegates, but it is a far cry from what a dialogue interpreter encounters in his dealings with immigrants. So let us stick to the interlingual aspect, which for us carries the day in the end. Even if we leave aside the intercultural component, knowing languages, terms and things is still not enough. The **translator** occupies a very special place in communication: he mediates between meaning meant and understanding. In all my pieces and lectures I have hammered wildly at this nail from different angles. Oral or written texts are but vehicles of communication, which is not achieved by simply voicing or writing a 'message' but only when such message has been relevantly understood. In this light, then, the job of the **translator** is to understand in order to enable understanding by being understood. This is his specific task, this is -or should be- his expertise; and this expertise, as I hope to show, goes far beyond regular or even outstanding linguistic and thematic competence.

The translator as a driver and as a pianist

In my experience, there is, among many **translators** a mistaken concept of our profession: they tend to believe that once one has become a **translator** there is not that much left to be learnt about **translation**; graduating as a **translator** or more or less establishing oneself on the market is taken a bit like getting one's driver's licence; you already know how to drive, expertise will come on its own and on the road. Thus, a great many colleagues believe that, in order to develop and become better professionals, all it takes is acquiring a wider vocabulary, vaster thematic knowledge and higher skills with electronic gadgets — like a pianist who thought that once graduated from the Conservatory, all that he needs is widening his repertoire and learning to bang at psychedelic keyboards. But it happens that as there are old-fashioned, even obsolete when not outright mistaken ways of playing Bach, and playing techniques that are obsolete or even anatomically pernicious, there are also obsolete and outright mistaken or pernicious ways of **translating**. Moreover, exactly the same way the specific acoustics of a hall, the mechanism of a specific instrument and the idiosyncrasy of a given audience advice for or against certain ways of playing, whatever their abstract value, the features of the original and the characteristics of our audience or addressees cannot but modify our approach to **translating**. The mediator that **translates** everything the same way, as the pianist that plays everything the same way, has a lot to learn: there is always a better, more adequate, more efficient way of **translating**, and it has not so much to do with knowledge of languages, technical vocabulary or subject matter, as with the essence of **translation** as an act of mediated interlingual communication, i.e. the process

¹¹²UN interpreters have a real taste of intercultural mediation when servicing visiting or fact-finding missions in the field — an experience I very much regret never to have had.

whereby a speech act (whether oral or written) between a specific speaker/author and interlocutor(s)/addressee(s) in a given language, situation and moment is re-produced by the mediator for other interlocutors, in another language, in another situation and more often than not at another moment. As is the case with our pianist's more advanced techniques or musical concept, such better way is often discovered by someone else; and if he has had the helpful decency of consigning his insight, that insight must be somewhere waiting for all other **translators** to assimilate, incorporate and develop further. As we shall see, that place is what Popper calls "world three," that of the products of the human mind, where lie the treasures of objective knowledge.

Some preliminary thoughts about translatology

Short of reducing it to a sheerly linguistic operation, it has been more reasonably claimed that translation is nothing but intelligent reading followed by competent writing (the natural corollary being that simultaneous interpretation is nothing more than intelligent listening overlapping with competent speaking). Again, it is not true. Despite nearly always interested assertions to the contrary, it is not so simple: The boldness to let go of the original, the distance to weight the purposes governing original texts and their **translations** necessitates something additional between reading and writing — even in those milliseconds interpreters have between listening and speaking. The advances in translatology, the refinement and coalescence of the very concept of **translation**, its progressive delimitation from peripheral phenomena such as adaptation are the result of a deeper understanding of communication through language — or rather through speech. It is only natural, then, that the theory governing our craft be buttressed from a great variety of disciplines studying diverse relevant areas: linguistics, stylistics, literary theory, discourse analysis, communication theory, ethnology, cognitive psychology, neurophysiology, etc. — i.e. those that -in one way or another and at different levels- explain, describe or clarify what communication is and how it works. We cannot advance except together with them, but neither can we afford to be left behind.

Entering world three

As opposed to the traditional mind/body dualism, Popper distinguishes three worlds, which with admirable simplicity he calls worlds one, two and three: World one is that of the physical objects, including our bodies and other organisms; world two is that of an individual's mental states and emotions; and world three is that of the products of the human spirit: ideas, religions, myths, prejudices, the arts and the sciences... and also **translation** theories. World two (our individual subjective world) mediates between world one (the physical world) and world three (that of everything that humanity has thought); when we read a book or a newspaper, go to the movies, or attend a seminar on **translation**, we 'plug into' world three. Only through it can we go beyond the limits of our own experience and ability to think. Thus, for instance, since Archimedes objectified his principle, it is no longer necessary to get into the bathtub to discover that a submerged body displaces its weight in water.

We, **translators**, are among the great beneficiaries of that world. For starters, we know more than one language and have read more than most mortals. Also, through our **translations** we are among those who have contributed the most to it. And yet, as I was saying, we leave unexplored and, obviously, unexploited all that world three holds with respect to **translation**

proper. Whenever we resort to its infinite library it is to consult dictionaries or encyclopaedias that help us solve isolated problems but do not develop our approach to texts, our methodology, our way of **translating**, our concept of the task, our theory of **translation**; i.e. the articulated system -and not mere piling up- of notions and criteria, based, indeed, on our own personal experience and insights, but enormously enriched by what other mediators, **translation** teachers, translato-logists, discourse analysts, language philosophers, communication theorists, etc. have experienced, thought and suggested, as well as the critical analysis they have made of their own and other people's ideas.

