

DEVELOPING TRANSLATION STUDIES TO  
BETTER ACCOUNT FOR AUDIOVISUAL  
TEXTS: AND OTHER NEW FORMS  
OF TEXT PRODUCTION





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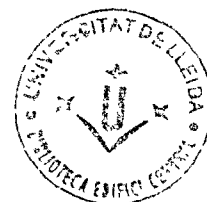
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**Developing Translation Studies to Better  
Account for Audiovisual Texts and Other New  
Forms of Text Production**

(WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE TV3 VERSION OF *YES, MINISTER*)



PRESENTADA AL DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA DE LA FACULTAT DE  
LLETRES DE LA UNIVERSITAT DE LLEIDA

LLEIDA, MAIG DE 1993

*Patrick Zabalbeascoa*

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Needless to say, all the weaknesses, mistakes, errors and any other shortcomings are entirely my own responsibility.

### Abbreviations used in this thesis

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- CAT Computer Assisted Translation
- LC1 Language culture of the source text and its most likely readership
- LC2 Language culture of the translation and its most likely readership
- SC Source culture
- SL Language in which the source text is written
- ST Source text, the original text written in the SL, according to the norms of use and usage of the LC1
- TC Target culture
- TI Translation Initiator, the person who orders the translation, and in doing so 'initiates' the whole process
- TL Language in which the translation is written
- TO Hewson and Martin's abbreviation for translator, or Translation Operator.
- TT The translation, the translator's finished version, written in the TL, according to the norms of use and usage of the LC2. We have kept the abbreviation TT, which really stands for 'target text' although we consider this term rather misleading at times.

# Chapter One

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Translation as a profession is now just as common and accepted as any other profession. Machine translation is already producing results that are more and more satisfactory and encouraging. Moreover, translation theory (or translatology or translation studies or whatever you like to call it) now appears to be taking off the ground. Translating is going on all around us, so it cannot be ignored, and yet there is so much widespread ignorance as to what translation really means and involves.

Television, likewise, is all around us, which is not news for anyone living in this day and age. The influence it has on the lives of individuals and social communities is undeniable and inescapable. Translation has found its way into the television companies and programmes of many countries, and in many different ways: simultaneous interpretation or subtitling of famous people being interviewed, or giving a speech; subtitles and dubbed versions of films and other programmes; even the translation of a number of advertisements, just to name the most obvious instances.

English is clearly the principal source language (SL) for the translation of audiovisual texts into other languages, since the USA is the top exporter of films and television productions, and also because the number and range of programmes is increased by the output of other English-speaking producers and exporters such as Australia and Great Britain.



The language chosen as the language of the translation (TL) for the test case is Catalan, and the genre of the TV programmes studied is what is most commonly known as 'situation comedy'. Catalan is a relatively new language to the television media, and even newer as a language into which television material was to be dubbed. This situation provided a good excuse to explore the possibilities and opportunities of starting something from scratch. At a crossroads like this, one would want to ask whether it was all right to carry on doing what has been common practice in other languages and other television and dubbing studios, or whether it was convenient to revise traditional practices and theories of translation and film dubbing to see where they could be improved.

I have also found it worthwhile to work on the specific case of the problems posed to translators of comedy since it has been an opportunity to fathom the depths of the truth that supports opinions that say that humour is universal, against others who say that it is so culture-bound as to be untransferable from one language to another.

I would also like to point out that translation, television, English and comedy can all be viewed as means of mass, worldwide communication, and it is important to know how these powerful forces are aimed at and received by a native Catalan audience, as an instance of other receptor communities and societies who also have television and comedy as part of their daily lives and use English as a language of wider communication or watch dubbed versions of audiovisual productions in English.

Although this work includes aspects of language, television and humour, it does not aim to make any major breakthroughs in these domains - if there are any novel insights in this respect then so much the better -. The main focus of attention of the dissertation is translation, and the points to be discussed will be points to do with the theory and practice of translation. While recognizing the multidisciplinary nature of translation studies there is a very conscious effort here to isolate what is characteristic and unique to the domain of translation theory. What has made it possible for translators to do their job - quite satisfactorily in many cases - for centuries without the benefit of so many recent insights in linguistics and literary criticism?

What we need is a model of translation that will explain the translating process objectively, that will help us assess the quality of translations more accurately, and help us teach students to translate better day by day, a model that will do all this by incorporating all the useful findings of linguistics and even literary criticism, but at the same time it necessary to make the model flexible enough to account for future findings resulting from research in various areas which we do not yet know about but which are sure to be made as linguists pursue their research. This dissertation is intended as a step in the direction of creating such a model. It proposes a model that is linguistically oriented but not based on any linguistic theory in particular. But above all, this model ~~is~~ is the result of focusing

on translation at all times, and not of a linguistic theory which has later been applied to translation studies.

## 1.2. ABOUT TRANSLATION

Anybody can talk about translation. Translation is easy. Translation is difficult. Translation is impossible. Translation is a necessary evil. To translate is to betray. A translator must be faithful. Translation is an art. Translation is a science. Translation is fascinating. Translation is frustrating. Translation is a product. Translation is a process. A translation is never finished. Translation must be periodically up-dated. Translation is all about languages. Translation is all about cultures. Translation is all about communication.

Where and what is the perfect translation? What should be translated? What should not be translated? What makes a good translator? Which translation is the best? Why are a vast number of translations apparently so bad? What alternative is there to translation? Can machines translate? Can just anybody translate?

It is surprising to see how much has been said about translation that is either a repetition of what has previously been written (or a perfect contradiction), or totally subjective and biased, or simply of no practical use since no general conclusions can be drawn from the logical propositions of the statements made. On the other hand, much of what makes sense in what has been said/written about translation is too narrow in its scope, and is therefore only true over a very limited range of instances of texts.

Translation, as we can see above, is full of contradictions and paradoxes and the task of solving them falls within the domain of translation theory. It is precisely because there are so many contradictory postulations about translation that the first (and indeed most important) objective of translation theory has to be a clear, objective **definition of the nature of translation**. If we cannot agree on a common definition of translation and its nature then it logically follows that we will never find ourselves talking about the same phenomenon, even if we use the same term, which, by the way, is a classic example of comic misunderstandings. And this ambiguity in the terminology partly explains many of the contradictions and misunderstandings that prevail among translation theory scholars and even translators.

"(...) because of the variety and the immediacy of their objectives each of these theoretical constructions is not situated at the same level of systematic explicitness. Some studies

describe the objects they are dealing with in taxonomic classifications, others lay the stress on processes and strategies, others again concentrate on formal construction. They very rarely articulate these different levels into one coherent whole.' Hewson and Martin (1991: 3-4)

### **1.3. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS THESIS**

- Find a general definition of translation on which to build the theory.
- Study the nature of translation with a view to mapping the parameters of the translating process and recognizing the interdependency of all the factors that intervene in a given translation.
- Define the nature and boundaries of translation theory.
- Define the potential factors of translation as variables whose relative values will change from one translating task to the next.
- Review accepted translation procedures and then search for translation procedures specifically indicated for the case of dubbing television comedy.
- Apply the model to the case of translating for television situation comedies.

### **1.4. THE METHOD AND THE MEANS**

The two main sources of material that I have used to work on in the shaping of this study have been (1) specialized bibliography and (2) personal transcripts of video-tape recordings of television comedy, originally produced in English and shown in Catalan on TV3 (e.g. *Yes, Minister* -> *Sí, Ministre*). I have also taken into account my own experience as a translator and as a teacher of the theory and practice of translation for fifth-year English Philology students of the University of Barcelona, in Lleida, and the University of Lleida.

The method has been to study the bibliography with a critical eye and use the conclusions as a basis for producing a personal model of how translations are produced and what

translation theory is in aid of. The second part of the project consists in applying the new-born model to the specific case of television comedy translated from English into Catalan in order to test the theory's validity.

### **1.5. IN SEARCH OF A MODEL THAT WILL WORK FOR THE DUBBING OF TELEVISION COMEDY**

**The reason for writing this thesis** is to further contribute to a much-needed general theory of translation by studying the particular problems that arise in translating television comedy series (situation comedies) from English into Catalan.

**The thesis will be developed from two different angles:**

- 1) A review of some of the ideas that have been published about the problems and characteristics of translations and the translating process. In particular I will interpret those aspects of translation models that might be useful to **the translator of audiovisual texts** (especially TV). I will attempt to harmonize their most compatible statements in an effort to find a common working ground for translators, while at the same time lay the way for the answers (or at least ask the right questions) for the particular case of translating television comedy.
- 2) The second part of this dissertation will be a presentation of an approach based on the concepts of **factors, priorities and restrictions** in the light of some samples of television comedy produced in English, and one or two considerations on what kind of systematization this area of translation can benefit from, either by following a methodology or at least by arousing a greater awareness of the factors involved. The illustrating samples will be taken mainly from the BBC production *Yes, Minister*.

**The main object of this thesis is to point out two fundamental considerations:**

- 1) There is a need within translation studies to provide a more accurate account of the whole range of texts and contexts that translators have to cope with. We must admit that certain written forms are much more abundant nowadays (e.g TV scripts, best-sellers, brochures, magazines) than more traditional forms of literature or philosophical or metaphysical writings. It is important that the quality and potential of these texts be carefully studied with a view to improving them as much as

possible. Nowhere do scripts for television programmes appear in any classification of texts, and it is debatable whether they can now be slung into already existing classifications; there is a need for a **new grouping of texts** to be made to accommodate new forms of communication such as television, telex, teletext and subtitles for films.

- 2) We need to pay more attention to the fact that an essential ingredient in the production of any translation (and likewise in the criticism of any translation) involves **identifying** an awesome amount of **variable factors**; a translator's success might then be measured in terms of how many are identified and adequately **accounted for** (how they are dealt with); and how many are overlooked or disregarded.

A combination of these two considerations should lead to a model of the translating process and a teaching methodology whereby the trainee translator will be able to analyse all the relevant **factors** and then establish two separate, but related, lists or sets:

- (1) a set of **Priorities**, which will include primary and secondary goals;
- (2) a set of **Restrictions**, obstacles and problems ranging from morphological ambiguity to deadlines.

A good theory should explain (to the translator, and in practicable terms) the nature of texts and text-types, and the kinds of Priorities and Restrictions that will have to be dealt with. Once the translator has drawn up his/her sets of Priorities and Restrictions he/she will be in a position to produce a coherent, faithful translation. What I mean by *faithful* here derives from the translator being **faithful to his/her own set of Priorities** for each text; and by *coherent* I mean that the translation should be produced according to a **strict observance of the set of Restrictions** (textual, professional and contextual) which will have to be carefully recognised and accounted for. *Coherent* also refers to the way in which the **Priorities** are to be set up; they should be carefully **ordered** in as compatible a way as possible, and respond to the context in which the translation takes place as well as the context in which it is to appear once it is finished.

**This thesis rests on the following considerations:**

- 1) Dubbing of any sort involves working with **audiovisual texts**, i.e. the text is not made up only of words, but also of pictures. Neither the words nor the pictures are in print when they reach their final destination: the words and the pictures are recorded onto a videotape. This means that words and pictures are received in chronological, not spatial, sequence. It also means that the spoken words are not the only part of the soundtrack, as it may also pick up any other desirable sounds. **All of the sounds and pictures** recorded onto a video tape are to be considered **constituent parts of an audiovisual text**.

- 2) In the case of television comedy we will stress the following characteristics in addition to the ones mentioned above,
  - (a) **television**: as the media or **mode**, opposed to cinema, but compatible with home video, a recent Factor that needs to be taken into account is the possibility of recording a programme, or sometimes even buying it on the market.
  - (b) **(television) fiction**: as the first broad trait, in particular opposed to news, sport, and documentaries.
  - (c) **(television) comedy** or *light humour*: this aspect will help to define the **tone** and illocutionary and perlocutionary force of the text; i.e. an attempt at being entertaining, as opposed to thought-provoking; the target response is laughter, opposed to thinking, worrying or crying.
  
- 3) A close look at television comedy helps to do the following:
  - (a) **distinguish** the translation of comedy from humour in other types of texts
  - (b) work out a **typology** of the sorts of jokes that most frequently appear in comedy shows, and explain why the translator should be able to distinguish them and how to deal with each kind of joke, as an integrated part of the whole text.

### NOTE ON THE TEXT

The words 'Factor', 'Priority' and 'Restriction' and their plural forms are written with a capital letter to refer to the way they are understood and defined in this work.

The quotations are mostly bibliographical confirmations of the hypotheses that led to the making of this work.

## Chapter Two

### 2.1. THE NATURE OF TRANSLATING

This section is a result of the need to understand exactly what translating is all about before one can even start to suggest theories or design models. Here we intend to begin to answer such questions as: What makes a translation a translation? Is translation possible? Is translation objective? and other similar questions related to the nature of translation.

#### 2.1.1. A TEXTUAL OPERATION

First and foremost, **translation must be understood as a textual operation**, an activity that is performed on a text, and the result of which always produces a text. However, it must be quite clear from the outset that we can never expect the target text to 'be' the original text. Part of the nature of translation is the changes that take place during the process. We will not include lexicographical or terminological questions as problems of translation proper, or translation theory. What we mean by this is that a list of words that does not form part of a text need not be given to a translator for him/her to translate, or asked to create translations of such words (neologisms) in another language. This does not mean that we do not understand that a text might be made up of a single word, or might be part of a larger text, as long as it complies with certain semantic and communicative requirements.

From this point of view translating might be defined as the process of **producing a new text (TT)** in a language (TL) that is different from the language (SL) of a source text (ST) that acts as **the main stimulus and reference** for writing the new text. The ST

text should not turn out to be a translation of an accessible TL text that would fully satisfy the requirements of the potential TT, because a translation is always produced in response to a specific need. For example, it would not make sense to translate the Catalan version of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* back into English. However, as we will see throughout this study, **one can never state anything about the production of translations as being universally categorical**. So we could think up a given context where it might be interesting or necessary to translate the Catalan version of *Pygmalion* back into English, for instance in the highly unlikely event that all of the copies of the play in English were irretrievably lost, or in the more plausible case that we wished to prove a certain point about the virtues of 'back-translation'. Henri Meschonnic (1973: 349, as quoted in Hatim and Mason, 1990: 8) also views translation as a textual operation:

"A text is a whole entity, to be translated as a whole."

**STs and TTs as texts must usually be perceived as utterances**. We translate utterances and not context-free sentences (the translation of sentences would be appropriate for the making of a bilingual or multilingual phrase book for tourists, but this is more similar to producing a dictionary than a translating process), or deep-structure propositions, i.e. a translator takes the ST as an input utterance, and processes it in a certain (arbitrary) way to produce an output utterance which is usually called the TT. However, what is wrong with such an expression as *Target Text*, is that it may induce a translator into thinking that there is a pre-existing target that has to be aimed for, or, similarly as inherent foreign language text that must be uncovered and this is not the case at all. The widely accepted premise that translations have to be periodically up-dated, supports our conviction that texts are normally to be treated as utterances with all that that entails (especially when the TT is only to be perceived once, as in the case of simultaneous interpreting, or many TV productions), and **only occasionally as more or less context-free structured series of 'sentences'** (only in the case of long-living texts, such as poems and proverbs).

Hatim and Mason (1990: 4) are aware of the 'utterance' nature of texts, in that each new reading of a text is as if the text had changed in some way, were a different text, a different utterance, and this is because texts, like utterances, are context-sensitive:

"Can judgements about translations be made objectively? (...) Every reading of a text is a unique, unrepeatable act and a text is bound to evoke differing responses in different receivers. (...) What can be done, however, is to elaborate a set of parameters for analysis which aim to promote consistency and precision in the discussion of translating and translations. A common set of categories is needed and a set of terms for referring to them, a metalanguage for translation studies."



Each 'unique, unrepeatable' experience of reading or hearing a text is what we have defined as the text's 'utterance' characteristic. This thesis sets out to provide its own parameters for analysis, while attempting to keep terminology down to a minimum.

We must agree with Hatim and Mason (1990: 21) on the following description of the nature of the translator's problems:

"The basic problems faced by translators in their work remain the same, these can be briefly listed as follows:

1. Comprehension of source text:

- (a) parsing of text (grammar and lexis)
- (b) access to specialised knowledge
- (c) access to intended meaning.

2. Transfer of meaning:

- (a) relaying lexical meaning
- (b) relaying grammatical meaning
- (c) relaying rhetorical meaning, including implied or inferrable meaning, for potential readers.

3. Assessment of target text:

- (a) readability
- (b) conforming to generic and discursal TL conventions
- (c) judging adequacy of translation for specified purposes."