To my mind, that is the great limitation of intuitive and self-made practitioners, of those who, like myself, for better or for worse have emigrated into the profession rather than been born in it. Their knowledge, their concept of **translation** as a particular form of mediating across two languages and cultures and transferring texts from one into another, of generating a second speech act on the basis of a first one -which is the essence of our job- are almost exclusively **subjective** (or, in Vygotsky's words, spontaneous — i.e. not scientific)¹¹³. Such subjective knowledge and concept can only be developed if they are critically analysed, i.e., contrasted. In order to criticise and contrast our subjective concept of **translation** we must verbalise it, place it, as it were, before us and see whether it really applies and equally well to all texts, to all situations, to all users — whether it can be used to generate all those second speech acts -always individual and unique- that our profession demands. Once verbalised, our criteria become **objective**, and are laid at the threshold of world three; and as soon as we communicate them to or comment them with others, they are installed in it, liable to be assimilated, criticised and developed — by others, indeed, but above all by ourselves. This is the only way we can get really better.

Armed with a sound theoretical buttressing, the **translator** thus turned *translator* is no longer at the exclusive mercy of his intuition, competence and good luck any more than the physician, since objective knowledge, collective professional lore endow a qualified practitioner of any discipline with a comprehensive view of any specific task. And now that the bulk of

¹¹³As I have stated elsewhere (Viaggio 1995, 23), in my opinion, the difference between translators and other recognised professionals lies, mainly, in that those other professionals learn to operate also with **scientific**, and not only spontaneous concepts. Men could spontaneously manufacture floating boats before Archimedes came up with his principle. All that Archimedes did was to turn a spontaneous concept into a scientific one. The first step of every science has systematically been that passage: experience had been there all the time, but only when it turns into awareness -collective awareness, at that- can we talk about science. Spontaneous empiric knowledge of flotation could not help the development of physics. Someone had to ponder and understand why some things float and others not, and then communicate it to others — deposit it into world three. For all we know, Harvey may well have not been the first to notice that blood circulates or Newton the first one to remark that all things are somehow attracted to each other but more so to the centre of the earth; but they were the ones who turned such empiric observation into scientific concepts and integrated them into the universal knowledge of mankind. As a consequence, today any twelve-year old schoolboy knows more physics than Archimedes, and the freshman at a medical college is already a more highly qualified physician than Harvey. Interpretation is, perhaps, one of the oldest intellectual activities man ever engaged in. The fact has been used as proof a) that interpreters are born, not made, and b) that there is, therefore, absolutely no need for any theory; the same is alleged about translation, of course. In how many westerns have we all seen the Lieutenant, fresh from West Point, have his ignorance and arrogance corrected by the illiterate scout? If less successfully, how many rough-hewn celluloid pioneers have told their intellectually minded offspring that 'You don't need no books to farm good?' Warfare and agriculture are much older than interpretation or translation, yet nobody could seriously argue that generals and agronomists are born or that they need no theory. If patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel, negation of theory is the last refuge of the interpreter/translator who does not really care how good his job is or how to make it better.

translations are related to economic production or its surrogate, international relations, and that a huge social need has emerged for professional **translators**, the amateur craft is becoming precisely that: a fully-fledged profession, i.e. the conscious, socially conditioned and acknowledged practice of a discipline that is developing on a par with productive forces. It is no coincidence that translatology is more developed where **translations** are better, or that **translations** are better where they are better paid, or that they are better paid where they are understood more immediately as essential aides to economic production. So much so that the translator of literary inane but politics-, commerce- or industry-related texts stands to make much more than the heirs of Dryden or Gerard de Nerval.

Still, there is much to be done: With our title unprotected and training left very often to chance, the gap between our subjective and objective knowledge is much wider than in established professions (especially in the least industrialised countries); so much so that some colleagues fail even to see **translation** as a special form of communication. It is a pity, of course; but only natural at our present stage in which scientific thought is just beginning to seep among us, in which individual ideas and insights barely begin to structure themselves into a systematic body of knowledge, in which -at last- we are stepping into world three and starting to read and criticise each other.

World three and its unsuspected translatalogical treasures

And what can world three tell us about our profession and our task that can help us **translate** better and more efficiently? After all our professional and financial success hinges upon nothing else! Until some thirty or forty years ago, contributions did not come from translators but from people who translated: from Cicero to Ortega y Gasset those who speak are men of letters, philosophers, more or less insightful dilettanti who never had to rely upon the craft in order to pay their rent, nor would have ever deigned to translate the owner's manual for a crossbow or a birth certificate from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. What today are called 'pragmatic' texts Schleiermacher left to the uninitiated scribes — that is to us. The profession of translator, as that of simultaneous interpreter, is a post-war creature, and all genuinely relevant insights come from its first proletarians, above all those who saw the absolute need to start teaching it. It is then that our world three starts getting richer by the hour.

Translating is communicating

This should be, I believe, the starting point of any speculation; it makes no sense to set about studying the ancillary unless one has a precise idea of what the essential is. This communicative essence of **translation**, to my mind, has been intuitively quite clear from its very inception. The great insights and polemics, the constant oscillation between *sensum de sensu* and *verbum e verbo* have been but closer and closer intuitive approximations to what exactly it is that the mediator must communicate. Over the centuries, those less and less dispersed and sparse insights slowly prowled towards a synthetic view of the dialectic tension between form and content, addressor and addressee, linguistic and dynamic equivalence, source- and target cultures, etc. With time -and, especially over the last forty or fifty years, with the literal explosion of translational practice in all manner of new directions- new factors and phenomena were progressively discovered and taken stock of, such as function, text-type, *skopos*, loyalty, norms and whatnot, widening, and, at the same time, making ever more precise what basically remained

an elusive concept. A clearer notion of language and speech, of culture, of the workings of cognition, communication, comprehension, etc. came also decisively to help from without. Eventually quantity had to lead to quality, and, in fact, an ever-richer practice kept broadening and deepening awareness until the relevant collective experience was finally in place for *homo transferens* to come up with a synthesis of everything that had accumulated so far.

If at the onset of translatology everything boiled down exclusively to detecting language problems and recommending ways of neutralising them, now we understand that there are as many valid **translations** of a text as different uses the versions in the target language will have. Nida's dynamic equivalence, Newmark's semantic and communicative methods, Seleskovitch's interpretive theory, Reiss and Vermeer's *skopos*theorie, Gutt's application of relevance theory and Pym's analysis of **translation** as a special case of text transfer are but ever more refined attempts at conceptualising this decisive epistemological leap. All of them have been dialectic stages in the evolution of our understanding of what **translation** is, what purposes it ought to set for itself in general and in each specific instance, and how they can be accomplished; and all of them have given substance to, precisely, different ways of **translating**. Any serious qualified professional that has followed this evolution cannot but have refined his practice as well. But, unfortunately, this process is far from impregnating general praxis, and most **translators** translate without realising that they are asked to translate functionally different texts, so that an emotional exhortation and a factual explanation, an ad, a recipe, a contract, even a poem are approached the same way, as if all original speech acts were functionally and pragmatically identical, and identical to them were all the second speech acts we are paid to generate. A most regrettable fact, since insights do not belong to those who have had them but to those that can use them, and anyone among us can adopt, wholly or partially, those suggested by experts, and extrapolate them with a view to deciding ever more precisely the way to approach each problem, each text, each job.

So intuition has finally come to fruition, and most -perhaps all- translatalogists are now aware that translation is mediated interlingual/intercultural communication. The basic question, then, is what is communication (in general, and more and more specifically lingual, intercultural, interlingual, mediated, and mediated intercultural interlingual communication) and how it is achieved. The answer, again, is only possible if we contemplate the phenomenon in its totality: In a nutshell, communication is a historically conditioned social event -or rather a countless number of events- whereby human beings living and working in society, within the general production and exchange of commodities and models of the world produce and exchange (truthfully or mendaciously) speech-informed second-degree or linguistic percepts, *LPs*, divided when relevant into intended *LPIs*, and comprehended *LPCs* out of their conscious or unconscious desires or needs, with a view to influence each other, so as to achieve what they perceive as a better or more favourable state of affairs for the individual or the group. These exchanges they can manage because evolution has produced socio-neuronal systems that allow them to apprehend, segment, conceive, analyse, store, retrieve and convey experience through the organising filter of a second signal-system capable of generating, systematising, storing, manipulating and transmitting conventionally arrived at symbols, i.e., signs with conventional referential value. Another relevant aspect to be constantly kept in mind is that communication is inferential: the *LPI* is not conveyed by the sign(s) (whether linguistic or not) but inferred from them by each individual comprehender on the basis of relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995; Gutt 1990, 1991, and 1996).

Communication through speech

Thus far, my point has been that human communication is semiotic (i.e. mediated by a second signal-system), and fundamentally linguistic (written or oral, verbal or gestural), and that **translation** is but a subtype of interlingual, intercultural and mediated communication, necessitated when the participants in the communicative event require (or feign to require — a case not much researched)¹¹⁴ and can afford a mediator conversant with the different languages and cultures involved. I have also submitted that what the participants wish to communicate are *LPs* - including their models of their interlocutors' *LPs*, which they will periodically exchange in order to verify that they have understood them the way they were meant to be understood and/or refute, belie, correct, complement, nuance or otherwise modify them.

If this is indeed basically so, even if there is much more to it than I deem relevant to consign here or than I can see, then a) the subjects of communication are specific, historically and situationally conditioned human beings interacting within social reality, i.e. within the production and exchange of commodities and models of the world, b) the essence of communication is exchanging *LPs* within and as a part of such general social interaction, c) the motivation of communication is a (conscious or unconscious, healthy or neurotic, magnanimous or selfish) wish for (what is perceived as) a favourable modification or consolidation of the (perceived) state of the world and one's position in it, and d) the purpose of communication is to achieve such wish, if need be by hook or by crook. In principle, in order to do this neither language nor speech need necessarily enter into play: a smile or a growl will sometimes do (which of course would be impossible in animal species incapable of intentional semiotic communication). But in the overwhelming majority of economically¹¹⁵ significant exchanges all three are unavoidable, and that is precisely why they evolved. It is here, in this general production and exchange of commodities and models of the world that all speech acts of **translation** take place.

The grounds for a general theory of translation

I suggest that now enough relevant factors are finally accounted for that enter into play in communication to allow any **translator** adequately to chart his course from any source text/culture/author/function/situation/language, etc., to the relevant target counterparts. This is what the scientific study of **translation**, what translatology can and must hope to achieve. The actual journey, on the other hand, is still in the hands of the individual practitioner, whereby actual **translating** remains a heuristic activity. At the same time, it is possible for the descriptive and prescriptive nature of translatology to become harmoniously synthesised (as in Chesterman 1993): a description of the relevant factors and their typical relative weight in typical situations is, at the same time, a prescription for diagnosis: they **ought** to be taken into account; moreover,

¹¹⁴For instance, the case of superfluous -but not less expensive- simultaneous interpreting into languages that nobody is really listening to, where the interpreter is more or less playing the role of a ceremonial guard: dressed to kill, but unarmed.

¹¹⁵May I beseech the reader to let go of the non-Marxian use of the term: this piece, in the above sense, is economically significant in that it has become part of the general production and exchange of goods and models of the world (the latter under the form of *SPs* that at either end of the communicative act the utterer wishes to convey and the receiver manages to grasp — that which is actually -sometimes more, sometimes less successfully- exchanged in communication).

in order to achieve certain communicative goals, certain strategies **ought** to be entertained and others discarded; the most knowledgeable practitioners **ought** to be critically looked at as the best standard setters so far, etc. And the door **ought** also to remain open for new insights, discoveries, demands, needs to modify and develop ever more scientifically arrived at norms. In other words, I am convinced that a general theory of **translation** has become possible. It is not - it cannot be - the end of the road, but it is a decisive stage reached. As Marx would put it, science is but experience made awareness, and now we have the basic elements thereof; from now on, a new cycle begins: translation is henceforward the object of systematic thought and research, and not merely an individual practice by isolated individuals individually expressing their individual insights based on their individual experience.