In other words, there are three main tasks for the translator, but these three main tasks are governed by one unifying, hierarchically-ordered set of Priorities. The first task is to read, understand and analyse the ST for the specific purpose of translating it according to an overriding set of Priorities. The last task is to produce a polished text which is coherent and faithfully represents the translator's Priorities. The middle task is what we might call translation proper, the actual transfer of certain properties of the ST into the TL. Needless to say, there is a great deal of overlap in these three stages, and on occasions they are too closely related to even be perceived as separate stages, because one may already be thinking of how the translation will sound even while one is still reading the original text. This is the essential difference between translating and reading a text without aiming to translate it, or writing a text that is not a translation. But, other than this, translating basically involves the difficulties involved in reading and in writing and in communicating.

### 2.1.2. AN ACT OF COMMUNICATION

Translation is an act of communication, or a mediation in an act of communication that involves Reading (the ST) and Writing (the TT). The translator is therefore a communicator as well as a mediator. Depending on the occasion of the translation the translator will be more of a communicator for his/her own readership or more of a mediator for the author of the original text. There must be a proper understanding of the relationship between the ST writer as communicator, the translator and the TT readership. Three possible cases arise here:

- (1) the author of the ST intended to communicate with the TT readership;
- (2) was aware that the ST might be translated;
- (3) wrote exclusively for a native speaker of the ST language.

In the latter case we can hardly consider that the ST author is communicating with the TT readership. In this case it is the translator (or his client) who decides to communicate with his readership, and has his own communicative purpose. The extreme opposite case would be liaison interpreting, where one interlocutor says to the interpreter "tell her that (...)"

The following quotation from Hewson and Martin (1991: 26) perfectly identifies a fundamental aspect of communication, and of translation as a means of communication:

"More acceptable for translation purposes is the theory of 'partial communication' which seems to stand explicitly or implicitly in the background of most contemporary studies about translation."

In this perspective, communication can never be expected to transfer the totality of what has been originally imparted in the message. This is true of intralingual communication, and is even truer of interlingual communication. There is no fundamental flaw in communication causing loss of information or entropy, it is simply in the nature of communication, its power and its weakness. In translation, the message does not have to be oriented from a hypothetical origin to a still more problematic destination. It results from the interlocutory production of those involved in the act of communication and has to be interpreted as such. Communication should be conceived as 'co-significance' or the jointly constructed, mutually negotiated production of signification: either we signify with others or it is not meaning that we are producing. Hewson and Martin, (1991: 27), go on to say:

"Since translation always applies to an already fully realized situation of communication in LCI, it is important to underline the meta-communicational status of the translator. (...)

His role is both accessory and crucial to the communication process. Instead of co-defining signification with his interlocutor, he will *mediate* between two situations; that is to say, he will take it upon himself to define the norms and options that need to be established between two Language Cultures (LCs)."

Thus, translation, like other forms of communication, involves the participation of people (communicators and receivers) who negotiate a certain 'meaning' according to the context in which they are at the time of the communication and their individual and social backgrounds, and what each party is assumed to know by the other party. However it is not always the case that translation applies to an already fully realized situation of communication; and sometimes it does not matter if there was an original situation or what it was. There are cases where the ST writer knows that only the translator will read the ST, because really the text is being addressed exclusively to the TT audience.

### 2.1.3. VARIATION WITHIN TRANSLATION

Variation is a key concept in understanding the proper nature of translation, and it is the lack of awareness of this aspect of translation that has given rise to the most numerous and serious misconceptions about the nature of translations. **Variation does not mean an absence of standards of excellence.** Variation is to be understood within the parameters and permutations of all the potential Priorities and Restrictions. Variation in translation essentially means that there must be 2 different renderings if there are 2 different sets of conditions (Factors and Restrictions); and there may be 2 or more different renderings even for the same set of conditions, expressing different sets of Priorities. This is one of the points that will be developed throughout the thesis, since variation is one of its cornerstone concepts.

### 2.1.4. THE OCCASION OF THE TRANSLATION

A basic ingredient that has only recently started to be sufficiently recognized is the Occasion of the Translation, which includes the client, the TI, the purpose, the expectations, the context, and the translator's stimulus as text producer. *Why are we going to translate this text?* This question is fundamental in explaining the nature of translation, and because its answer varies from text to text and from context to context, it is a variable, and because it is a variable it helps to prove that **translating does not happen in a vacuum**, that we translate for different reasons (for example we may translate for educational purposes, to spread religious or political ideas, to inform, to show how other people think, to sell a product overseas, etc.) and in a whole variety of contexts.

A translation task will be impossible when we are incapable of defining a need and a context for the TT. Mallfrè (1991: 136) hints at this when he says:

“Veiem remot l'interès que pugui tenir la traducció d'aquesta cançó concreta.”

These are questions that have to be dealt with in any theory of translation because they are part of the nature of translating and not just an awkward accessory. In this sense there is almost a sort of 'political' ingredient to translation, in deciding which texts to translate and which ones not to translate, and (among the ones that are to be translated) what they are in aid of. Syntax and morphology have nothing to say on these points but we can learn from the findings of sociolinguistics, sociology and discourse analysis.

### 2.1.5. TENSIONS IN TRANSLATING

During the translating process there is an inevitable, though variable, creation of tensions at each level of the translation. These tensions have already been identified by a number of authors:

- (1) SL => TL (lexical patterns, syntax, textual systems, communication strategies)
- (2) ST function and status => TT function and status (including ST/TT intertextuality)
- (3) ST author => TT producer (background, style, idiolect, intention; they are two different communicators).
- (4) ST intended readership => TT intended readership (their expectations, cultural values, background knowledge)

These tensions explain the need for compromises. They are also variables and cannot be universally characterized. In this thesis we will include these tensions among the Restrictions.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 33) offer their definition of translation:

“Translation can be neither an automatized process nor a complete creation. (...) The translated text finally produced should be seen (1) as a meaningful relation established with the SL original text and (2) as establishing a significant difference with the other excluded translation options. Translation can thus be finally defined as the individually and interculturally motivated *choice* according to the TL *socio-cultural norms* of a TT by a *mediator* among sets of *homologically* [context-sensitive] related *paraphrastic* options.”

Here we can see how Hewson and Martin, just as Hatim and Mason (1990: 3), insist on the idea of '**motivated choice**' as central to a proper description of the nature of translation.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 43) conceive translation as a process of identifying all the possible paradigmatic paraphrases and then selecting the most appropriate ones to the context:

"The generative process in the Variational approach: paradigmatic reconstruction based on *paraphrases*. (...) this translation process does not correspond to the definition of one translation exclusive of others but to a set as complete and as clearly defined as possible of translation alternatives. Paraphrase functions as a *clarifying* concept in ST and as a *relativizing* one in LC2."

### 2.1.6. THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ROLE OF TRANSLATING

Translations can also be regarded as an attempt to bridge, or simply account for, existing differences between people, cultures, languages and societies and their intertwining, interdependent nature. An important Factor in explaining the nature of translation is the degree of its social acceptance and status. Translations have historically suffered from being perceived as some sort of necessary evil, nearly always leaving the reader of the translation unsatisfied and with a wrong or incomplete idea of what the original author was trying to communicate.

These negative opinions about translations have caused translators generally to be **underpaid as professionals and looked down upon as intellectuals or writers**. Any mistakes or weaknesses in the original were always (often still are) attributed to the translator in the foreign version rather than to the ST writer.

In Catalonia translating has frequently been regarded as a powerful tool for establishing Catalan as a language of normal communication and a language of literature and academic instruction. This **positive attitude** towards translation has probably been instrumental in the production of very carefully-made high-quality translations. As television was also seen as a powerful means for spreading the language it was immediately decided that foreign productions would have to be translated and dubbed and these dubbed versions would also serve an educational and political purpose of spreading and 'normalizing' the everyday use of Catalan.

### 2.1.7. THE ARBITRARY NATURE OF TRANSLATION

Translation is not something that just happens. There is a will behind it and an understanding as to what translations are and what translations involve. Translating is a human activity, and like many other human activities it is subject to personal opinions, to fashions, to social attitudes to authorities on the subject and other similar forces. There is no inherent translation for 'wet paint', there is somebody who decides that the most convenient way to translate this into Spanish is '*recién pintado*', or '*pintura mojada*', or '*esto está húmedo*', or '*no tocar*', or whatever. Therefore, **there can be no objective translation 'rules'**. Translation rules are more like the rules of a board game than the laws of physics. Somebody has decided what they are to be, they do not just exist, but if you find yourself playing that game you will have to obey those rules (this is what I will call 'style book').

Other translation rules are simply rules of common sense, composition, grammar, or some other Factor which is related to the translating process, but which is also separately identifiable. This explains how somebody can translate without knowing the 'rules'.

## 2.2. THE BOUNDARIES OF TRANSLATION THEORY

- Does 'interdisciplinary' mean dependence on scholars from other sciences and studies? The development of translation theory depends on how one defines translation.
- Translation Theory: We can be objective in our description, but not in our strategy; **translation strategies are arbitrary**, although they should usually be justified.
- A proper translation theory should provide the same framework for
  - (a) the translator
  - (b) the translator instructor
  - (c) the translation critic

On this point, we find the following passage by Bell (1991: 22) particularly enlightening:

"What is translation theory? (...) In short, instead of making subjective and arbitrary judgements on the extent to which one translation is better than another and insisting that goodness resides in the faithful adherence to an imposed set of commandments, **our**

**orientation has to be towards the objective specification of the steps and stages** through which the translator works as the ST in the original language is transformed into the target text; a focus on the process which creates the translation rather than on the translation itself."

On the one hand, a translation theorist should not be making subjective statements about what translation is or involves, but on the other, needs to accept the arbitrary nature of translation itself. For too long the opposite has been the case; translation was viewed as being an 'objective' process, leading to a single, logical result, while translation theorists were spilling out totally subjective views as to what they thought translation was and as to what translators should be doing to achieve their ultimate goal: the production of the ideal translation.

Gutt (1991: 5) outlines three possible approaches to translation theory:

- (1) An approach relying on shared intuitions about the domain of the theory
- (2) The translation theorist delimits the domain by definition. (potentially normative)
- (3) Translation is what a culture takes it to be.

Any one of these approaches shows the arbitrary nature of translation, but we must not mistake the arbitrary nature of translation with the need for a more objective approach to translation, albeit one that will account for such arbitrariness.

R.T. Bell (1991: 23) pinpoints the nature of this debate through a quotation from Beaugrande:

"As Beaugrande warns: 'it is inappropriate to expect that a theoretical model of translation should solve all the problems a translator encounters. Instead, it should formulate a set of strategies for approaching problems and for coordinating the different aspects entailed.' "

This is precisely the aim of this thesis; to provide a framework for translation strategies to help enhance translators' awareness of how to approach their task so that they can adequately solve the problems themselves.

Mallfrè (1991: 63 & 68) points out that the theory needs to be a descriptive account of the process regarding the translator's intuitions:

"La intuïció hi fa un paper molt important. (...) Hi pot haver bons traductors que no coneixin la teoria de la traducció. (...) Hi ha algunes intuïcions que poden ser sistematitzables, poden formular-se racionalment i, per tant, aprofitar-se didàcticament, si cal. (...) És útil que la teoria de la traducció s'ocupi dels qui la practiquen. I no menys útil serà que un traductor, per intuïtiu que sigui, sàpiga, més o menys, de què va la teoria, sense que això vulgui dir que s'hagi de convertir en un especialista teòric."

Bell (1991: 32) says that human reasoning processes are more essential to using and conveying knowledge in texts than are logical proofs. It is the task of science to systematize the fuzziness of its objects of inquiry, not to ignore it or argue it away:

"Probabilistic models are more adequate and realistic than deterministic ones. Dynamic accounts of structure-building operations will be more productive than static descriptions of the structures themselves. We should work to discover regularities, strategies, motivations, preferences, and defaults rather than rules and laws. **Dominances** can offer more realistic classifications than strict categories. Acceptability and appropriateness are more crucial standards for texts than grammaticality and well-formedness."

Here, one has the feeling that there is an underlying premise that translations somehow 'happen'. While it is true that translations can and should be studied systematically and objectively, it is not true that translation is a science or ever will be. Scientific approaches to translation (i.e. empirical observation of all the intervening Factors) merely help to reveal even more clearly its arbitrary, subjective, context-dependent, social, and communicative nature.

Translation theory is indeed not a science as De Waard and Nida (1986: 185) tell us:

"Translating is not a science but a technology, for it is built upon a number of scientific disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, communication theory, anthropology, and semiotics."

This is essentially correct, and in this respect Nida has moved on from his views in the 1960's where he envisaged translation as eventually becoming a science (e.g. in the title of his book *Toward a Science of Translating*<sup>1</sup>).

Hatim and Mason (1990: 1) defend a functional approach in translation theory:

"It is the task of the theorist to discern regularities and patterns of behaviour where these exist, to incorporate diversity of function within an overall model of the translating process. Kelly (1979: 226) suggests a functional approach: 'It is only by recognizing a typology of function that a theory of translation will do justice to both Bible and bilingual cereal packet'."

Regularities and patterns will produce typologies and classifications, but we must, at all times, be aware of their arbitrariness and the limitations of their scope. In other words, classifications and typologies are no more than tools which are used to model our experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Nida, 1964.



Here Hatim and Mason (1990: 3) really hit the nail on the head regarding the proper approach to translation theory:

It is in the nature of things that the target text displays only the translator's final decisions. Readers perceive an end-product, the translator's final decisions. What is available for scrutiny is the end-product, the result of translation practice rather than the practice itself. (...) If we treat text merely as a self-contained and self-generating entity, instead of as a decision-making procedure and an instance of communication between language users. (Critiques of individual translations abound. But from the perspective of translation studies, what is needed is systematic study of problems and solutions by close comparison of ST and TT procedures. (...) texts can be seen as the result of motivated choice (...) naturally, in translating, there are potentially two sets of motivations: those of the producer of the ST and those of the translator."

The key words in this quotation are 'motivated' and 'choice'. Both account for the fact translation theory must allow for variation, because there will be different motivations and so different choices will be made. Regarding the fact that all we can perceive is the end-product, we must say that it is the critic's job to find out the translator's motivations and which choices were made and why, and criticize the translation in the light of such an analysis.

Hatim and Mason (1990: 7), on the issue of 'dynamic' v. 'formal' equivalence:

"(...) all translation is, in a sense, communicative. Similarly, a translator who aims at formal equivalence usually has good reasons for doing so and the formally equivalent version may well, in fact, achieve EQUIVALENCE of reader response. (...) it seems preferable to handle the issue in terms of equivalence of **intended effects**. (...) consider the issue in terms of the degree of motivation of particular strategies in both ST and TT. We are here in the domain of pragmatics. (...) The concept of '**adequacy**' in translation is probably a more useful one than 'EQUIVALENCE'. Adequacy can then be judged in terms of the specifications of the particular translation task to be performed and in terms of users' needs."

We must make it clear, however, that there are not only two types of equivalence (which is going back to the 'literal v. free' debate) but many. A translator must know at all times which type of equivalence he/she feels is going to fit his/her requirements most adequately. What Hatim and Mason call 'specifications' I will consider can either be regarded as Priorities or Restrictions (see chapter 8).

Hewson and Martin (1991: 11) introduce the concept of 'variation' as a key factor in understanding the proper nature of translating much more strongly than most authors:

"The translation theoretician, in order to avoid distorting his or her object of study, should not select and exclude but should concentrate on ranges of variations and study conditions of variation in translation production. (...) The translation process by far outreaches the narrow confines of the linguistic field. (...) in Translation Studies the linguistic question -however

central its role may be- must be formulated in a specific way, with considerably less emphasis on structure and more on conditions of variability and comparability between utterances."

Everybody seems to agree that Translation Studies are of a multidisciplinary nature, however there are some aspects that are unique to translating, and this is what a theory or a model of translation needs to concentrate on. As for other sciences and studies, their validity will partly come from their applicability to translating. If a given science or discipline can be said to offer some interesting insight into the translating process we will say that we must take this into account as an intervening Factor in the process. But if this Factor radically changes our perception of the nature of the translating process then we will have to conclude that our approach to translation was inaccurate or incomplete. This is precisely the problem that prevails over so many statements about translation, and translation 'rules', and it is a problem that this thesis hopes to solve.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 32)

"It is clear that there can be no definitive translation (except those pronounced to be so for normative reasons), since the Cultural Equation relating texts across the boundaries of languages is constantly changing, thus contributing to the diversification of cultural values."

Translation theory must be descriptive and account for variation. It must define the limits of adequacy of different renderings. But any descriptive theory must also co-exist, and not contradict, specific normative requirements imposed on a translator for a given translation. **There is no paradox in this and it also explains the arbitrary nature of translations.**

Hewson and Martin (1991: 38) see that the only kind of progress we can make in translation theory is an increasing awareness of the factors involved. In their review of previous theories they say that translations are thus perfectible, but this process cannot be effected through systematization or the correct application of translation techniques. The only way to improve hermeneutical production according to them is through an increased perception of the respective cultural values involved in the conversion -- through complexification of perception and not through rationalization of techniques. Similarly, they go on to say, the translator can only contribute to improving the conciliation of languages and cultures **by refining his or her own perception of cultural Factors**, not in any way by eschewing personal or idiosyncratic preoccupations.