My own concept

I can boil it down to the following: Rummaging through world three, I have come to understand that **translating** is communicating, and that communication begins as an intention and ends as an act of comprehension. Thus, the first thing I must ask myself is who is asking me to **translate** this text or speech and why, so that it is read/listened to by whom with what purpose; in other words, what kind of a speech act am I to initiate or re-produce. What I do, in fact, is try and determine in my mind the kind of *LPI/LPC* identity that my **translation** is supposed to help achieve: that is the *skopos*, the aim of my **translation**, and that *skopos* determines my overall strategy; all my tactical decisions shall be governed by it: I do not **translate** the same way for the layman and the initiated, in order to inform and to convince, a contract and a report, a political intervention and a technical presentation. Only then do I sink my teeth into the original, which I take as the linguistic materialisation of an individual, collective or institutional meaning meant. For me, words are but circumstantial evidence of sense; I think that, faced with them, the **translator** should become Sherlock Holmes or Sigmund Freud (their methods are almost identical). What interests me is not what the original says, but what the author means, what he means to **do** through his text, because since Grice we know that talking is doing, that behind every speech act there is a pragmatic intention to act upon a specific or imaginary interlocutor: to inform, notify, cajole, seduce, threaten, ask, demand, etc.

I understand now that every text is liable to as many -more or less adequate- interpretations as a musical score, since neither language nor musical notation allow us to consign all that we mean to communicate. Every reading is, therefore, an overt interpretation, and as such exposed to immediate criticism. I know that I am forced to burn ships at every step and that I am answerable for every one I incinerate. As an interpreter, I am also acutely aware that my audience may have different knowledge, expectations and needs, and that such differences advice for or demand all manner of adjustments. On the basis of a first speech act - which I cannot modify, and that is my constraint, and of my instructions — which I can seek, indeed, to influence, I am called upon to generate a second speech act, this time around in the target language, weighting the new dialectic relationship between the original meaning meant and pragmatic intention, my instructions and the new addresses, who will be bringing at their end different, expectations, knowledge and attitude, an act that I shall initiate according to my analysis of all those circumstances and within my ability — and that is my responsible freedom. A translator is paid, precisely, because on the basis of his uniquely specialised knowledge he exercises **deontologically responsible freedom**, something that no machine or improvised intruder can ever hope to do).

Now, since I am not an author but a **translator**, my text, the verbalisation of my *LPI* based upon my understanding of the initial *LPI* -although almost invariably autonomous in the target language and culture- is not totally mine; it must evince a certain necessary relationship with the original, with its content, its intention and even its form (except that this relationship varies from case to case) — it must be somehow or other "faithful" to it. Again, it is in world three that I have been able to find and critically analyse the embarrassingly rich discussion on fidelity in **translation**. Only an adequate concept of fidelity (which, as I have come to realise, I owe not only to the original, since I am a mediator and, as such, I owe at least a dual allegiance — triple if we count the UN) allows me not to waste my time and energy and **translate** better and faster or, in the booth, more leisurely. Here, Popper, who is not a translator nor speaks about translation, has given me the decisive clue: *Words do not matter, so long as no one is misled by them*. Until further notice, this will be my motto (and it should be, I submit, that of every **translator**). It defines fidelity in a negative way — I am no longer concerned so much with what I am supposed to do with words as with what I am **not** supposed to do with them: mislead with respect to the *LPI*, the meaning meant by the original within the *skopos* of my **translation**. I understand that language is merely vehicular, and that its formal features become relevant only in as much as they convey a part of the relevant substance of sense, contributing to the utterance's relevant cognitive effects¹¹⁶ upon the addressee (making implicatures relevantly stronger or weaker, narrower or wider) — in which case come into play indeed all manner of formal features such as terminology, style, register, rhyme, metre, and so many other things that otherwise carry no sense on their own and become totally negotiable). In so far as words, form, do not impede, hamper or impoverish comprehension unnecessarily and unjustifiably, **everything goes**: additions, omissions, shortcuts, circumlocutions, adaptations, register switches, etc.

From Seleskovitch and the Paris school I have learnt the basic lesson that the **translator** translates in order that the addressee understand, so that a relevant segment of world two (the original's *LPI*), objectified in world three (the text or speech) as an element of world one (the paper, the acoustic waves), again relevantly become part of world two (the addressee's having understood — his *LPC*). Hörmann (yet another non-translator) has shown me that intended meaning and understanding are asymmetrical, since they pursue different aims. There are not only different understandings but different dispositions to understand (the same meaning meant by a delegate does not end up in identical dispositions to understand on the part of his alternate, his subordinates, the chairman, the secretary, his political opponents, his allies, those who do not give a hoot anyway, or the verbatim reporters). Also important, of course, are the author's ability to say and the addressee's ability to understand: not all meaning meant is properly conveyed nor does every disposition to understand manage to comprehend effectively. It is part of my job, in principle, to help the author to convey his meaning and the addressee to grasp it. I realise that for the **translator** only the point of departure and arrival are, as it were, given: the *LPI* and the ability to convey it previous to -and therefore different from- the text, and the corresponding disposition and ability to understand posterior to -and, therefore, also different from- the text. Discovering or guessing them is my uppermost responsibility, since only then can I help the original *LPI* to be adequately understood — adequately grasped as an *LPC*. Between these two poles we mediate, the original, I and my **translation**. I am the pillar that supports, separates and unites two arcs of the same bridge, through which the author's *LPI* verbalised as speech must

¹¹⁶Sperber & Wilson define cognitive effects as "changes in the individual's beliefs" (1995, 266).

travel to the **translation's** addressee. If this bridge, no matter how pretty to the eye, does not allow speech to flow, it is like a beautiful liner that does not float.

Nord, House and Gutt reveal to me that Newmark's *semantic* and *communicative* approaches are better explained from a different perspective: a **translation** can be *documentary* (Nord), *overt* (House) or *direct* (Gutt) — i.e. it can **represent** the original text in another language, or it can be respectively *instrumental*, *covert* or *indirect* — having thus **autonomous status** in the target language. At the UN, for instance, the translations of all parallel texts are instrumental, whereas those of drafts submitted by individual delegations are documentary. Delegates' speeches, on their part, require almost invariably a documentary approach, whilst most interventions by the Secretariat are but instrumental. Armed with this theory I **translate** and, if need be, explain and defend my solutions before users, the Administration and my colleagues. But, most of all, I am indebted to García Landa's concept of speech as a social perceptual process. This permanent discussion enriches me and allows me constantly to refine my craft.

This is what I have learnt between my incursions into world three and my everyday job. But there is much more in world three that I deem less relevant, or wrong, or boring, or that I have not quite understood, or that I simply know not of. And there will be more and more. I am aware that I cannot afford to make do with what I know already, with what I have already thought of. In this piece, for instance, I maintain things that I had said many times before (especially Viaggio 1992a, b and c, and 1995), but without the formidable insights of Popper, Hörmann, and Sperber & Wilson (until a few months ago, I had not even heard of them) or, for that matter, García Landa's model, since only very recently have I finally understood and assimilated it. As I have tried to show, the world three of translatology (acceded through books, chats and **translation** seminars) has made it possible for me to accede worlds three of philosophy and communication; I have now a richer vision both of my mission as a **translator** and of the necessary criteria and tools to accomplish it successfully.

But there is something more important: With each incursion into world three -alas, also teeming with trash!- I come back to my world two feeling that I am a better **translator**, more professional, more convinced of this faith and ever more determined to defend it from its detractors and to propagate it among those who do not share it; I come back with more enthusiasm, with renewed passion, a happier man.

How to find one's way in world three?

All this is fine, of course, but how to accede the relevant sectors of world three? How not to waste time and enthusiasm reading uninteresting, irrelevant, obsolete or outright mistaken things? Unfortunately, there is no periodically updated anthology. The best solution is for interested colleagues to divide the work among themselves. In my bibliography, I have listed some of the writings that have influenced me the most — those I recommend. But it is not necessary to read them in order to assimilate their ideas (*skopos* *theorie*, as a case in point, has been submitted mostly in German and I until very recently I knew it indirectly). Normally, the most recent pieces assimilate critically the preceding ones; and if there is no longer a need to read Newton or Darwin to become acquainted with their theories, it is neither indispensable to read our translation classics -or Popper, Hörmann and Sperber & Wilson- in order to benefit from theirs. It is enough to accede to their translatalogically relevant insights, and that is what popularisation literature and more informed colleagues are there for. In principle, I believe it is

both enough and indispensable to keep abreast indirectly; leafing whenever possible through specialised journals is even better. A couple of books (Delisle 1994 and Hatim & Mason 1997, for instance) can offer a more comprehensive view. In any event, there is no need to become library rodents, one can leave the specialists to do the selection, analysis and assimilation. It is better, rather, to attend every now and then a seminar such as this one, where ideas are contrasted and confronted. But not less than that; because world three marches on inexorably toward the unreachable horizon of knowledge of the universe, of man, and of **translation**; and now that the third millennium is nigh, it is high time that all true translators and interpreters march on with it, helping at the same time its progress; so that **translations** be ever better and more efficient, and so that we, their creators, be considered genuine professionals and be paid accordingly.

The need for training

All these new insights I have mentioned were simply not there when the UN started hiring translators and interpreters. At that time and for some years there were no schools to speak of, and the first ones to be founded had no other faculty than self-made practitioners who had no systematic theoretical concept (as a matter of fact, it was among them, precisely, that the present conceptual system began taking shape); these things, therefore, were simply not taught: some of us picked them up along the way (mostly haphazardly and inefficiently), others picked them up from us, but many are still not aware of their existence. As I have tried to show, the concept of **translation** has come a long way since, and the knowledge and ability now required in order effectively to mediate interlingually and interculturally is so vast and varied that it is simply impossible, or at the very least inefficient, to try and acquire them on one's own and sheerly through direct hands-on experience. This is especially true in the case of simultaneous interpreters: the crucial psychomotor component requires effective and efficient training: for them self-training can be extremely dangerous, since all manner of vices are acquired that later on become impossible to discard. As a self-trained practitioner, I know painfully well whereof I speak. Training then, should, on the one hand, bring translational world three down to the would-be **translator** and help him access and find his way in it, so that, on the other, our apprentice go about learning the decisive practical aspect of his craft with a clear concept of the reason for the task and the aims to be achieved by it. Training should have as its general aim to produce not just a **translator** but a **translator** — someone whose specialty is, precisely, mediated interlingual/intercultural communication — not Law, not Engineering, not Literature, not Linguistics, necessary or useful as many of their concepts may turn out to be in actual professional practice.

Basic training

Basic training should thus be specifically **translational** and aim at building up a solid and systematic body of declarative knowledge (knowledge of and about the discipline — a *savoir* that, as in any other discipline should encompass the relevant concepts and their scientific names) which should serve as the basis for an efficiently instilled procedural knowledge (the practical skill at efficiently applying the declarative knowledge to solve different and unique specific cases — a *savoir faire*). The declarative knowledge ought to cover several key areas, in ascending order: language, culture, encyclopaedic knowledge, communication and **translation** theory. Obviously, the **translator** -no less than the surgeon, by the way- will be judged by his procedural knowledge. The point to be retained is that such procedural knowledge -as in the

surgeon's and other professionals' cases- can no longer exist or develop in a theoretical (i.e. declarative) vacuum: no problem solving without a theoretical assessment of the problem - or without a theoretical weighting of the solution. No translational practice, then, without **translation** theory!