Although we must abandon the idea of a theory providing us with recipe-like rules, this is not to say that the translator has no use for a theory, quite on the contrary. Or, as, Hewson and Martin (1991: 51) put it:

- '1- The cultural equation. No translation is ever produced without reproducing, initiating, or reformulating **a particular conception about translation.**
- 2- Mediation: no reformulation is conceivable without a reformulator or mediator. **He represents a distinctly psycho-socio-cultural stance;** in the most extreme cases translations bear the imprint of their translator." <sup>1</sup>

On the topic of the boundaries of translation theory, Gutt (1991: 21) writes that if we can develop an account of translational competence that can accommodate the influence of a wide range of Factors without describing and classifying them with respect of their various domains, then there is no need for a multidisciplinary approach. It is important not to mix up theories from other domains. Gutt (1991: 160) asks a very interesting question in the following passage,

"If there are different approaches to translation how is the translator to know which one to follow on any given occasion? And what effect does his choice have on the audience who may have expectations of their own?"

These questions can be answered by our Priority-Restriction model. Indeed, one would not like to envisage a translator thinking to himself '*Well, now I think I am going to use Newmark's approach (or apply Bell's model or whatever)*'; it will rather be the case that the translator who has studied the theory will simply have a keener awareness of what translation involves, so when confronted with a given text to translate he/she should be thinking along the lines '*Well, now I am going to do the following things, because in the light of what I can see here this seems the best way to tackle the problem*', and in doing so he/she may very well be applying Newmark's 'communicative' method, or somebody else's model or a mixture of both. Whatever he/she does, the label should be the least of his/her worries.

Steiner (1975: 277), as quoted by Gutt (1991: 136), "*The theory of translation ... ought not to be held to account for having failed to solve problems of meaning, of the relations between words and the composition of the world ... Praxis goes ahead, must go as if: theory has no licence to do so.*"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. bold-type, my own.

<sup>2</sup> Highlighted as in the original.

### 2.3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSLATION THEORY BECOMING PURELY DESCRIPTIVE

Translation is what translators do (and must be defined as such) just as language is what native speakers of a given language do.

One of the aspects of translation theory is that it must be able to explain why and how a translator can translate well without any prior knowledge of translation theory, and no one can deny that this does happen. In return, the fact that this is so (i) says something about the nature of translating and (ii) provides a clue to the correct approach to translation theory. We will say that translation theory must be different to other theories whose existence is a necessary condition for their related practices. We can say without a shade of doubt that many great inventions and even some discoveries are the result of putting into practice a certain theoretical model of physics or chemistry or algebra. Without the theory there would be no practice. This is not the case regarding translation.

There can be (indeed there are many) great translations done by people who did not even know that translation theory existed, much less what it entailed. In this sense, translation theory, or theoretical models of translation, are much closer to linguistic theories or literary theories, than a science such as physics. One can speak or write well without knowing who Chomsky was or what he proposed. Likewise, one can produce a literary work of art without knowing what the latest theories have to say on the subject. **In the final analysis, translation is what translators do**, just as language is what the speakers do with their mother tongue (even more than what they perceive it to be) and not what some grammarians say it should be. On the other hand, literature, especially good literature, depends slightly more on how literary critics define it, but also, ultimately, on how successfully an author reaches his/her readership, regardless of the size of the readership. So, the translation theorist, like the linguist, can only honestly aim to understand and describe what goes on when somebody is said to be translating. And the translation theorist and critic, like the literary theorist and critic, can also form an opinion as to what makes a translation good or bad or better than another, and justify that opinion. The translation critic will still be interpreting each translation, just as the translator originally interpreted each original text. A new translation theory, then, should not attempt to 're-invent' translation, its practice and its product.

However, it can redefine translation, approach it from a different angle, introduce new concepts and parameters by which to analyse the subject. A new translation theory can aspire to be widely accepted, frequently applied, and introduced as a valid model to be taught in Translators' Training Schools or as a guideline in translation criticism. With all this a translation theory, or model, can only act as a more powerful lens for improved, more objective observation of phenomena, a more precise tool for evaluation; but

whatever it aims to do it must be by taking into consideration the everyday practice of translation, and no matter how successful it may be in changing the general outlook on translation it must still account for the huge body of existing translations. In other words, a translation model is needed in order to write a computer program for Machine Translation, but this does not mean that this model will take on the appearance of a closed set of 'translation rules' that must be applied universally by all translators. If this were the case we would not be able to explain how anyone who does not know such a *Magna Carta* for translators can possibly translate even the simplest of texts.

Many researchers have felt that the proper way to design a computer program that will translate satisfactorily is to understand how the translator's mind works when he or she is working. R.T. Bell (1991: 17) sees translation theory as embarking on the attempt to turn the **procedural knowledge** which translators possess into **factual knowledge** which can be probed, shared and discussed. This clearly expresses the need to describe the translator's activity in order to better understand it. The descriptive approach is correct, as long as one realizes that a translator can follow many different patterns of behaviour in different types of translation and even within the same translation. The following statement by Bell (1991: 61) is very close to what this thesis is endeavouring to achieve;

"We intend merely to work through the process, indicating what kinds of decision need to be made and what means we have at our disposal for making and realizing our decisions."

It is important to note here how Bell recognizes that all we can hope to do is indicate **what kinds of decisions need to be made**, implying that what a theory can never do is spell out exactly and universally which *decisions* need to be made, or even more fancifully, devise a theory that will make the decisions beforehand for the translator.

It is also the aim of this thesis to bypass, or even better to overcome, traditional debates and dichotomies in the specialised and scholarly literature, the most encumbering of which must surely be the literal vs free debate. On this point Hatim and Mason (1990: 5) are particularly inspiring;

"(...) our judgements are made in terms of what the text is trying to achieve. It is this fact which may lead us to a reassessment of the traditional 'literal' vs 'free' debate. The problem is that the issue is all too often discussed without reference to the CONTEXT in which translating takes place; the social circumstances of translation are lost from sight. In fact the beginnings of a solution to the problem will depend, to borrow a well-known sociolinguistic formula, on: who is translating what, for whom, when, where, why and in what circumstances?"

It is an aim of this thesis to show how **the 'literal vs free' debate is a sterile one**, as are many other dichotomies in the specialised literature. We will define context as a factor in the translating process, a Factor among a series of Factors. Literal translation and free translation are to be considered as potential methods that are available to the translator.

However a translator will not usually be using a given method according to a certain terminology. He/she will define his/her own method in the solutions he/she provides in the TT. Thus, 'literal' and 'free' and any other method are **simply headings for classifications of typologies made up by the theorist or critic for their models or explanations**, but these labels need not worry translators since many translators do not even know of their existence. Strictly speaking, there should not even be many translations that can be defined as literal or free; on the one hand most *blindly* literal translations lead to nonsense somewhere along the line, and on the other hand the term 'free' needs to be carefully defined before it can be of any theoretical use. What we can say, though, is that no process can be entirely free; a translation must follow some kind of pattern and have a certain degree of textual coherence.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 8) appear to be in sharp contrast to Bell (1991: 61) when they write that there can be no algorithmic representation of the translation process since **both input and output are variables placed in interactive positions**. I would say that a happy medium would be to say that there cannot (need not) be a single algorithmic representation of the translation process, but there can be many different algorithmic representations of translation depending on the Factors involved. In other words, each different algorithm could represent a different translating method.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 29)

"The language difference should not obscure the fact that communication of some sort can always be established across languages. In all cases of conversion the extent of the gap in communication and the motivation for re-establishing contact have to be carefully assessed."

The fact that communication of some sort can always be established across languages is due just as much to the existence of communicative universals as linguistic universals, and if we consider that the only linguistic universals to be widely accepted and contrasted are very general and/or abstract they may just as well be interpreted as communicative universals anyway. '**Meaningfulness**' (a pragmatic value, therefore more closely related to utterances) is a more useful concept in translation theory than 'meaning' (a semantic value, related to sentences). The fact that a competent enough individual can learn to speak any two languages in the world is because of similar human needs to communicate, and because of similarities in **communication strategies** rather than similar linguistic structures. The striking similarities in the structures of many languages has probably obscured this fact for a long time. We will consider differences between languages as **expected Restrictions**, and any similarity between them as a lucky instance where the expected Restriction is not operative. We will call such instances, examples of **Reversed Restrictions** (see Chapter 9).

People who have defended the impossibility of translation have usually taken as their starting point those cases where languages have been closest in their grammatical and

vocabulary structures and patterns, and then expected the same degree of similarity across the board, in all cases, and in seeing that this was not possible they then became convinced (and tried to convince others) that translation was 'theoretically' impossible, although it was still going on all around them. It is just as valid to consider languages as being fundamentally different in their form, and cultures fundamentally different in their values, and that different peoples are basically the same regarding their **communicative requirements**, rather than the ways they express themselves or in the way they think. Linguistic and cultural differences are to be considered as two different kinds of **Restrictions** that are imposed on the translator, but nevertheless **part of the nature of translation, not its denial**. So, any linguistic or cultural similarities are to be considered only as a possibility, but never as an inherent quality. If there are cases of linguistic or cultural similarities we will say that certain potential Restrictions have been cancelled out, or reversed. We will say that two different languages and/or cultures are more or less closely related according to:

- (1) whether there are more or less similarities between them
- (2) the degree to which these similarities are systematic and expected.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 40), offer a definition for communication related to the concept of variation:

"Variation could indeed be defined as the set of all possible formulations that can be associated with any given identifiable situation. (...) Communication could then be conceived as the co-negotiated and contextually motivated *selection of* (more or less) *predictable communicational formulations*."

In the coming chapters we will account for variation and explain communication in terms of variables called Factors and contextual motivations described in terms of Priorities.

Wilss (1982: 53)

"What distinguishes the modern science of translation from previous considerations of translation theory is its interest in knowledge of methodology and its keener awareness of the problems involved."

In this thesis we hope to explain why translation is not a science, although it can be studied scientifically, and the difference between a theoretical approach to translation and a methodology. The approach towards translating must be the same at all times, **the basic methodology** (the common denominator to all translating processes) will therefore always be the same; but **specific methods** and especially certain translating techniques will vary from text-type to text-type and from language to language (what makes one type of translating different from the rest).

## 2.4. MACHINE TRANSLATION

A general theory of translation should account for all kinds of translation including MT. **Machine Translation is not to be understood as 'automatic' translation.** Translation can be done by machines, but they must be programmed by humans. It is in the design of the programmes that translation is never 'automatic'; every translation that has been done by a machine will simply be a reflection of the programmer's attitude toward translation. Which factors were analysed and taken into consideration, and which ones were not. Theoretically, there is no reason why a computer programme should not be able to translate certain texts. It is a question of finding a group of human beings capable of providing the necessary technology, and probably a different group of people to conceive such a programme.

Mallafre (1991: 68) reminds us of Delisle's words: "*Com recorda Delisle, no hi ha traductors absolutament polivalents.*" Why should the situation be any different for machines that act as translators? Before we leave Mallafre in this section it will be useful to remember what he has to say (1991: 89) on the issue as it is perfectly compatible with what this thesis is trying to prove:

"Cal tenir-la en compte en la mesura que [la traducció automàtica] il·lumina els problemes de traducció tradicional i ha estimulat la teoria lingüística."

It is more realistic to think of a large number of **different translating programmes for different purposes and different languages.** In this respect MT can be paralleled to human translation; just as you cannot find a single person who can translate all kinds of texts even in the same pair of languages and in the same direction, let alone in many different languages, it does not seem the right approach to MT to work on a project that aims to translate any text written in any language and translate it, error-free, into any second language. To me such an approach shows a lack of understanding of the real nature of translation.

There is, strictly speaking, no **'automatic' translation**, but there can be (indeed there already is) satisfactory **'computer-programmed'** translating, in specific areas, in response to specific needs and between specific languages. We need a translation theory that can explain this and find its parallelisms with human translating.



## 2.5. REDEFINING CERTAIN CONCEPTS IN TRANSLATION THEORY

**TT Faithfulness:** the translator must be faithful to his/her own set of **Priorities**, taking into account the **Restrictions** imposed on the process and product in the light of all the intervening **Factors**. So we will not say *a priori* that the translator should or should not be faithful to the ST writer, the TT reader or whoever; it all depends on the requirements of the moment, which will have to be redefined for each new translation. In other words, the translator must be faithful to his/her own standards, in combination with those requirements imposed on him/her by the Translation Initiator. Below is a definition of faithfulness that does not agree with ours (which is that the translator should not be faithful to the ST writer or to the TT reader, but essentially the translator should be faithful to his/her own set of criteria), Beekman Callow (1974: 34), reported in Gutt (1991: 68):

"A translation which transfers the meaning and the dynamics of the original text is to be regarded as a faithful translation. The expression *transfers the meaning*, means that the translation conveys to the reader or hearer the information that the original conveyed to its readers or hearers."

**TT Coherence:** A coherent translation will be one which conforms to (1) the required standards of coherence in text production according to the findings of text linguistics; (2) the degree to which the **set of hierarchically established Priorities** for the translation was consistently accounted for. The concept of **coherence in translation** will require that the translator draw up a graded list of Priorities that is realistically plausible by taking into account the Restrictions of the TT context, the translator's context and the complexities of the ST.

**TT Ambiguity:** A translation or any part of it will be considered to be ambiguous if there are two or more possible interpretations which are mutually inconsistent and at the same time, at least one of the potential interpretations or implicatures was **unintended by the translator**, or contradictory with the set of Priorities. It will be terminologically more desirable to refer to so-called ambiguity (when it is a desired feature) as something else, e.g. pun, polysemy, metaphor, symbolism, or imagery, or whatever; then we will know what we are talking about when we use the words *ambiguity* and *ambiguous*. Thus, it will be possible to say that ambiguity is always a weakness in any translation, something to be criticised and corrected, depending on **the degree of ambiguity**, and the consequences of misinterpretation.

**ST-TT Equivalence:** equivalence, if it is going to be used as a concept in translation theory, cannot have an absolute, context-free value. Equivalence can only be defined as that aspect of the ST that the translator wishes to preserve in the TT. When there is a complete success in preserving a certain aspect in its entirety we may speak of 'sameness'. Equivalence, then, is a concept that admits that we often fall short of 'sameness' in our renderings. Some authors have proposed to change the concept of 'equivalence' for that of '**adequacy**', but this is not really necessary if we admit that equivalence is a variable and that **translators are not always pursuing the same kind of 'equivalence'**. Traditional definitions and accounts of equivalence are the result of a prescriptive account of the process and/or product of translation.

According to Gutt (1991: 10),

"The notion of 'equivalence' is meaningful only with regard to a conceptual framework that spells out what aspects of the texts are to be compared and under what conditions equivalence is thought to pertain.(...) translation and original can be compared with regard to a very large number of factors, any of which can be significant for some detail in the text, and hence needs to be taken into consideration when establishing equivalence."

**Unit of Translation:** the debate on the Unit of Translation is a sterile one. Its origin is to be found in the 'literal' vs 'free' debate, which is also a sterile debate. **There is no a priori, context-free "Unit of Translation"**, therefore it cannot be defined in any useful terms for the translator. At the most we can say that the vast majority of translations are a question of being given **one text as input**, and that the translation will result in **one text as output**. But even this is debatable. In most cases it is true that the only *a priori* one-to-one relationship that makes any sense, is that for each text that is handed to the translator he or she will be expected to produce one text, and this text will be called the translation of the original. Mallafre (1991: 47-48) provides a beautiful example of what we are trying to argue here:

"Una constatació il·lustrativa de les diferències entre el text original i la traducció és la ingènua pregunta d'algú que, en ser assebatat que Joyce emprà gairebé trenta mil paraules diferents, diu: «Així, la traducció catalana té el mateix nombre de paraules?» Una bona traducció hauria de tenir-les? I encara, si les tingués, cas de ser possible, no trairia molts altres aspectes? Caldria en primer lloc preguntar-nos què vol dir que l'obra té aquest nombre de paraules. (...) Però ¿podem reduir la traducció a un pur joc quantitatiu o compensatori? Això és impossible, naturalment; i no és gens clar que això sigui traducció ni res que s'hi assembli."