Language (and, of course, culture)

Let us start with the obvious: in order to mediate interlingually the **translator** must know his languages. Unfortunately, very few people, and especially youngsters, have a real mastery of their own native tongue — let alone any second or third language. Language training becomes, then, an indispensable basic component. For the purposes of mediation, language training covers different aspects. One is lexical precision and syntactic fluidity: a mediator must be a language virtuoso — he must be able to play all manner of linguistic tricks, especially in the booth, where the ability to condense -i.e., to find the most economical way of expression- may mean the difference between life and death. A crucial skill is perspicuity: the ability to verbalise an *LP*, i.e., to mould speech to sense, or, more traditionally, to put thought into words — clearly, precisely, elegantly and naturally. The linguistically manacled translator or stilted interpreter has a lot to improve on the sheerly linguistic front.

Another aspect is register flexibility: Horizontally, as it were, the mediator must be able to write or speak not only the specific regional variety of the language that he is most familiar with, but also other varieties as well. He must be able to strike an ad hoc balance with equally valid lects. Vertically, he must be able to waive his own socio-linguistic instincts: he must be able to write or speak as a lawyer, as a diplomat, as a technical expert — even as a refugee. All these different if overlapping skills are something that must be learnt and, therefore, should be a component of training. Finally, there is the basic difference between written and oral speech.

There is, however, little point in learning to understand or use abstract linguistic systems. Any language carries and conveys a culture, or, rather, variety of cultures. The cultural component, needless to say, must also be an essential part of training.

Contrastive linguistics

But knowledge of the different languages as such is not enough. A mediator must be aware that different languages are like different instruments that offer different possibilities to and impose different limitations upon the speaker wishing to verbalise an *LPI*. By far the most illuminating book on this score is Vinay & Dalbérnet's legendary *Stylistique comparée de l'anglais et du français*, who keenly point out a crucial distinction between English and French that can be easily extrapolated to Spanish and other romance languages on the one hand, and to other Saxon languages on the other: English works on the level of reality, French on that of abstraction (*l'entendement* as V&D put it). In English you can *plod*, or *rush*, or *tread*, or *run*, or *swim*, or *crawl*, or *dash*, or *fly* across a river, (and in one syllable to boot!). In French or Spanish you can only *traverser* or *atravesar* (three to four syllables, six for *atravesábamos*) plus variously a preposition, a modifier, a noun, etc. (viz., *de un salto*) that will necessitate a few additional syllables. Another feature of English is the promiscuity of her nouns: they will say yes to any preposition, while Spanish nouns are remiss to accept anything but *de* (*the book on the table is red* means simply what it says, whilst *el libro en la mesa es rojo* means that the book is red while

on the table (it presumably changes colour when removed). Which, by the way, neatly leads us to the distinction between explicature and implicature.

Explicatures and implicatures

Both *the book on the table is red* and *el libro en la mesa es rojo* explicate the same fact - they share the same explicature; but, as we have seen, they have different implicatures. Now this is fundamental: no matter how similar their explicatures, if the implicatures are different, then two utterances mean different things. Sense is the sum of explicatures and implicatures. The corollary is also obvious: no matter how their explicatures may differ, two utterances that share the same sum-total of explicatures and implicatures mean the same thing. This is the theoretical basis for abstraction and condensation: if the implicature remains as relevantly rich, the terser the explicature the better. When the lights are on, *light, please!* implicates *turn them off*; when they are on — exactly the opposite... from the information point of view, the verb is totally superfluous. As normal speakers, we all intuitively know this, except that in order to put this intuition to professional conscious use we have to become aware of it — we have to learn that it is so and how it works. To begin with, all implicatures are not equal:

Strong and weak implicatures: the importance of relevance

The *on/off* implicature above is indeed very strong, while the *when on* implicature of *el libro en la mesa* is definitely weaker; as a matter of fact, it would normally take some time and lucubration for a native speaker to come up with it. What actually happens is that when analysing incoming stimuli of any kind, including utterances, we are all intuitively guided by the principle of relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1984/1995). In a nutshell this means the following: a) we assume the stimulus (in our case, the utterance) to be relevant enough to us to be worthy of our attention (otherwise we simply do not even listen to it!); b) we assume that it will optimally convey our interlocutor's intention to communicate; c) we therefore will match it against an immediately relevant possible interpretation; d) if that interpretation fails to produce relevant cognitive effects, we go on searching until we find a plausible one or give up altogether. The stronger the implicature the more immediately it is perceived with minimal processing effort, and that is why the *when on* implicature takes longer to be arrived at than the *on/off* one. The strength of an implicature is a function of context: in the abstract, *'light, please!'* does not carry any implicature stronger than *do something about* (turn on, turn off) the lights or *give me a light* (beer, coffee) or a myriad other things: there is simply no way to 'translate' such an utterance into any other language so that the same range of weak implicatures can be invoked. That is why context, and most particularly the actual setting of communication is so decisive to make out implicatures with no unreasonable effort, and that is precisely the reason why in simultaneous interpretation the verbal form of any message can always be shortened significantly. This, again, is something that must be learnt, and therefore should be a part of basic training.