**Translation Method:** translation methods can be defined in terms of what their **Global and Higher-order Priorities are**. Thus, for 'interlinear' translation, the Global and Higher-order Priority will always be to refrain from rearranging the order of the words as much as possible, especially from one line to the next, even at the cost of target language naturalness. The Global and Higher-order Priority of 'communicative' translation will be *to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original* (Newmark, 1988: 39). No method can be said to be (universally) better than another, so translators should not adhere to a single translation method as if it were a magic formula or a recipe. The adequacy of a given method will always depend on the Factors, or variables, that have a role to play in the process or the product of the translation. So, more than a method what a translator needs is an **awareness** to be able to recognize and assess the relative value of each and every Factor that is operative for a given translating process.

**Translation Procedure:** a translation procedure is to be understood as a **specific technique, one of a large group of techniques**, that the translator has to be familiar with in order to be in a better position to assess the 'adequacy' of using a certain technique rather than any other. In a sense the notion of procedure also has its origin in taking 'the word' as a starting point, and many translation procedures are defined or characterized in the way in which they depart from a word-for-word solution. In this respect any 'change' from a literal solution, that is recurrent or can be systematized is called a procedure. However, from our point of view it is useful to regard 'literal rendering' also as a procedure. Prescriptive priorities may appear in a professional translator's stylesheet. The mark of a truly good translator is one who is capable of adapting to the circumstances of the task and this can best be tested by the range and position of the procedures used, as well as a certain degree of creativeness and daring; when it comes to "inventing" procedures that have not previously been described in the theory or stylebook but can be perfectly well justified.

**Freedom:** the translator's freedom should not be interpreted as an opposite to literalism. The translator's freedom is a result of the fact that there will never be a translation theory that will be able to predict a unique rendering into a foreign language of a given text. It follows from this that the translator will always be free to decide his or her approach to the task. There cannot be one prescribed way and **there cannot be one predefined result**. Having said this, we can say that the translator's choices are often made for him/her, beforehand, by his employer or client. Then we might say that the translator is only 'theoretically' free from prescription, but in real translating situations the translator will have to follow very strictly a set of norms and rules laid down by somebody else, by fashion or tradition, or they may even sometimes be self-imposed. **The translator, though 'theoretically' free as translator, is not free from the normal requirements expected of any reader or writer, as reader of the ST, or**

**writer of the TT.** Or, in Mallafrè's (1991: 115) words: "*Les llibertats del traductor estaran en funció d'aconseguir l'efecte del conjunt.*"

According to the approach to translation proposed in this work, the list of translation procedures should be open-ended, and the number and nature of procedures available to the translator will vary from text to text. This approach also stresses the arbitrary nature of translation, but this arbitrariness is true of many human activities. First of all, it is true of language, as de Saussure pointed out, it is true of justice, of standards of beauty, of History, of politics, of art. **In principle, the translator is free to devise new procedures,** if they can be justified by the Priorities and Restrictions of the translating occasion.

**Science:** translation becomes a science when **an adequate translation can be produced by applying a series of predefined formulae to the ST.** In this case translations would be the same, or equally adequate, irrespective of who the translator was. Translation theory should be scientifically objective and empirical, but cannot aspire to be mathematical in its expression.

**Craft:** one can be said to be talking of translating as a craft **when a rendering can be improved through greater background experience and familiarity** with the texts and TI/reader expectations on the part of the translator. **The craft aspect of translating also explains differences in the quality of translations produced by different translators.** It accounts for inspiration and the importance of the concept of *awareness* used in this thesis.

**Art:** translation reaches the level of art when a truly satisfactory translation that does justice to the original can **only be achieved by a very small number of translators.** The translation will usually be quite personal, there will be a **degree of creativeness** in the translation and possibly a certain idiolect that will make it possible to recognize the identity of the translator through his/her work. When translation is an art the translator will not follow the client's stylebook, but his/her own personal set of criteria. Very often there will not be a TI client, although there may be customers willing to pay for the work once it has been finished and is available for scrutiny. When translation becomes literary art the resulting text necessarily gains a **certain recognition and status among the originals of the TL.**

## 2.6. ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY AND NECESSITY OF TRANSLATION

A considerable number of people, including some experts, are claiming that a lot of translations done today are unnecessary; others say that some are unwanted or even heretical; many foreign language teachers have completely banned translating from their classrooms; and there are still those who are convinced that translation is simply impossible. So now, in the undisputed age of translation, its acceptance as a powerful, useful, irreplaceable tool is still not universal.

Although the issue might be clear enough for some, it is worth taking a look at the point made by those who propound that translation is theoretically impossible. First of all, as far as the theory is concerned, it stems from and is therefore inseparable from its practice and it is absolutely undeniable that people *do* translate, have been doing so for centuries and will surely continue to do so for a long time to come. Secondly, I am sure that nobody would go so far as to say that all translations are impossible and that nothing is translatable from any language into any other, which brings us to the first principle of translation: everything about it is in the conditional, there are no absolutes (so it cannot be *absolutely* impossible). Furthermore, most of what is being translated in the world at present is fairly straightforward and formulaic in its expression and offers very little resistance to translation. Of course this depends on what is actually meant by 'translation', however, it is surprising to note the large number of different definitions that have appeared. Here is one that is relevant at this point, by Peter Newmark (1988: 5):

"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. Common sense tells us that this ought to be simple, as one ought to be able to say something as well in one language as in another. On the other hand, you may see it as complicated, artificial and fraudulent, since by using another language you are pretending to be someone you are not... The pity is, as Mounin wrote, that the translation cannot simply reproduce, or be, the original. And since this is so, the first business of the translator is to translate."

I suspect that at least some of those who defend the impossibility of anyone producing a satisfactory translation **demand that it "reproduce or be" the original**. However, it is wrong to expect that for every text there will be only one possible translation, the correct version -in a word, the perfect rendering of a given text. The beauty of the art lies precisely in the fact that it can constantly be improved without ever reaching perfection. This is the idiosyncrasy of the act of translating, not its denial.

It is true, of course, that translating is no easy business. On the contrary, it is a very complicated process that often requires team work and thorough research. It also requires time, imagination and a feeling for language, as well as a fairly sound, up-to-date

knowledge of many extra-linguistic areas. The reason for this is that there are so many different variables in any text to be translated. Moreover, these variables are not complementary or proportional, but opposing forces that pull the translator's attention in various directions. Thus, a translator might be seen as a juggler trying to keep lots of objects of different shapes and sizes in the air at the same time, or as a traveller who is constantly going from one crossroads to another, being compelled to make a choice at every fork in the road, knowing exactly what he/she is missing each time he/she takes a certain direction instead of any of the others. These tensions between form and meaning, sound and sense, denotation and connotation, source language and target language, different cultures and readerships are Factors that suggest that a translator is bound to fail in his/her task right from the word go.

Another belief that reinforces this standpoint is that some languages are superior to others in their grammar and/or vocabulary and expressiveness. For centuries Latin and Greek have been considered the only means of communicating science and religion effectively. There are also more popular myths as well: French as the language of love and German the language of great philosophy are two of the most widely spread examples. The logical conclusion, according to this kind of belief, would be that different languages express different parts of human experience and there is little or no overlapping in what different languages can communicate. Fortunately, this sort of prejudice has now been completely overcome and it is almost universally accepted that all languages are capable of covering all their speakers' experiences. Naturally, you cannot describe or give a name to something that does not even exist in your imagination (e.g. a language will not have a word for a flower that none of its speakers has ever seen or heard of, and if another language community merely knows of its existence and has a name for it but has never seen or smelled it, the speakers will not attach any metaphorical meanings to the word). In the case of religious texts such as the Bible or the Koran, translations have been frowned upon, forbidden even, since the originals are considered sacred scripts of the word of God. To attempt to rewrite such scripts in a language other than the one in which it was first transcribed would be to twist, to manipulate the original words. Foreign versions of books of this kind are branded as heretical or blasphemous and, therefore, inadmissible. In literature, too, critics and scholars often point out that translations of works of literature -even philosophy- are always inferior to the originals. This is proof, some say, that 'true' translation is simply not possible. It is claimed that it is impossible to translate all the nuances of meaning and sound effects of certain works, or at least certain passages.

There are many poor, error-ridden versions of all sorts of texts, not only literary ones, but bad translations cannot be held up as proof of the impracticability of translating their originals. In my opinion a book or a poem which has not yet been satisfactorily translated is **not an untranslatable text but a challenge to present and future translators** to achieve a new goal, to succeed where others have failed. Those who

proudly show the world an untranslatable item are among those who have failed in their attempt to translate it.

Translating is all about writing and having a great command of language. Therefore, a masterpiece original written by a genius who exploits a language's possibilities to the full will require just as good a translator-writer to do credit to it in the foreign version. Likewise, poor, ambiguous writing in the ST will often take a top-class translator to make some sense out of it. This means that only a handful of people are qualified to produce a skillful, worthy rendering of certain originals. It must also be aid that this kind of original is only a tiny fraction of the total amount of texts that are translated in the world today.

This controversy over whether translating is possible or not can only be solved, as I have already mentioned, by defining precisely what one means by translation and stating what one expects of a translation. We need to find a definition for translation that would cover the millions of publications that we have already agreed to call translations. It does not seem logical or right to say that translation is not possible (which means it does not exist) while more and more translations are being made all over the world, to and from practically every living language that has a writing system. Nor does it seem respectful to translators as professionals.

So we can only say that translating becomes impossible when we expect too much of it, like expecting it to respect the word order of the original and the syntax of the target language at all times. Translating becomes impossible only when we do not accept the validity of translation procedures such as modulation, transposition, compensation, expansion, contraction, transcription, translation couplets or cultural equivalents, or in the last resort paraphrase or explanation. Translating becomes impossible when we want to translate in the abstract: when we do not know what or who we are translating for, when we are not willing to accept that there must be different ways of rendering the same text depending on the nature of the readerships and the historical periods. In short, the only kind of translation that is impossible is the abstract, utopian translation.

Once we have stated that any text can be translated to some degree of satisfaction, a second question arises: when do we need to translate a given text? Just because everything *can* be translated, does that mean that everything *should* be translated? Surely not. Before we set out to translate a book or whatever we must find out as much as we can about the text and make sure it is worth translating. It may not be worth translating because it has nothing interesting to say to the TL community, or because something just as good or better has already been written in the TL. When the Romans translated wholesale from the Greeks they absorbed much of their culture. They did so knowingly and willingly, since they held the economic and political power. However, now there is a fear -remarked on by Professor Julio-César Santoyo of the University of León during a recent (1989) speech in Barcelona- that wholesale translating from English into Spanish (and probably other languages as well) might pose a threat to people's national identity and culture: something

that is not desirable by any means. The Romans are seen as having pillaged Greek literature, religion and culture. Some feel that in the twentieth century translation is not being used to 'steal' from another culture but the opposite: through wholesale translation the English-speaking countries are imposing their culture on other countries whether these countries like it or not.

*I think Professor Santoyo was right in saying that publishers should be aware of the dangers of translating any foreign book that falls into their hands without considering first which books in the vernacular are more worthy of publication. Publishers should give some more support to home products before commissioning translations of foreign works of dubious quality while good translators should be freed from the burden of being ordered to translate worthless, uninteresting pieces -just as no engineer should be asked to build a bridge across a river in the same area that already has a good bridge or, even worse, one that nobody will ever cross.*

So, although this thesis concentrates on translating problems in the dubbing of television comedy, it must be said here, before we go any further, that it would be a happier situation if Catalan television did not have to import so many foreign comedies and were capable of producing their own quality situation comedies. And it is no paradox that one of the ways this situation may be come by is through improved translations of parallel foreign scripts which may serve as a model from which to develop original programmes in Catalan.



## **Chapter Three**

### **The Difference between Prescription and Description**

In this chapter I will argue that there is a need to draw a line between:

- (1) the postulates of translation theory, and
- (2) practical guidelines, handbooks, standard procedures, style books, methodologies, tradition, etc.

The need to properly distinguish the two stems from the facts that:

- (1) they are too frequently mistaken in the literature, and
- (2) they influence the practice of translation from different angles.

The usefulness of translation procedures and techniques as eye-openers will be given its real relative importance. Translation procedures should be identified, described and exemplified in the theory. In the practical guidelines, etc. there will be an outline of the ideal conditions in which certain translation procedures will be either mandatory or inappropriate.

One of the greatest misunderstandings in the historical evolution of theories on translation has been an inability to see that prescription and description are both necessary to the translator but in entirely different ways so that prescription should be left to fall outside the theoretical domain. In this chapter we aim to find out the proper relationship between description and prescription.

### 3.1. THE NATURE OF TRANSLATION RULES

R.T. Bell (1991: 11) defends the claim that **translation rules are arbitrary**. This is a logical result of the arbitrary nature of translation itself; he reminds us that Tytler's Translation Rules are all normative prescriptions.

"(...) deriving directly from the subjective and evaluative description of the 'good translation'. They are like the rules of etiquette; what people are told they ought and ought not to do in particular circumstances, by reference to essentially arbitrary norms of behaviour."

Bell (op cit. p. 23) underlines the need for a re-orientation in Translation Studies; how they must be re-oriented towards description, whether of process or product, and away from prescription.

Fortunately this is just one example of what is now becoming a general trend in the field, as there are many other authors who are advocating the same kind of approach if not in the same words. However, this does not mean that there is no room for prescription in the everyday work of the translator, quite on the contrary. **The translator has to adhere to certain norms and follow certain guidelines**. What we are trying to discern are the boundaries of theoretical models, and it is in this respect that we are saying that a theoretical model of translation should not (cannot afford to) be prescriptive. A general theory of translation can only be a descriptive, or explanatory (see Gutt: 1991) one. Our first goal is to achieve a better understanding of the process, and thereby a more objective assessment of results. In other words, although there is prescription in many translation processes, it will not come from any theory, but from the conditions in which the translation is to be produced. Thus, theoretical models will not be the source of prescription, but they will **explain and account for prescriptive conditions** as variables, as Restrictions that are imposed on the translator.

We agree with Hewson and Martin's (1991: 55) outlook when they say that most of the former models were mainly oriented towards the production of a specific product and so toward pragmatic efficiency. They claim that their construction, without excluding that obvious finality, is more particularly aimed at representing classes of phenomena, degrees of predictability, and conditions of convertibility. In a very evident manner complexity is the price to pay for the perhaps excessive ambition of the project. But is that not better than oversimplification, or misplaced subjectiveness?

Although theories are supposed to simplify matters by presenting them in a more general, abstract way, the fact of the matter in translation theory, is that the more we know and the better we understand the process, the more complicated the whole picture seems. This is

because many of the discoveries that are made **do not deny other theories**, but merely add to them. This is where the truth of Hewson and Martin's statement lies; the weakness behind most models is that they are **only applicable to a certain kind of text**, be it poetry, the Bible, technical reports, or whatever, yet they are presented as general models valid for all kinds of texts and purposes. So how can we present a more definitive model for a general theory of translation? The proposal that lies at the root of this work claims that all translation phenomena, in the first analysis, can be divided into three very broad categories: Factors, Priorities and Restrictions. The second claim is that any new theories or new applications that come along will simply be the result of discoveries of new Factors, or Priorities, or Restrictions. So, in the coming chapters, when we go into the matter in more detail, we will not be presenting any classification of Factors or Priorities or Restrictions as a complete definitive list of phenomena. It is rather a case of justifying our descriptive approach to translation and explaining what we mean through examples and not through comprehensive accounts of the nature of the Factors involved (which are the variables in the process), the nature and variety of the Priorities that the translator will need to define, and the kinds of Restrictions that will have to be taken into account or overcome. It is precisely because so many variables are at work in any translation process that Machine Translation has taken so long to pick up, and this also explains why human translators must specialize, since **no single translator can produce top quality work of each and every kind of text**, and so it seems more reasonable to think that it will be extremely difficult, not to say downright impractical to aim at producing a computer program that can translate 'universally', and consequently anticipate all the potential problems and requirements.

Hewson and Martin (1991: 87) are probably among the authors who most clearly spell out the need to drop any attempts at being prescriptive at a general theoretical level; their 'Variational Procedure' aims at opening up the options sufficiently in order to determine the greatest number of possible conditions of integration in the language and culture of the TT readers. This does not imply that previous solutions were necessarily wrong or incomplete but that the emphasis has been changed in order to reduce parasitic distortions. They insist on the importance of the fact that orientation is no longer *prescriptive* but *prospective*.

If we are to say that previous [theoretical] solutions were not wrong or incomplete we will have to say, then, that they were simply too restrictive in their scope of applicability. It must be stressed that prescription is wrong for a general theory, but it may provide useful guidelines for specific tasks.

The first part of the following quotation, Hewson and Martin (1991: 229), is recurrent in the introductory paragraphs of many a theory. We all agree that practice and theory should ideally go hand in hand. This is why theorists find it frustrating that so many translators

can get on without them, and translators feel frustrated in not finding the kind of answers they are looking for whenever they decide to read the theory;

"One is struck only too often either by the impractical nature of theories of translation, which can never really be applied to 'real' Translation situations, and by the unreliability of 'methods' advocating certain fixed rules for passing from one LC to another. Our aim, of course, has been to bridge the 'gap' between theory and practice in order to produce both a theory which is intellectually as satisfying as possible and in line with the latest research in the field, and a series of identifiable practices which do not constitute 'rules', but a whole approach to translation."

What is so enlightening about this statement is that it tells us that the goal of the theory is not to produce a series of rules that the translator has to follow blindly, but simply *create an awareness* of what translation is all about. This is what we are trying to do here; present a model of translation that will (if we liken the translator to a traveller) provide the translator with a compass, a knowledge of the stars, of the pros and cons of taking a train and not a plane, all the necessary know-how (from map reading to checking into a hotel) so that when he/she is asked to go to a certain destination, at certain time of day, in a certain month of the year and with a fixed budget, he/she will know what to do in order to get there by the best possible means according to the circumstances. What translation theory cannot do is buy him/her a ticket, provide escort to the foot of the plane, and a reception committee on arrival!

E. Gutt (1991: 6) simply echoes what has already been said quite clearly by Bell (1991), and Hewson and Martin (1991), and this shows the direction which translation studies are taking at the present time;

"(...) most of the definitions given are prescriptive rather than descriptive; they serve as norms for translation practice (...) One answer to this has been the formation of the 'Descriptive Translation Studies' approach to translation."

The fact that even in 1991 it is still felt necessary to point this out can only mean that there is some resistance or reluctance to accept that it is not the theorist's job to establish the rules of translation. However, I have not found in the literature any recent publications proposing a prescriptive model. Such an insistence on this point might be because most translations are produced in normative situations.

Ernst Gutt (1991: 58), while talking on the possible solutions for a given translation says,

"There would be no point in resisting such changes just because they violated some translation-theoretic notion like functional equivalence."

Whatever *such changes* refers to does not matter because, because we can say that the same applies for **any changes that can be coherently justified**. Likewise, *functional equivalence* will be regarded as only one type of equivalence, and more

importantly, only one type of Priority, and therefore no *translation-theoretic notion* as Gutt calls them, can be *violated* 'a priori'. But there would be a justification for resisting changes that contradicted the Translation Order (the client's expectations and demands); this is precisely the difference between a descriptive translation theory on the one hand and TO specifications, norms and context-specific Restrictions on the other.

### 3.2. EXAMPLES OF PRESCRIPTIONS IN GENERAL THEORIES OF TRANSLATION

#### 3.2.1. SAVORY

Savory (1957: 49) is right in being pessimistic about the prospect of translation theory ever being able to provide watertight answers to a general approach towards translating strategies,

"It would be true to say that there are no universally accepted principles of translation, because the only people qualified to formulate them have never agreed among themselves, but have so often and for so long contradicted each other that they have bequeathed to us a welter of confused thought which must be hard to parallel in other fields of literature."

Savory follows up with his widely-quoted list of pairwise contradictory translation principles:

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

12 A translation of verse should be in verse.

Savory's great insight has tremendous implications. The only logical solution to these apparent paradoxes is: **it all depends**. It is *why* it depends and *what* it depends on that is the object of analysis in this thesis. These twelve sentences only prove that it is out of place for the theorist to claim any one of these truths. But there is a need for the translator to be aware that it might be more adequate (the 'adequacy' principle) to translate the words more closely than the ideas (or vice versa), it might be more adequate to add something in one context and to omit something in another, etc. The theory will help by providing the translator with **the necessary tools for analysing** all of the potential and operative variables, as well as an awareness of the proper nature of the translating process, and the rest of the job will hopefully be done by the desirable existence of some handbook and/or guidelines from the client, which are fully comprehensive.

### 3.2.2. NIDA

Four Priorities (see section 3.3.). The following definition by Nida and Taber (1969: 1), as quoted by E. Gutt (1991: 67), must be criticised on account of its being circular as much as prescriptive. We have already seen above how it is better to talk of a translation being **'adequate' instead of 'correct'**.

"Correctness must be determined by the extent to which the average reader for which a translation is intended will be likely to understand it correctly."

Nida and Taber (1969: 12)

"Translating must aim primarily at 'reproducing the message'. To do anything else is essentially false to one's task as a translator."

This kind of law-laying cannot be acceptable because it is prescriptive and normative, it is only appropriate if it appears in a stylebook, or as part of a Translation Initiator's instructions, but this kind of language should not belong to any general theory of translation. Besides what is the use of making such a statement with the word *primarily*? This word undermines the prescriptive force of the rule anyway. If we were to say something like, '*a translator often aims at reproducing the message*', then all we would have to do to ensure the coherence of such a statement would be to define the conditions whereby it is adequate (or appropriate) to *reproduce the message* and those processes where such a goal is not a Priority because there are other more urgent needs.

### 3.2.3. NEWMARK

According to Newmark, the translation should be as literal as possible, and as free as is necessary. What is so surprising is that so many people seem to regard being literal as some kind of Priority in itself, and there is no obvious reason why this should be so. On close inspection it is nearly always the case that being literal is merely seen as a means of achieving the real Priority, which might be retaining the meaning, or the style, or some other aspect of the ST. The dangerous extension of such an approach is first to believe that a literal method is the best means of rendering *all* texts, and second, to begin to see the literal rendering of a text as an end in itself.

Larson (1984: 6), as quoted by Gutt (1991: 68), is in the same line of thought as Newmark regarding equivalent effect:

"The best translation is the one which (a) uses the normal language forms of the receptor language, (b) communicates, as much as possible, to the receptor language speakers that same meaning that was understood by the speakers of the source language, and (c) maintains the dynamics of the original source language text. Maintaining the 'dynamics' of the original source text means that the translation is presented in such a way that it will, hopefully, evoke the same response as the source text attempted to evoke."

In other words Larson is defining the nature of **equivalent effect**. But that is just one potential Priority. We shall see in later chapters that that is also just one kind of equivalence. The danger seems to lie in taking frequent recurrent Priorities as the rule, and less frequent Priorities as exceptions. However, one cannot take anything for granted, and a rule with many and important exceptions is not a very good rule. Moreover, the *best* translation cannot be definable independently of the context in which it appears, and the purpose for which it was produced. Also, the term *best* rings of *perfect* and this is certainly taking us back to the early times of translation theory. It is more useful to stay in the region of comparativeness, without reaching the superlative. Thus we can speak of one translation being better than another, or even better than any **yet produced**, but this must never rule out (1) the possibility of an even better rendering turning up; or (2) the need to update many translations for later generations, or simply different readerships. For a number of different renderings of a given ST into a specific TL under certain predefined conditions and having stated the goals clearly, we will speak of one group of versions being **inadequate** and another being **adequate**, and from among the latter, some will possibly be better than others, and maybe there might even be one that can be regarded as being better than any of the others, which does not entail that it is **perfect**.

The weakness that Ernst Gutt (1991: 115) finds in Newmark's translation principles is the same one that can be found in many others:

"It is not difficult to see that each of these rules is an application of the principle of relevance to an audience with particular interests."

The exceptions to such principles, then, can easily be anticipated as those readers or listeners with other interests. Gutt (1991: 118) develops this idea further on,

"In each case, the actual 'translation principle' is the same: do what is consistent with the search for optimal relevance. What differs are the specific applications of this principle that take into account the different 'rankings' of relevance that exist in different cognitive environments.

Once this is recognized one can see why so much of the literature on translation is useful, and yet only in a limited way: (...) the usefulness of such guidelines is limited because each guideline is an application of the principle of relevance to some set of circumstances; it is, therefore, valid only under those circumstances. When the circumstances change, that guideline no longer applies.

This is one reason why translation principles and rules need to be modified with regard to exceptions or else contradict one another."

Each *application* and *guideline* can be expressed as a set of Priorities, and each set of circumstances is what we will be calling the operative Factors. Translation principles and rules need to be modified in the sense that it is essential to discern the **prescriptive context-sensitive** statements from the more **general theoretical** statements. The distinction has hardly ever been sufficiently clear. Even Gutt (1991: 121) is slightly ambiguous regarding his own position on the question,

"What translation theory has been attempting to do for a long time - that is, to develop a concept of faithfulness that is generally applicable and yet both text- and context-specific."

In my opinion a translation theory cannot afford to be context- or text-specific; all it can do is point out how important it is that the translating process be sensitive to the intervening Factors of each text and context.





### 3.2.4. HATIM AND MASON

Although Hatim and Mason cannot be accused of being prescriptive in the way Tytler was, there are occasions when they do not appear to be wholeheartedly descriptive. Indeed it is very hard not to feel the temptation to give one or two 'tips' or 'rules of thumb'. Thus, we read in *Discourse and the Translator* (1990: 9);

"The translator of poetry should aim:- to preserve, as far as possible, the range of possible responses; in other words:- not to reduce the dynamic role of the reader."

We are back to what the translation should be like *before considering* all the Factors of the context and the Priorities of the purpose, in this case for the translator of poetry. In this thesis the message is the following: the translator of poetry should decide what kind of TT he/she wants to write and, once the objectives have been stated, do what is necessary (by applying the adequate procedures consistently) to attain those goals. It is particularly surprising that Hatim and Mason should have succumbed to prescriptiveness in the field of poetry, precisely because poetry has always been acknowledged as the most 'artistic' (here *artistic* means difficult, personal and where translation rules cannot anticipate the objectives) and 'elusive' (*elusive* refers to the many levels of interpretation, which usually range from 'fairly obvious' to 'very obscure') kind of text for translation. Prescriptions such a 'the translation of poetry should be in prose/verse' or 'the translator of poetry should aim to preserve ...' have no place in any *descriptive* model. In poetry more than in any other kind of text it sounds silly to speak of '*the* translation' when we should be speaking of '*a* translation by so-and-so'. This is not to say that a certain client might ask for certain features to appear in the translation, or the translator might impose them on him/herself. Then it will be perfectly acceptable to hear such commands as 'for this poem I would like you to write a translation in blank verse / four quatrains / etc.'; or 'I would like you to produce a literal, prose translation of this poem'; or 'I think this poem calls for me to aim to preserve the range of possible responses'.

In their section entitled *Poetic Discourse: A Test Case for Translatability*, Hatim and Mason (1990: 13) are still not 100% descriptive, though they are clearly heading in the right direction;

" (...) Lefevere (1975) provides a useful framework by listing seven different strategies in verse translation. (...) Against such strategies, or categories, translations can be judged according to what the translator set out to achieve, instead of some notional criterion of what qualifies as good translation of poetry."

Why limit ourselves to seven strategies? Does this mean that the translator cannot explore other possibilities? Or does it mean that these are seven strategies that Lefevere has been capable of recognizing, while admitting that somebody else might discover or describe

further possibilities? The bottom line is that while it is theorist's job to point out, for the translator, as many strategies and procedures as possible, and define the situations and purposes for which they may be appropriate, other strategies and procedures cannot be foreclosed if they can be adequately justified, and they may produce satisfactory results for the goals that were set. Here we can see how the theorist can help the translator, on the one hand, and how the translator must act as informant for the theorist, on the other. This also explains why many translators feel the need to explain their work and in doing so contribute to the body of knowledge that we have on translation.

### 3.2.5. GUTT

In the following quotation, Gutt (1991: 94) sounds sensible, but what about when such requirements are simply not attainable because of the presence of considerable Restrictions, or because the translator's intention does coincide with the ST author's?

"To say that a translation should communicate the same interpretation as that intended in the original means that it should convey to the receptors *all and only those explicatures and implications that the original was intended to convey.*"

At this point it is necessary to remember that there may be **two kinds of communication via translator**: (1) the ST writer intends to communicate with the TL readership; and (2) the translator picks up a ST that was *not intended* for translation, or gives it a different communicative goal.

As Gutt (1991: 122) says, there may be something 'intuitively' right about the following statement, but on close inspection it is based on the 'literal vs free' debate, which, as we have already said, leads us nowhere useful:

"Intuitively there seems to be something right about the desire to distinguish between translations where the translator is free to elaborate or summarize and those where he has to somehow stick to the explicit contents of the original."

What is the purpose or gain of such a distinction? I find it theoretically more consistent to say that the translator has to communicate the explicit contents over and above all other aspects of the text (i.e. 'communication of explicit contents' will be the Top Priority for that process [see chapter 8]), or that this is not the Top Priority, and then the translator is not constrained by the same Restrictions (see chapter 9).

Here is another example of how we must agree with Gutt (1991: 188) in his message as a whole, although some parts might need rephrasing:

"What I have *not* attempted to do is to show how all possible translation problems should be analysed or solved. Such an undertaking seems neither possible nor necessary ."

Gutt's closing statement is quite right as far as translation theory is concerned. However, I think it is important to say that all (the more the better) translation problems should be analysed (if not solved), through a combination of (1) **a coherent descriptive theory** which will provide the translator with an awareness of the proper approach to take in each process; and (2) **a specific handbook and stylebook** for each kind of professional translating area, the more specific the area the better. For example, it would be better to have a handbook on the recurrent problems of translating reports for publication in medical journals from Catalan (=SL) into American English (=LC2), accompanied by useful hints and tips along with the most frequent appropriate procedures, than a handbook for translations involving 'the language of medicine' in English, without defining the source language, or restricting the variety of English, or defining the prototypical text. It is also more useful to have a stylebook produced by the publisher of the translation, than a more general stylebook, or one that was originally written for a different publishing house. On this point, some people have defended the need for a nationwide standardized stylebook for certain terminology, such as the terms used in computer science. There are reports that this is being done in France, but such a project has not yet been considered in Spain, for Spanish.

### 3.3. AN EXAMPLE. A SYSTEM OF PRIORITIES ACCORDING TO NIDA

Below we can see Nida's (1969) System of Priorities, which is an example of what might be a good starting point for our descriptive model of translation. The limitation I see in this system is the same one as for most translation recipes: **it claims to be valid beyond the scope of text-types for which it was originally devised.**

#### 3.3.1. THE PRIORITY OF CONTEXTUAL CONSISTENCY OVER VERBAL CONSISTENCY

The translator translates texts, not languages. The choice of which TL word to use to translate a word of the SL text depends more on the context than upon a fixed system of verbal consistency, *i.e.* always translating one word in the SL by a corresponding word in the TL. (see how "great" in Scene 4 of *The Challenge* is rendered by 'això rai' in one instance and by 'genial' in another).

To interpret *context* as an opposite of *fixed system* we may say that *context* is a specific arrangement of variable Factors. So, although *verbal consistency* is not always a Priority, depending on the context it may become a specific requirement. In Nida's definition of

this Priority, *context* covers both situational context and co-text. This Priority is repeated, or rephrased, in every theory that has appeared after it. But it is still important to acknowledge Nida's wording, especially the terms *Priority* and *consistency*.

### 3.3.2. THE PRIORITY OF DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE OVER FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE

If we look at translations in terms of the receptors (readership or audience), we introduce the Factor of the intelligibility of the translation. Traditionally translations were judged by simply examining the two texts, by comparing their formal and semantic structures, and on the basis of this it was decided whether or not a translation was "faithful". However, dynamic equivalence is evaluated on the basis of the manner in which the SL and TL receptors understand (or appreciate) the message. Dynamic equivalence is therefore to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the TL respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the SL. This response can never be identical, due to differences in cultural and historical setting, but there should be a high degree of **equivalence of response**, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose. The receptors must respond to other functions of the text (e.g. expressive and vocative) as well as the merely informative ones.

Nida's second Priority has also been frequently picked up and re-expressed in other theories, namely the ones that defend the usefulness of the term *equivalent effect*. However, as this Priority is considerably more committed than the first one, it has also been questioned by more authors. Hatim and Mason (1990: 7) for instance give one or two examples of situations where formal equivalence is a higher-order Priority than dynamic equivalence; among others they say that formal equivalence is a means of providing some degree of insight into the lexical, grammatical or structural form of a text. This is where we begin to see that Priorities cannot be fixed by a theory because this is not the object of a theory. A theory that fixes its Priorities becomes prescriptive and normative and consequently falls into Savory's trap of paired-up rule-paradoxes.

Therefore we may say that Nida's second Priority is valid for Bible translation and maybe for some other kinds of texts, but even better than that, we should say that this Priority has been established by Nida in order to produce the kind of Bible translations that he would like to see produced, i.e. translations that will convert the maximum number of people coming from entirely different cultural contexts (but with no previous knowledge of Christianity or Western and Middle Eastern contexts) to the same faith. In contrast to this we could imagine other reasons for translating the Bible that would engender a different kind of Priority, for instance a **strictly philological rendering**, possibly

including notes and a foreword, for readers with a good background knowledge of the Scriptures or the Christian and Jewish religions and traditions.