Language and speech

We can say that while explicatures are the realm of language, implicatures are the stuff of speech. **Translation** is not an operation on language but on speech. The would-be **translator** must be immediately disabused from mistaking the one from the other, since most crucial errors find their

origin in confusing the twain in an undifferentiated magma. Speech is language in use. Texts and utterances are speech -not language- acts, and so are their **translations**. This is especially apparent in simultaneous interpretation, where all manner of linguistic divergences may be observed that do not stand in the way of speech communication but, on the contrary, very much help it, nay, make it possible. Linguists themselves teach us that language does not exist as such, that it has but virtual social reality as a not so stable system of units and the rules for their combinations, that it is but a statistic abstraction, as it were, inferred from countless speech acts. We, who speak long-established languages, tend to be blinded by the fact that there are so many grammars, manuals, dictionaries: it seems as if language were neatly bound in them and one could pick it up from its pages. But only seventy or so of the 4,000 odd languages presently spoken on Earth can even be written. Most languages simply have no codified grammar and are learnt the way we learnt ours before going to school: by inference, by analogy, by aping grown-ups¹¹⁷. For the people who speak them, as for most speakers of our own languages, speech **is** the only reality.

The difference between meaning and sense

Sentences are linguistic tokens and mean, whilst utterances are speech acts and have sense, or, if you prefer, linguistic chains mean, but only people can make sense through them when using them in specific acts of speech. Whatever the status of an oral or written text, whatever the relative importance of its form, it is always but a means, a vehicle, the verbalisation of an intention to communicate -of an *LPI*- itself governed by an intention to act upon the others and the world, to modify or consolidate a state of affairs. It is at this point that **translation** training finally touches upon the communicative essence of **translation**. It is here that **translation** training becomes specifically translational.

¹¹⁷Vygotsky explains that before going to school, the child operates only with spontaneous concepts. Once upon the academic road, he is taught scientific ones. The difference between them is that spontaneous concepts are learnt bottom up, empirically — they are simple intuitive generalisations. Scientific concepts, on their part, are learnt top down, verbally, from the adults. The advantage of spontaneous concepts is that they relate so immediately to the child's experience that they become easily assimilated and entrenched — not always for the better, as we know. Their disadvantage is, precisely, their immediateness, their un-criticality, their non-verbality, the fact that they are impossible to systematise, unless they become verbal, i.e., scientific. Any child, say, seven years old knows what the word 'uncle' means, and can point to all relevant 'uncles' within his experience, but he could not define the concept in the abstract. He will have, though, no problem adding and subtracting abstract figures taught at school.

"Grammar is a subject that seems of little practical use. Unlike other school subjects, it does not give the child new skills. He conjugates and declines before he enters school. ... The child does have a command of the grammar of his native tongue long before he enters school, but it is unconscious, acquired in a purely structural way, like the phonetic composition of words. If you ask a young child to produce a combination of sounds, for example /sk/, you will find that its deliberate articulation is too hard for him; yet within a structure, as in the word Moscow, he pronounces the same with ease. The same is true of grammar. The child will use the correct case or tense within a sentence, but cannot decline or conjugate a word upon request. He may not acquire new grammatical or syntactic forms in school, but, thanks to instruction in grammar and writing, he does become aware of what he is doing and learns to use his skills consciously... Grammar and writing help the child to rise to a higher level of speech development." (1934, 183-184)

Discourse analysis

Since in a previous presentation dealt specifically with this topic, I shall skip it here, but not before stressing, as I have stressed elsewhere, its relevance, and reminding the crucial notions as developed originally by de Beaugrande and Dressler, whose approach is meant to answer our most basic question: what makes a given stretch of discourse a text? Or, in their words, what are the conditions of **textuality**? The first thing we, as readers, are looking for in a text is its **acceptability** as a message, since the communicative function is the crucial attribute of a text, to which all other features are subordinate. If we reject it, we will not read it as avidly — or at all. We are going to accept it -more or less- based on its **cohesion** with a possible world — its objective truthfulness, as it were, and its internal **coherence** — its clarity. We will normally take it as somebody's **intention** to communicate a finite message. We will expect it to be **informative**, i.e., to relevantly enrich our general knowledge and perception of the world — the more the (relevant) information is unexpected or unknown, the more informative the text will be to us (provided we are in a position to understand and assimilate such information, otherwise informativity is lost or, worse, becomes parasitic). We will approach it as relevant in a given **situation**, such as this seminar, for instance. And we will consciously or unconsciously compare it with **other texts previously encountered**. In the case of UN texts, intertextuality is an essential feature, since most of them teem with cross-references, quotations or paraphrases of other texts. Notice that cohesion and coherence can be said to be properties of the text itself, while intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality are more reader-centred. It also, naturally, must be part of training.

Comparative textology

This ties in with intertextuality and the ability to write or speak 'imitating,' as it were, different regional, social, technical and professional lects. As a case in point, Roman, Napoleonic, Islamic and Commonwealth Law have different 'styles;' so do scientific articles in English and, say, Spanish, whilst rhetorical conventions can be miles apart. Whether they can or should be carried over, watered down or made to evaporate in **translation** depends on a myriad factors (themselves an indispensable object of specific knowledge and therefore training), but whatever the advisable strategy, the translator or, to a lesser degree the interpreter, must a) identify them, b) assess them and c) be able, if need be, to carry them competently across. This, again, must be the object of specific training.

Translation theories

This, of course, encompasses all of the above. As I pointed out at the beginning of this piece, also in **translation** there are several partially complementary and partially conflicting modern theories. Whatever his personal preferences, a **translator** ought to be conversant with at least the most influential ones. In fact, his preferences must be the result of an ever more educated and more insightful choice. Experience proves that it is not effective to leave that education and insightfulness to the future — or to chance: the third millennium **translator** must be made aware of all that is relevant to the discipline and the craft, as well as of the constant need to keep abreast with new developments — **before** he comes out into the market.