### 3.3.3. THE PRIORITY OF THE HEARD LANGUAGE OVER THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE

According to this Priority, a translation which is well done in the aspect of its written form is by no means always as good when read aloud. One must **anticipate** the fundamental differences that exist between written and spoken language. This is true of course, but the greater importance of the heard language is only operative in certain texts. It is easy to see that this Priority can have no claim to universality, because it is only valid for texts that are meant to be read out loud or recited. Here are some important instances of this Priority:

- (1) Capitalization is not sufficient to correct the meaning of otherwise ambiguous or misleading translations.
- (2) One must not depend upon the spelling to correct otherwise (**unintended**) ambiguous or misleading pronunciations (**homophones**).
- (3) Terms which are vulgar in pronunciation should not be used in the text, even when the written form does not seem vulgar (when the style is not meant to be vulgar, of course) e.g. 'ass' (in the Bible).
- (4) The **punctuation** should favour the marking of the intonation groups over the grammatical clauses.
- (5) **Unintentional oral puns** should carefully be avoided. This Priority may be alright for Nida, whereas in comedy, on the other hand, the translator's Priorities are different from those of Bible translations and the translator might do well to exploit the use of a word which is an accurate translation of the original and, at the same time, a new, and fitting, pun in the TL, where there was not one in the SL.
- (6) The forms of **proper names** should be transliterated, and adjusted to a considerable degree to the phonological system of the TL, so as not to provide special problems for those who must read the script or for the listeners. The present thesis presented here defends the position that proper names in fiction should be adapted or translated if they mean something that will help the audience understand the personality of the character, if they serve some rhetorical purpose other than a purely referential one.
- (7) **Overloading** of the translation should be carefully avoided. It is necessary to see that the rate at which new information is communicated in the translation will not be too fast for the average listener. This is especially important in those parts of the text which may require a certain background knowledge that can be expected of most if

not all the SL listeners, but the TL receptors are most likely not to have. (For example, the BBC production. *The Black Adder* bases much of its humour on a parody of the History of England, with its characteristic famous people and events, all very familiar to any English person over the age of about eleven. Any translation of this programme should take into account that this will certainly not be the case with the TL receptors, so the translator will help his audience wherever he can, to fill in information gaps, or even change difficult but unimportant parts). The prefix *over-* in the first sentence and the modifier *too* in the second are both negative in their meaning so it almost seems tautological to say that *overloading* and *too fast* are to be avoided. What matters is that the translator be aware that such concepts as overloading and rate of information are relative values that depend on the Factors of the TT readership and the translator's intention.

Text and language functions can be described in terms of Priorities. The proper phrasing of this Priority for a general theory should be '**the words and structures of the translation should take into account the mode and channel of discourse**'. This, we can see, is more of a Restriction than a Priority, because it is a Factor that limits the translator's freedom of choice. However, it is a Priority in the sense that it is an aspect of the text that must be accounted for. I think that Nida's third Priority is also relevant when it comes to translating texts which are aurally received such as radio and television broadcasting, since they are texts which have been written (or transcribed) to be read or recited. This is also an operative Factor in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting.

### 3.3.4. THE PRIORITY OF THE NEEDS OF THE AUDIENCE OVER THE FORMS OF LANGUAGE

According to this Priority, one must attach greater importance to the forms understood and accepted by the audience for which a translation is designed than to the forms which may possess a longer linguistic tradition or have greater literary prestige. This is always the case for a well-established language such as English where one must bow to the rules of usage. However, in the case of Catalan, which is still finding its ground, there is a greater acceptance of the idea of a "norm", which is meant to be a model for any speaker of the language to follow if he or she wishes to be regarded as a proficient user of the language. In this respect, the official media in Catalan (e.g. TV3 and Catalunya Radio) have made a conscious effort to provide a model for people to mirror their speech in. This Priority does not have a universal value either. One only has to think of the translation of poetry for one's own personal satisfaction, where the decision to publish may be made at a much later date, or in scientific reports or theses or legal documents, where it is much more important that the meaning be conveyed as accurately and unambiguously as possible even at the expense of ease of comprehension.

### 3.4. WORKING ON A TRANSLATION MODEL BASED ON VARIATION

This section points out the underlying philosophy of this paper and the kinds of parameters it wishes to operate within.

- (1) A model of translation should be able to allow for imitation, creation, interpretation and recreation as different aspects of the process, rather than regard only one of them as truly reflecting what translating should be. Translation is on different occasions ART, CRAFT, or SCIENCE. When translation can be said to be some form of art (presumably the production of great literature in the TT) **one must allow for a more considerable degree of variation**. Conversely, if a translation can ever be regarded as the result of applying some scientific procedure or formula, then the allowance for variation must be considerably reduced to practically nil. It does seem safe to say that art, craft and science are mutually exclusive approaches to translation, and the choice of one or the other will nearly always be determined by the type of text, and if that is not enough, then the adequate approach will surely be dictated by the Translation Initiator (see section 4.1.).
- (2) As a consequence of point (1) a working model of translation should be able to predict the ideal circumstances for **loss, gain, or compensation**. It has been said that translation always involves some amount of loss. This is not always the case, and it is necessary to look into the circumstances (Factors) that are more fertile ground for loss, whether -and how- this can be made up for, and the likelihood of there ever being any grounds for improvement (gain). Again, we must insist on the fact that loss, gain and compensation are part of the nature of translation, not its denial, so they have to be accounted for and explained. This can be done by a model based on a system of Priorities and Restrictions which will be explained in chapters 8 and 9.
- (3) It is equally important to understand and define **the nature of equivalence**: principles of equivalent effect, equivalent frequency, equivalent style, register, equivalent speech act, pragmatic equivalence, textual equivalence, etc. We have seen that some authors prefer to speak of adequacy. However, there is no real advance in this if neither equivalence nor adequacy are properly defined. We will show how equivalence is a type of potential Priority in chapter 8.
- (4) The only readily-identifiable **Unit of Translation** is the Text, which is at the centrepoint of a top-down (starting an analysis at the level of the text as sign in a social context), bottom-up (starting at the level of sounds and morphemes) analysis.

Very often the translator is seeking to **produce an 'equivalent' text**. Newmark has a very interesting approach to the question of the unit of translation and defines the conditions for changing the expected unit of translation, depending on whether the text is expressive, informative or vocative. Translation theory cannot ultimately predict at each point in the text what segment of text is going to act as unit. It is preferable to look upon the ST as if it were the picture of a jigsaw puzzle; then the translator's aim is to try and reproduce that picture (highlighting whatever features are felt to need highlighting) regardless of the size, shape and number of pieces that are used to do so for an adequate rendering of the ST in its new appearance as a TT. This image may help to solve the 'form vs content' debate. Whether we render a jigsaw puzzle of a still life in the style of the Renaissance (the ST) in the same style or in some present-day equivalent (the TT) is an important debate; but not the size, shape and number of pieces (i.e. words, syntactic structures and punctuation). So if we decide that the best translation for a group of four words in the ST is a four-word group in the TL, it will not be because four words have to be rendered as four words but because that is the best way to capture the ST author's style and mode of expression.

- (5) There is **no one-to-one ST-TT relationship**, but 'one-to-many'. Therefore we must account for and predict variation in potential TTs: it is a question of allowing for variation while demanding clear criteria by which decisions on solutions are made. There can always be more than one TL version of an ST, which explains the limitations of the back-translation test. But this is not in conflict with the natural desire for standards of excellence.
- (6) In the light of what has already been said it should be clear by now that Translation Studies should strive to be descriptive and objective, rather than normative and subjective. However, even in a descriptive model it is possible to **anticipate greater or lesser variation**.
- (7) Any categorization of text-types and language functions must also admit the fuzzy nature of **overlapping boundaries**. Categorization of text-types or procedures or any other aspect related to translating should only serve as a tool for improved description of the process, but not as watertight, univocal classes to which all phenomena can be undisputedly assigned.



### 3.5. ACCOUNTING FOR VARIATION THROUGH FACTORS, PRIORITIES AND RESTRICTIONS

When Gutt (1991: 109) argues that it is doubtful that adequate 'functional hierarchies' can be set up, the answer is that it is not doubtful. It is impossible and undesirable in the theoretical domain, on the one hand; but it is perfectly possible and desirable for the translator to set up his/her hierarchies for each new translation.

Newmark (1982: 21) says that translating is all about meaning; quite true but *meaning* understood in the broadest sense of the word, not limited to grammatical meaning and lexical meaning, but embracing *pragmatic meaning* and *utterance meaning* as well. So when Gutt (1991: 129) says,

"It is not true that all translation gives first priority to achieving resemblance in semantic interpretation. (...) while this [phonemic translation] is a rather extreme and exceptional approach, there are other, more normal instances where the translator may feel compelled to disregard faithfulness in semantic representation in favour of other factors. Rhymed poetry is one example."

he is really calling for a model like the one presented in this thesis. '*All translation*' gives first priority to *nothing*: Each new translating process will give first Priority (something that will be named Top Priority in Chapter 8) to something that need not be the same as the first Priority for any other process, but there is nothing against that in principle either. It is important not to let the fact that certain Top Priorities are extremely recurrent obscure this other more important fact.

Gutt (1991: 190) claims that his account of translation is neither descriptive nor prescriptive in its thrust, but explanatory. In its approach it rather tries to understand what causal interdependencies are at work in translation, and hence to bring out what its **conditions for success are** (i.e. the operative Factors). It is in this last point that we find Gutt's contribution most inspiring and not fundamentally different from what we have agreed to call a descriptive approach to translation theory.

The Priorities and, analogously, the Restrictions of a translating process depend on a careful assessment of all of the intervening Factors. Because there is such a wide range of Factors, and not all of these are operative at the same time and are of different importance from text to text, and from context to context, so too the Priorities and Restrictions will vary considerably from one translation to the next.

The number of Factors involved in translation is increasing all the time and accounts of their various natures are constantly improving due to new discoveries in related fields and sciences. So, an ideal theory must account for this. If it is too narrow, or in any way

prescriptive, sooner or later it will become outdated by the introduction of new text-types or changes in readership profile or general perception of the nature of translation or any of a number of other circumstances. Translation draws on other disciplines in order to obtain a proper understanding of the nature of many of the Factors that come into play. Factors may be personal, psychological, cultural, social, linguistic, political, communicative, professional, aesthetic and possibly others. So for a better understanding of these Factors we depend on the findings of philosophy, psychology, most areas of linguistics (semantics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, morphology, phonology, syntax, sociolinguistics, discourse studies), literary studies, communication studies, sociology and any other fields that might be perceived as shedding some light on the subject.

Nevertheless, we cannot subordinate the potential findings of translation theory to any one scholar or theory of any of these disciplines as has often been the case in the past. Translation theory has to be free to process all of the potentially useful data and models that are available to suit its own idiosyncrasy. To pick up the previous dead metaphor and liven it up a bit, we can say that, indeed other disciplines can serve the purpose of illuminating our subject and enable us to see things more clearly, but we cannot allow any other field to take the subject over completely. All Factors are to be considered as variables if translation studies are to be truly descriptive. The concept of Factors accounts for the likelihood that in the future, linguists, philologists and literary critics (and, naturally, experienced translators) will make new discoveries, and the discoveries that have any bearing on translation will simply be incorporated into our model as new Factors which previously had not been taken into account as variables, thereby explaining certain shortcomings in some translations which had not previously been explained satisfactorily, or maybe not even recognised.

We will deal with Priorities and Restrictions (and their related *Restrictions Reversed*) in much greater detail in chapters 8 and 9 but it is useful to give a rough idea at this stage of what is meant by Priorities and Restrictions. A Priority as we understand it is a part of the translator's intention. The translator's whole intention may be expressed as a set of hierarchically-related Priorities. A Restriction is an obstacle, an impediment, which the translator cannot afford to ignore. The nature and number of Restrictions that are operative in a given translating process will determine the way in which the translator complies with the Priorities, or may even force him/her to abandon one or two of the original Priorities because they are not realistically attainable.

### 3.6. THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCOVERING AND ASSESSING FACTORS

Hewson and Martin (1991: 54) aim at devising an approach that contributes to representing translation phenomena as, *one global configuration of factors including Source Culture (SC) and TC, ST, and TT, and the translator operator*. They are quick to point out that each aspect taken separately, would be artificial; however, combined, they provide a reasonably accurate simulation of reality. Later on, (op. cit. p. 105) they list the necessary levels of definition in the ST: linguistic, contextual, and textual Factors.

Below are a series of quotations that are in tune with the approach adopted in this thesis;

"Hofman (1980) " (...) The most urgent task is (...) to describe the nature of those factors operative in the process of translation, to identify them precisely, as far as possible, and to formalize them for application." Gutt (1991: 3)

"Translators do not engage in the mere transplantation of words; (...) their interpretive acts deal with the exploration of situations that are constituted by an intense interaction of linguistic, psychological, anthropological, and cultural phenomena." Schulte (1987: 2)

"La meva tasca pot ajudar a conquerir una parcel·la important de la traducció artística, d'obres on l'impacte viu, emotiu i intel·lectual és rellevant, en una sistematització justificable i sotmesa a un esquema transmissible pedagògicament." Mallafre (1991: 138)

"Thus one of the main problems with the scientific investigation of translation seems to lie in the fact that not only linguistic factors, but many other factors need to be taken into account." Gutt (1991: 5)

From the above quotations, which are just an illustration of many similar statements, one concludes that there is a growing awareness as to the need to start studying translation by studying all of the intervening phenomena, parameters, or what we will call Factors. It will also be important to bear in mind that **not all Factors will be operative for a given text**. Therefore we can merely hope to create an *awareness* in the translator to be able to properly identify those Factors which are operative in each case.

### 3.7. TRANSLATION FACTORS & PRIORITIES IN OTHER THEORIES

#### 1. Nida's four Priorities

In particular, Nida's Priority of 'the heard language over the written language' is particularly applicable in the case of dubbing; but it is also a good example of a theorist trying to impose a criterion that is valid in a certain set of conditions on ALL texts in ALL conditions; this is what is not admissible.

#### 2. Newmark's dual system of Priorities

Newmark (1982) attempts to present two separate sets of Priorities, according to whether emphasis is laid on semantic (in 'authoritative' texts) or communicative Factors.

Newmark's approach includes textual analysis on 4 different levels: textual, referential, naturalness, cohesive.

Newmark's 2 kinds of Priorities are based on the following rule of thumb: "be as literal as possible, and as free as is necessary." Newmark as a declared 'sourcerer', which is a milder word than literalist, says that literal translation is always best, so any changes have to be justified. In our approach, which does not aim at entering the 'sourcerer' v. 'targeteer' debate, we say that the decision to ~~change~~<sup>render</sup> any part of the text literally has to be justified just as much as any changes; in other words, everything has to be justified. Justified in terms of Priorities and Restrictions, that is.

Newmark (1982: 36) "*Mainly, the translation theorist is concerned to see that no linguistic or cultural factor is ignored when one is translating.*"

#### 3. Snell-Hornby

This author's contribution is particularly interesting in the area of text typologies. She takes a gestalt approach towards what she calls 'the illusion of equivalence'.

#### 4. Delisle's Interpretive Approach

Delisle's work is particularly aimed at providing useful answers for translation pedagogy. The stress he lays on the importance of equivalent interpretation is later picked up by Ernst Gutt.

## 5. Hatim and Mason

These authors incorporate Speech Act Theory and Discourse Analysis as operative Factors in the translating process. Their basic Priority can be expressed in terms of *rhetorical purpose*.

## 6. Roger T. Bell

Bell applies text linguistics to a model of translating, based on discoveries made in Semantics, Syntax, Pragmatics. He sees translation as an algorithmic process. Bell (1991: 7) says that the crucial **variable** is the *purpose* for which the translation is being made, not some *inherent characteristic of the translation itself*. Variation for Bell is in no sense an inconvenient characteristic of language in use but its very nature without which it would be unable to function as a communication system. In Bell we find support for our claim of a need to specify the choices which are available to the communicator and the functions such choices may be called upon to play. His parameters of variation (1991: 7) are expressed in the form of questions, outlined below:

**What** is the message contained in the text?

**Why**, for what purpose, was the text issued?

**When** does the communication take place?

**Where** does the communication take place?

**Who** are the participants involved in the communication?

According to Bell (1991: 8), for the translator, both dialect and register features are important but, of the two, it is the **parameters of register** which are probably the more significant. This may be true as a general statement, but the translator finds general truths of limited relevance if their conditions are not defined.

Bell (1991: 9) presents discourse parameters in the following manner:

<b>Sociological variables</b>	<b>Discourse categories</b>	<b>Linguistic forms</b>
Participants	Tenor	Syntax
Purposes	Mode	
Settings	Domain	Lexis

It is, says Bell, no doubt, the seeming chaos of variation faced in texts by translators and the inevitable **inability of a theory of translation to be strongly predictive** which has led some to go so far as to deny the very possibility of creating a 'single valid

comprehensive theory of translation' and fall back on stressing the 'subjective', 'craft' nature of the activity.

### 7. Hewson & Martin

The Variational Approach (by listing paraphrases in both languages)

Their new Factors, or arrangement of Factors: Translation Initiator, Translation Operator, Language Culture

Their basic Priority is what they call the **Cultural Equation**. We will be quoting widely from these authors throughout this project.

### 8. Ernst Gutt

Applies Relevance theory to translation. Gutt (1991: 104) claims that relevance theory draws our attention to another factor, and that is **processing effort**. He says that the audience will rightly expect special contextual effects, special pay-off, from the use of more costly forms. It makes the audience look for special contextual effects. The audience may be misled toward unintended contextual implications.

Gutt's (1991: 111) definition of faithfulness calls for resemblance in relevant aspects.

## 3.8. A BROAD INTRODUCTORY CLASSIFICATION OF FACTORS

This section is a **personal** development of this particular model. It points out some of the most important Factors involved in the translating process, in very general terms.

There is a need to define all the characteristics of each kind of FACTOR. Below is a list of the Factors or parameters that are present in any translation. Who does what, when, where, how, in what circumstances, and what for?

### 1. PARTICIPANTS

ST writer, TI, Translator as TT producer, TT readership, and, indirectly, the ST reader.

Translation theory should account for and define translator competence and performance, but also the relevant characteristics of all of the other participants in the translating process. These should be considered as relevant Factors.

## 2. CONTEXT.

- (1) Context of the ST, time, place, culture, ST readership;
- (2) Context of the TT: time, place, occasion/client, culture, TT readership.
- (3) Context/conditions of the translating process.

## 3. LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION

Differences/similarities between the two language systems and the communication strategies and conventions. SL influences & TL influences. Language here is to be understood in the broadest of its senses.

## 4. The Factors that intervene in TEXT ANALYSIS AND PRODUCTION

Unity of the text, binding Factors (cohesion, coherence). Text typologies and constituents. We need purpose-oriented typologies (e.g. a typology of texts that will work for translators or translation theory, but not necessarily for other domains).

Each one of these broad classes will be analysed in greater detail in the following four chapters.

### 3.9. THE NEED FOR PRIORITIES

What Gutt (1991: 8) calls *The Problem of Evaluation and Decision-making*. He says that the need for decision-making arises from the fact that the target-language rarely allows the translator to preserve exactly what the original conveyed;

"(...) So, since none of the options considered captures *all* that the original seemed to express, the solution is not self-evident but requires a non-trivial decision on the translator's part."

And he goes on (op cit. p. 18) to say that schemes in translation theory have kept increasing as new sets of phenomena were found to be relevant to translating.

Precisely because there is no absolute level of relevance that is adequate to every occasion, the translator needs to select from all the operative Factors those which can be adequately justified as being more important for a given translation process. We will call these Factors Priorities.

When Gutt (1991: 52) says that formulating a general translation theory of functional equivalence that is explicit, coherent *and* can accommodate the kinds of differences just

discussed seems a formidable task indeed, he seems to imply that more than a formidable task it is almost an impossible one. Our answer to this challenge will gradually unfold in the coming chapters and we will advocate a hierarchical structuring of Priorities, Restrictions and Factors that must not be predetermined by theory, but identified by the translator in each process. They are all variables, as we read in Gutt (1991: 53),

"Hönig and Kussmaul propose a theory of translation that does not regard text functions as factors that have to be kept constant in translation, but considers them as variables, too."

Below are a few examples from Mallfrè (1991: 96, 97, 102) about religious and literary translation that illustrate the need for a clearly defined set of Priorities for each new translation task:

"La traducció religiosa ha constituït al llarg de la història una especialització molt específica no exempta de riscos. Hi ha hagut dos interessos, en part contraposats: la necessitat de preservar en tota la seva puresa intocable la paraula de Déu i la necessitat d'evangelització."

"Una imatge il·lustrativa dels problemes de la traducció es troba en la pràctica religiosa d'algunes Esglésies protestants de la Xina de consagrar arròs i no pa. ¿S'exporta el pa de la cultura originària o s'adapta la base d'alimentació de la cultura receptiva?"

"Naturalment que pot haver-hi i hi ha una traducció paral·lela artística. En aquest cas l'atenció del lector es repartiria entre l'obra i la traducció, comparant fins a quin punt la traducció té encerts que la fan vàlida com a tal. La *Divina Comèdia*, en la traducció de Sagarra editada per Alfa, il·lustra molt bé aquesta traducció artística, amb l'original a peu de pàgina, cosa que mostra fins a quin punt l'interès prioritari radica en la traducció i que només de tant en tant recorrem a l'original per ratificar l'exce·l·lència d'un passatge traduït que ens ha cridat l'atenció."

"Un director de publicacions, un editor, pot tenir el criteri de publicar un text original acompanyat d'una traducció didàctica o d'acompanyar-lo d'una traducció artística. No em sembla tan encertat d'editar l'obra d'un autor acompanyada de tipus barrejats de traducció."

Mallfrè offers more proof in the lines below (1991: 137) of the need to establish a hierarchy of Priorities during the translating process:

"Veure en quina mesura intervenen els diferents elements, tractar de no sobreçarregar uns aspectes a expenses d'uns altres, amb una gran responsabilitat de tria d'intensitats, que poden ser de grau diferent, però de les quals és bo no ignorar l'existència, perquè totes, en mesures diverses, són part de l'eficàcia del text i del seu significat emotiu."

Precisely because the Factors are variables means that on different occasions different Factors will have a different relative importance.



Gutt's book (1991) is about the bearing that relevance theory has on translation, and so his main Priority is always to maintain an optimum degree of relevance in the TT for the target audience. On page 113 he says,

"It seems that the bulk of rules and principles that have been advanced in writings on translation are concerned not so much with matters of general translation theory but rather deal with matters of relevance. (...) In fact one is struck by how frequently guidelines in translation involve concepts like 'importance', 'significance' and even 'relevance' itself."

It is easy to see that such terms are not self-defining. What does 'importance' mean, for example? Important in what way, to what extent, how important in relation to other aspects? It is now obvious that the translator has to make the translation meaningful and relevant in some way for the readership, although this has not always been universally acknowledged, but we can only foresee the **type** of problems we might come across in the process. It will have to be left to the translator to decide exactly what the problems are.

Hatim and Mason (1990: 13) say that in assessing translations, the first thing to consider is the translator's own purpose, so that performance can be judged against objectives. Then the critic will be in a position to discuss results in terms of what the translator is aiming at, and for what kind of reader. In short the question to ask is, do the results match up to the stated aims? The *stated aims* are what we are going to call Priorities. It is unfortunate to note that many a critic (if one is to go by papers read on the subject in symposia and congresses held in Spain) does not seem to be aware of the fact that the translator may have been guided by a different set of Priorities to the one the critic is judging the success of the translation by.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Participants**

#### **4.1. THE TRANSLATION INITIATOR**

##### **4.1.1. ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE MODEL ARE VARIABLES**

One extremely important Factor that is missing (or not made relevant enough) in almost every translation theory is the role of the translator's client or employer. This Factor is now slowly beginning to be recognized as playing a role of some importance in the production of any translation. The first question to ask then is why have the majority of scholars (many of whom have been so clear-thinking in providing answers to problems confronting translators and/or brought up by the critics) not taken this Factor into account? If we can at last widely acknowledge that the translator's client or employer is a Factor to be reckoned with, the next question is what kind of a variable is it?

The answer to the first question possibly explains the late arrival of other innovations in translation theory, and it is as simple as the fact that translation theory has always lagged behind the actual work translators were doing. Another reason is probably the sheer weight of tradition and convention, as well as the prescientific, arbitrary nature of most of translation studies. First of all, there is the long-standing tradition of taking the word as

the main point of reference for any discussion or study on the translating process. In this sense we might say that the progress made in theoretical studies of translation can be explained as a history of moving further and further away from the word to explore the outer circles of the field, while almost unconsciously maintaining the word at the centre of these concentric circles. Then there is the fact that new translation theories have always had to wait for new literary or linguistic theories on which to feed. It was only when translation started to be perceived as a profession as well as an art or a craft, when sociological aspects were being drawn into literary and linguistic studies, and when *communication* became the new key word, that scholars began to look beyond the word and even beyond the text, into what was going to be known as *context*. But, as Hatim and Mason (1990: 38) put it,

"Under the influence of Firth and Malinowski, description of **communicative events** is now fairly widely recognized as a proper goal of linguistic analysis. (...) Translators, for their part, have long been aware of the role of SITUATIONAL FACTORS (source, status, client, use to be made of translation, etc.); it was only in linguistics that the realization was slow to come about."

The first participants that were noticed in any context were the speaker/writer on the one hand, and the listener/reader on the other, and texts were understood to be acts of communication between the two sides. The next step in the mapping of context was the incorporation of the global socio-cultural context and background. This way of defining context may have worked very well for many different types of communication acts and probably provided adequate ways of interpreting many literary works and 'naturally occurring' utterances. And because it worked for certain literary and linguistic theories and models it was eventually adopted by subsequent translation theories. But in translation, at least, there is another kind of participant lodged somewhere between the apparently 'immediate' participants and the rest of society: the person who orders the translation in the first place, the translation initiator, the one who starts the ball rolling. It is precisely because this person does 'start the ball rolling' that he or she cannot be overlooked in any full explanation of the translating process. While discussing the translator's motivation, Hatim and Mason (1990: 12) say

"To study translations in isolation from the Factors affecting their production is consequently to miss out an important dimension of the phenomenon. In fact, the social context of translating is probably a MORE IMPORTANT VARIABLE than the textual genre, which has imposed such rigid distinctions on types of translating in the past."

Along with the word, another dead weight that tradition has loaded on the back of translation studies and slowed down progress is the notion that somewhere, somehow, there must be a perfectly unique translation (TT) for every text, and that it is therefore the goal of translation theory to find a magic formula that will enable translators to *uncover* the latent TT. This notion nips in the bud the very essence of translation and translating:

variation. It is only in the recognition and careful evaluation of all the intervening variables that translation studies can honestly make any progress. In Bell's words (1991: 11),

"Tytler's Translation Rules are all normative prescriptions deriving directly from the subjective and evaluative description of the 'good translation'. They are like the rules of etiquette; what people are told they ought and ought not to do in particular circumstances, by reference to essentially arbitrary norms of behaviour."

If we approach the subject by assuming, however unconsciously, that the *right* version is simply lying under the surface of the text waiting to be uncovered, we can only end up by aspiring to spell out a technique or set of rules, which, if properly observed, will lead the translator to *finding* the one and only TT for a given text. Such a technique has still not been found, nor has any set of translation rules proved to be anywhere near objective. This approach was ultimately disproved by the relative failure of the first experiments in machine translation. Again from Bell (1991: 22):

"In short, instead of making subjective and arbitrary judgements on the extent to which one translation is better than another and insisting that goodness resides in the faithful adherence to an imposed set of commandments, our orientation has to be towards the objective specification of the steps and stages through which the translator works as the ST in the original language is transformed into the target text; a focus on the process which creates the translation rather than on the translation itself."

So, if we start by admitting that there can be different renderings of a given text depending on the conditions in which the translation takes place, then translation theory is no longer tempted to be prescriptive and becomes descriptive. It becomes a question of discovering all of the potential Factors that may or may not intervene in a given translation. Then these Factors will have to be described (a) separately, as being either Priorities or Restrictions within the process; and (b) according to how they interrelate. It is important to see that a translation is carried out within a framework of Priorities and Restrictions set by the translator himself in the light of all the textual, contextual and professional Factors. In a theory taking this approach, we will say that if something cannot be accounted for it will be due to the fact that **some Factor or other that has not been properly evaluated or identified**. This approach should create an awareness in scholars to look out for new Factors (or new aspects of known Factors) in their endeavour to make improved translation models. It should also provide a clear framework for critics to better understand and assess the quality of translations. It is in this kind of approach to translation theory that the translator's client or *translation initiator* (TI), to use a term coined by Hewson and Martin (1991: 113), is beginning to be recognized as a Factor of any importance. On the same page of *Redefining Translation* one can read,

"The Translation Initiator (TI) - as the term indicates, this is the driving force behind the act of Translation, and whose identity and express wishes have a fundamental influence on the Translation operation."

The implications of accepting the translation initiator as an intervening Factor are quite important. It means basically that there is another link in an imaginary chain-process that enables somebody who has written something in a given language to come into contact with somebody who, in principle, cannot read that language. In other words, **the translator is not the only one to interfere with the original**. This in turn means that we will have to revise all that has been claimed to be the part and parcel of the translator's responsibility and see whether some of it should really be laid at the client's door. Hewson and Martin are quite right in reminding us that,

"A translator bound to no one is something of a rarity nowadays. The most unhampered translator would not only be translating at his own instigation (i.e. he chooses his own text, with all that that implies), but also for himself and in conditions which he himself sets. In fact he can do precisely what he likes and how he likes, and his work is thus virtually unparametrable." (1991: 161)

We will also have to look in depth to see how the client or TI can help or hinder the translator in his or her work. In short, what is the translation initiator's position in the translating process?

In many theories of translation, it is the translator who holds responsibility for practically all the decisions that have to be taken regarding translation problems, and therefore these theories are addressed to translators and translation teachers only. Hatim and Mason are an example of this and they do not seem to have grasped the full implications of considering the client as a Factor in the process even though they proclaim the importance of contextual Factors. They say,

"What is 'required' of any given communicative purpose within a TL cultural environment is then a matter for the translator's judgement. It is in these terms that we may define appropriateness." (1991: 94)

This is only partly true unless we are willing to admit that part of the translator's judgement rests on the kind of order he or she has received from the client and anything relevant that might be known about the client or TI.

More recently it has been realized that some of the decisions concerning the translation of a text can be taken at an earlier stage than the actual translating process, i.e. by the translator's client. If the client fails to fulfill his/her proper role, as unfortunately so often happens, then the translator will be forced into the very tricky situation of making these decisions him or herself without knowing for sure what it was the client wanted when the translation was ordered. Of course, the translator may be his or her own TI, but when this is not the case the translator immediately becomes dependent on the TI's instructions, so it is important that these be as clear and comprehensive as possible.

Moreover, it has often been the case that translators have been unjustly criticized for serious mistakes in their work that are entirely accountable to the client for not having given clear instructions in the first place but, instead, simply saying "translate this" and thinking that was enough.

The problem that many translation theories run into is that for them translating necessarily means accounting for all of the elements that are part of the original text (ST). However, if one looks at real translating contexts, the TI tends either to require only one or two particular aspects of a message, or to give a very general translation order. When one looks at the whole range of clients, one comes to see that they often represent a *conflict of interests*, and that the translation order given to the translator to some extent reflects this state of affairs. Bell tells us that the crucial variable is

"(...) the *purpose* for which the translation is being made, not some inherent characteristic of the translation itself. (...) variation is in no sense an inconvenient characteristic of language in use but its very nature without which it would be unable to function as a communication system (...) we need to specify the choices which are available to the communicator and the functions such choices may be called upon to play. (...) Parameters of variation: What? Why? When? How? Where? and Who?" (1991: 7)

And Hatim and Mason on the subject of the translator's motivation say,

"The translator's motivations are inextricably bound up with the **socio-cultural context** of the translating process. There has to be a need for a translation, which may be client-driven, market-driven, translator-driven." (1990: 12)

#### 4.1.2. HOW CAN THE TRANSLATION INITIATOR INFLUENCE THE TRANSLATION?

##### 4.1.2.1. The TI and the occasion of the translation

It is the TI who first receives the Source Text, and even if he or she does not understand the language it is written in, the TI must know something about the text, at least who or where it comes from. It is on the basis of the TI's knowledge of the text that he or she will decide whether the text is to be translated, why and what for. It is in the answer to the question 'why' -or 'what for'- a text is to be translated that the first variable -of the many that come into play- is fixed and henceforth becomes a fundamental guideline for the translator, and this is why the TI must know why the text is going to be translated and then let the translator know. Again Hewson and Martin are the only ones to point this out:

"The premise that translation does not 'just happen', but results from (1) a need, and (2) an order. The order corresponds to the instructions given by the TI to ensure that communication takes place." (1991: 113)

#### 4.1.2.2. The TI's appreciation of the translator's work

The client or TI may or may not value the importance of a top-quality translation. **The economic Factor** obviously has a great influence on the work done, with **repercussions at every possible level**. Although there is evidence that this is now changing for the better, the fate of the profession would still seem to rest on a naive or prescientific conception of what translation actually involves. Hewson and Martin (1991: 156) provide us with the following example of an all-too-frequent phenomenon

"Translation is still often considered as a costly extra which is better done cheaply and badly, rather than paying the price. Much comment has recently been made in France about small companies who lose their export markets because they are unwilling to invest the necessary money in speakers of the foreign language."