Norms

Different cultures and settings (such as the UN and its different translation Sections) have their own norms. The concept of norms has been propounded by, among others, Toury. As Chesterman (1993) points out, **translation** norms can be categorised into professional and expectancy norms. Professional norms are at least in part validated by authorities, but they also constitute the actual practice of competent **translators** and are accepted as being the guidelines that such **translators** tend to follow. Professional norms are in their turn governed by expectancy norms: those established by the receivers of the **translations**. It so happens that different users tend to set different, mostly unrealistic or naive norms (blinded that they normally are by the semantic representation mirage). It is up to **translators** to help users understand, accept and eventually establish communicatively ever-better norms. As a case in point, at the UN many users of Spanish translations will demand that the language be sacrificed to semantic equivalence, whilst most users of translations into French will wince at any stylistic infelicity. In the conference rooms, delegates sometimes also seek to impose communicatively naive -when not outright impossible- norms. I contend that users should be educated into accepting the more advanced norms; and in that, **translators** must play the decisive role. This they can only hope to achieve if armed with a sound theoretical arsenal. After all, **translation** norms should be basically a function of ever-deeper insights into communication. As a case in point, the so called 'completeness' norm most practitioners -especially those who began interpreting more than a decade ago- intuitively follow is as obsolete as it is un-realistic: completeness of the explicature tends to be impossible on the go, especially for interpreters working into a language that is not their mother tongue; but even when it is not, completeness of the explicature in no way guarantees identity in the implicatures, which is what we are normally after. Thus, the dialectic interaction of **translation** theory, practice and use and its reflection through ever evolving norms, I think, ought to be part of training as well.

The specifics of simultaneous-interpreter training

The fundamental difference between simultaneous interpreting and translating is two-fold: simultaneous interpreting a) is governed by the specific rules of oral speech; and b) imposes unique psychomotor demands. It is these demands that stand in the way of many otherwise competent mediators. From the psychomotor point of view, the interpreter must handle simultaneously three different processes that vie for his concentration and processing capacity: listening/analysing, short-term memory operations, and elocution (Gile 1995). Within the general view of **translation** as communication, it is here that the fact that **translating** is talking becomes more rotundly apparent. The procedural knowledge to be instilled in the would-be interpreter is, precisely, the ability to talk to the audience rather than parrot into the microphone. This requires that the interpreter consciously seek for the *LPI*, and then seek to produce in his audience a relevantly identical *LPC*. It is not enough to understand the words, it is not even enough to understand what the speaker intends to convey: the interpreter must also seek to guess what is his audience's ability and disposition to understand, since they will be listening to him (i.e., to the speaker) by intuitively applying the principle of relevance. It is the interpreter's deontological duty to strive to optimise relevance minimising any unnecessary processing effort on the part of his audience. The most obvious cases are when the interpreter simply glides over any foreign

accent, speech defect, or glaring awkwardness of expression (something that they do spontaneously, without even thinking).

Hesitations, excessive speed, irregular delivery, monotony, an unpleasant pitch, the abundance of informationally superfluous or parasitic information all equally conspire against relevance. The student interpreter must be taught to minimise them. His delivery should be as natural as possible (in my experience nor many self-made practitioners really manage to speak naturally while interpreting). On the sheerly linguistic level, this requires rigorous and intensive training in condensation of form, but more important is the ability to abstract content (see Viaggio 1992).

As a mediator, it is essential that the student be taught to 'read' the room, becoming aware of the issues, the stakes, the different positions, the hidden agendas behind the overt ones. Only then will he be able to listen to the speaker with his audience's ears and talk to his audience with the speaker's mouth. Only then will he be able to understand what is really relevant in each specific instance (which the best self-made interpreters intuitively do) and consciously discard that which it is not — (which very few of them dare), since by that they would be maximising their own work's relevance to their audience, i.e., rendering a better service, i.e., providing a communicatively more adequate interpretation.

The dawning era of the *translator*

Until now, the UN and other institutional recruiters have not paid much attention to the **translators'** translational academic credentials, the original rationale being that linguistic and encyclopaedic knowledge would in principle suffice or have to suffice, since at the that time few practitioners had any specifically **translational** academic background. In the coming millennium, I submit, a relevant academic degree from a recognised school of **translation** must eventually become mandatory: the UN can hardly afford to train on the job linguistically and culturally competent but communicatively unsophisticated **translators** such as I myself was when I started twenty-plus years ago. A physician becomes a veteran with practice, but he becomes a physician at a School of Medicine. The days of the self-made international **translator** are as counted as those of the self-made journalist, football player or fashion model. When I hear my young colleagues, fresh from any good **translation** school, I sometimes wonder how come I was ever hired: they are so much better than I was when I started! And to add insult to injury they are bound to become much better than I can ever hope to be and learn so many new things that I shall never hear of! But then I find consolation in thinking that their wonderful advantage: what they know that I did not, I myself helped them learn before they even donned their earphones for the first time, whereas I had no one to teach me.

Conclusion

I have stressed the need for linguistically competent, but intuitive, theory-bereft **translators** to evolve into fully professional **translators**. The difference between the twain lies in the latter's familiarity with, mastery of and ability to benefit from different concepts, insights and approaches to be found in a variety of neighbouring disciplines, such as discourse analysis or, especially, the most advanced translation theories that see translation as a sub-type of communication and not simply as a text-producing craft. All of these are to be found in what, borrowing Karl Popper's notion (if not quite literally) we can simply call World Three — the

social knowledge reservoir. All translators have their own personal, intuitive, mostly a-critical theories. They have them in their heads, i.e., confined to their chunk of World Two. Only by making them explicit and contrast them with the theories of others can they hope to improve them or simply substitute them with better ones. This, in turn, will help them shape and socially institute ever more scientifically based norms. The training of this new brand of professionals is obviously crucial in opening their minds to the vast treasures of World Three.

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