#### 4.1.2.3. The TI's understanding of the nature of translation

An important variable is how well the TI understands some of the difficulties involved in translating in general, and, more specifically, if the TI understands the problems posed by the text to be translated. Nowadays, most translators are paid according to number of words, the languages involved, the degree of technical knowledge required, and whether the translation is urgent; but maybe other variables also need to be considered, such as the quality or success of the TT, especially for certain kinds of texts.

#### 4.1.2.4. The TI as source of information

It is necessary for many clients, especially publishers and large companies or institutions, to have a **stylebook** that illustrates the client's style and covers as many points as possible. For example, in the translation of certain texts where Spanish is the language of the TT, translators are given a list of words that must be avoided. This happens when the client knows that the Spanish version will be read in most if not all of the Spanish-speaking communities in the world, and wishes to avoid the use of words that are slang or taboo in some dialects however harmless they may be in the translator's dialect. **If the TI does not tell the translator who the TT readers are going to be, how else can he know?** The same is true for other aspects of the translation.

#### 4.1.2.5. The TI as censor

The case of **copyright**, whether subtle or obvious, may be ascribed to a repressed context or to the TI. In both cases one could consider they may not only be instrumental in ordering a translation on the one hand but in preventing a text from being translated on the other. An example of this is the Koran, which has only very recently been translated, previously being labeled as 'untranslatable'. There are more subtle examples of TI interference in deciding that certain elements should be altered or left out. One has to look out for apparently quite **remarkable omissions or drastic changes that cannot be put down to translator incompetence or cultural gaps**. A case in point is an English TV comedy which included a half-wit character from Spain; the other characters were told that this was easily explained by the fact that he was from Barcelona. When the programme was dubbed for Catalan viewers this character's birthplace was changed to Mexico.

And here is an example from Hewson and Martin about the translation into French of *The Day of the Jackal*,

"There are clearly no language or apparent cultural difficulties preventing a fairly straightforward translation of the novel. The Translation order would therefore appear to reflect the particular identity and motivation of the TI. (...) Although we are not in a position to explain away all the changes, we would be tempted to suggest that a certain ideological stance and certain preconceptions are behind the transformation of the blond Anglo-Saxon killer. Or one might argue that the TI was motivated by his perception of the reading public's taste, emphasizing the historical aspect at the expense of the glorification of the 'exceptional' qualities of the foreign (perceived as anti-French) hero -whether as a killer or as a seducer. Or necessary adaptations to ensure maximum sales." (1991: 156)

The final sentence of this quotation is particularly relevant and underlines the importance of market Factors both as a driving force for the translation to be ordered in the first place and, consequently, a Priority that must be kept in mind at all stages of the translating process. TIs are often unaware of the relationship between how much they are willing to invest in their translations, as mentioned in points 2 and 3, and the resulting financial success or failure of the final product. A lack of adequate economic incentive may also explain some striking omissions and other surprising weaknesses.



#### 4.1.3. THE ACTUAL IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFYING THE TRANSLATION INITIATOR

The client's role is so important because the end product should be made to suit his or her instructions, and those very instructions can be determining in themselves if they are specific or restrictive enough. **The TI can be a help or an obstacle.** If one considers the Factors that come into play during the translating process as either Priorities or Restrictions, the TI can usually be perceived as a Restriction, or as setting up certain Restrictions or conditions.

There are different types of Restrictions; most of them might be placed under one of the following headings: textual, contextual or professional. The TI would normally be perceived as a professional Restriction; ambiguity would be an example of a textual Restriction; a ST and a TT written in two completely unrelated languages is an example of a contextual Restriction. Strictly speaking, the TI is not a single Restriction, but the **source of a number of Restrictions.**

This must not be understood in a purely negative sense; 'Restriction' will sometimes mean the margins within which the translator is to work, or the contextualization of the translation, and this sort of 'Restriction' is imposed on any text. For example, lip-movement and timing are Restrictions imposed on film translating.

Of course, TIs are not always a restricting Factor, sometimes they can be quite helpful. For example, a stylebook might be seen as a constraint imposed on the translator's creativity; this is sometimes true, but having such a clear set of criteria is usually an advantageous guideline. **The TI is sometimes better acquainted with the subject-matter and its terminology than the translator,** who can benefit from the TI's knowledge if he or she is willing to communicate it. Sometimes the TI knows exactly what kind of translation needs to be produced and should then spell out the (realistic) requirements as clearly as possible. In a sense, we are calling for clients and companies to become more aware of how they can help their translators to improve the standard of their work. Another aim is to advise critics to hold their fire before they have become fully aware of the conditions in which the translator had to produce his or her work, i.e. what the specific Priorities and Restrictions were for that particular translation.

Hewson and Martin are the first to stop and look into this question in any detail. In *Redefining Translation* they even make various classifications, which I have slightly re-arranged and extended, according to the following variables:

#### 4.1.3.1. The TI's competence

The TI may be more or less familiar with the language and culture of the ST or TT. This is not done for the sake of making yet another classification but because of its significance as a Factor in the translation process. They say (1991: 114),

"The choices which the translator will make will no longer depend on internal (or in fact personal) criteria, but on a whole series of parameters which will be more or less clearly expressed in the translation order. (...) It immediately becomes apparent that the socio-cultural identity of the TI is of prime importance."

This position will normally determine the TI's access to the ST and his comprehension (and potential criticism) of the TT.

#### 4.1.3.2. Other roles of the TI

The TI may or may not be identified with any of the other participants in the translating context. The TI could be the author of the original, a/the reader of the original, the translator, a/the reader of the translation, or none of these.

"The identity of the TI may in itself prove to be a determining Factor in the choice of a TT. This is important to bear in mind when the TI is also the receiver." (1991: 165)

#### 4.1.3.3. The TI's empathy with the ST

The degree of familiarity with the ST, its intentions and its implications. Hewson and Martin have the following to say about this,

"A ST can never be regarded as an 'innocent' document. As it has been chosen to be translated, it is thought of in most cases as a read document whose purpose of communication has already been defined." (1991: 166)

The TI may be in one of these four possible relationships with the ST:

- (a) The TI has produced the document him or herself. Maybe we could include in this category 'anonymous' texts produced for companies or institutions who, in turn, order the translation of these texts.
- (b) He or she has read the ST. Here we need to know how well the text was understood.
- (c) The TI has not read the ST, where the whole responsibility for the translation is given to the translator. Hopefully it is clear by now that this is not a desirable situation.

- (d) The ST has still not been written at the time of the translation order; an example of this might be staff translators who are expected to translate whatever documents come in.

#### 4.1.3.4. The TI's relationship with the TT receptors

The relationship between the TI and the target language readership and culture is an important Factor as well. When the TI is closely identified with or is even a part of the TT readership he or she can be very helpful in guiding the translator when the readership is not simply the whole target language community but a strictly-definable group within that community. The TI's knowledge of such a group and its needs and expectations should be reflected either in the translation order or in a stylebook. Such a detailed definition of requirements will reduce the range of acceptable renderings and will help towards a more accurate definition of Priorities.

#### 4.1.3.5. The TI's awareness of his/her own role

It is essential that the TI realize the benefits of being familiar with the theoretical, practical and professional problems involved in the translation order. This Factor is the TI's awareness of his/her own role in the process and his experience as a TI. In *Redefining Translation* we read:

"A second point we should consider is the probable ignorance of the TI regarding the problems which all translators face. The TI may make totally unrealistic demands on the TO, requiring 'the same using the same'. Translating a pun, for example, using the same elements as in the ST is often virtually impossible, and when the translator is given no latitude, this can lead to an unsatisfactory TT from every point of view. As for the naive assumption equating LC1 and LC2 receivers' needs, this can lead to a totally unrealistic Translation order. If the translator is asked to maintain certain LC1-specific elements, this can not only change the message, but even produce the opposite effect of the required one."  
Hewson and Martin (1991: 172)

If, in a spoken text, the translator is being asked to produce an equivalently socially determined text, he will often have to work with the largest possible translation unit in order to account for general aims of communication, rather than translating, for example, expression by expression. This means that the TI should not be demanding an expression-by-expression translation of such a text (i.e. the TI should demand that the translator aim for contradictory goals).

There will be cases where the TI Factor will be fundamental to the whole process and other cases where this Factor will hardly be operative (this is true for many other Factors

as well). But we cannot know which case is which unless we first realize that it is a Factor that has to be accounted for in any translation. I would go so far as to say that in the past, when there was not so much professional translation going on, the TI Factor already existed even if it could not best be described as 'the client'. In the case of Bible translation it is quite clear that the TI is the Church, and just imagine the number and range of heresies the translators could be perpetrating if they did not take this Factor into consideration. The Church was also the TI of many other texts, and it often laid down clear guidelines as to what was to be translated and how.

A present-day example of the importance of identifying the TI and pinpointing his or her needs and potential usefulness to the translator as a source of information is the case of advertisements. A translator cannot (honestly) begin to translate an advertisement without knowing quite a few things beforehand; the main one is the answer to the question, Is the TT supposed to be an advertisement that will be published with the aim of selling a product? And of course only the TI can answer that question. Depending on the TI's characteristics he or she will also have to help in answering as many questions as possible; e.g.

What product is being sold?

What are the salient characteristics of the target ST readership?

What are the characteristics of the target TT readership?

In this respect, the translator will already begin to show his or her translating competence by asking for all the necessary information if it is not readily provided by the TI, because one of the many skills that a translator should display is his or her ability to find out (as efficiently as possible) what he or she does not yet know.

#### **4.1.4. THE TRANSLATION INITIATOR AND THE TRANSLATOR**

Translating parameters which are not properly defined by the TI, or are unrealistic or even simply highly demanding, become 'Restrictions' for the translator. Conversely, the TI may help the translator by defining clear realistic conditions and expectations for the production of the TT. I propose that these 'Restrictions' be regarded as 'Restrictions Reversed' which means the absence of a potential Restriction. Hewson and Martin say something to the same effect:

"Once these parameters have been spelt out, the role of the translator is in fact considerably simplified when it comes to choosing between the different TT forms available. (...) The 'hidden' Factors in the Translation Operation are much more important than is often imagined. (...) A full consideration of all of the parameters not only aids the translator in his

task, but also enables the translation critic to evaluate the TT produced in a more objective light.' (1991: 171)

The translator must realize that for every potential Restriction there will be moments where the Restriction will not be operative (Restriction Reversed) and must be ready to exploit situations of greater maneuverability to his or her own advantage in order to better fulfill the predefined set of Priorities. Bell hints at this when he writes,

What is crucial is the ability to recognize alternatives that are available in the original, the choices that can be found in the TL and the realization that choices foreclose others' (1991: 72)

In short, what is being advocated here is that everybody involved in translation, including translators, publishers, multinational companies, teachers and academics, become fully aware of the TI's role in the translating process in order to raise the standard of translating and make improved translation models. One last example of the symptoms of a lack of awareness regarding this Factor is that one of the problems commonly found in the teaching of translation is the fact that the TI (the teacher in this case) often has very definite criteria in mind when setting a text to be translated, but these are simply not spelt out, or are mentioned in the vaguest possible terms ('respecting the beauty of a ST', etc.). The result is discouraging for the student. Worse still is the teacher who does not even have a set of criteria, merely his or her own rendering and expects the students (without telling them how) to produce exactly the same TT as their teacher. Peter Newmark has repeatedly stressed the importance of contextualizing the translation for the student, or as he puts it, defining the occasion of the translation, i.e. Where was the ST published? Who was the ST readership? Where will the TT be published and who for? Who is paying? What is expected of the translation?

Ernst Gutt (1991: 55) offers us some very good examples of translation orders, quoting from Hönl and Kussmaul:

"Hönl and Kussmaul (1984: 39) formulate the specifications for the options as follows: "The Viyella House company now want to sell their products also in Germany. Make a translation which shows what marketing strategy they use in England. Perhaps you will want to add a few lines as well." or "The Viyella House company has sent us this advertisement; we should put together something corresponding to it. So get together with some of our advertising experts, translate the advertisement for him and then work with him to draft a good advertisement for our area." (...) There need not be any resemblance between the original and the German [TT] advertisement."

In the above case the Viyella House Company is the Translation Initiator, laying down some useful guidelines. Below Gutt (1991: 65) provides us with another example;

"Weidner translates words into business. Consultancy-based approach. We will consult you, both before and during the translation process. Our close involvement with your project

enables us to identify with and understand your corporate objectives. This appreciation of the background to and the aims of each assignment is the key to providing a translation which achieves the impact you are seeking in the target market. *More than translation service . . .* Your translation requirement needs to be managed like any other aspect of your business; it has to dovetail into your overall marketing and publishing plans. We understand your environment and we offer *very much more than a translation service.*" (Advertisement on back cover of *Language Monthly*, no. 47, August 1987)."

This shows some very clear-thinking regarding translating strategies, it is also an example to be followed by other translation agencies.

## 4.2. THE TRANSLATOR

Translation must be seen as an activity **at the centre of which we find the translator**. Many might find such a statement quite redundant and superfluous. However, there does seem to be, on occasions, an inclination to believe that a prescriptive theory can solve many translation problems regardless of the translator. Hewson and Martin (1991: 85) place the translator at the centre of their model,

"The translator's competence is again the foundation and complement of homologous definition. It is, moreover, fundamental to the VARIATIONAL APPROACH that the translation options should be kept open as long as possible in order for MOTIVATED DECISIONS [*sic* i.e. Priorities] to be taken at the highest possible level [*sic* our scale of Priorities] in the translation procedure."

On the the other hand, it is true that many theories have spent some time on outlining **the necessary qualifications of the ideal translator**. In this section we will look at what some authors regard as the profile of an ideal translator (usually without any specification as to what kind of translator). Our own view is that of the translator having a lead role in the process, but without being fundamentally different to the other participants and Factors involved in a translation. In short, the translator is one of a number of participants, and the participants form just one of a whole group or set of Factors that define the process. As a Factor, **the translator is also a parameter, a variable**, so our approach will be to see what differences there are from one type of translator to the next, what kind of Restrictions operate on translators, and what makes one translator better than another.

#### 4.2.1. TRANSLATOR COMPETENCE

We have already argued that the concept of the existence of a universally definable *ideal translation* has only served to hinder progress in translation studies. It is now time to ask whether there might be an analogue situation when it comes to talking about the *ideal translator*. Of course, we could start to describe some sort of superhuman translator as an ideal model. We could demand that the translator know this and that and be able to do all sorts of things. But we will not take this approach. We will simply try to identify those abilities and features that make some translators better than others and treat these features as variables. This can also be done by taking a negative starting point and pinpointing what it takes to be a poor translator, then we will call an absence of any of these deficiencies a **Reversed Restriction**. Mallafrè (1991: 52) says the following about the translator and his/her task:

"El paper del traductor és difícil. I ho és perquè no hi pot haver una completa objectivitat impersonal en la seva tasca, i li cal no solament conèixer la LT perfectament i la LO a fons, sinó els entorns culturals respectius, o la matèria concreta a traduir, en aquest cas potser més que les llengües. Allò que que no coneix per formació ja adquirida, ho haurà d'esbrinar mitjançant la informació."

Regarding the translator of scientific and technical texts Mallafrè (1991: 92, 94) points out:

"És important que el traductor conegui la matèria particular, fins i tot més que la LO. (...) Només es tracta de veure que les dificultats són diferents, i el traductor científic o tècnic necessita un entrenament que posi l'accent en determinats aspectes més que en altres."

It might be more accurate, terminologically, to refer to *technical* translation as that kind of translation that demands a special training and/or in-depth "encyclopaedic" knowledge and/or practical skill or experience. This kind of definition would include some texts that deal with scientific subject-matters, but not all; and may include even some literary texts that are "technical" in this sense.

**What is a translator?** A translator is a person (or computer programme) that translates. So it is starting from a proper definition of the translating process that we will be able to define the translator. However Bell (1991: 15) finds it interesting to define the translator without any specific reference to translation:

"What is the translator? The translator has been defined as a 'bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities', i.e. the translator decodes messages transmitted in one language and re-encodes them in another."

It is important here not to lose sight of the fact that *decoding re-encoding messages* involves no less and no more than **reading and writing skills**. Reading in one language and writing in another. How are we to interpret *bilingual* in this definition? Bilingual as in '*always*' having had a *bilingual and bicultural background*, at one end of the spectrum, or simply as *not being completely ignorant in at least one foreign language*, at the other end? Too much hot air has been spent in debating whether bilinguals make better or worse translators, beside the fact that there are different degrees of bilingualism and the fact that there are different opinions as to how to define the term. So it would seem that bilingualism is an issue that had better be avoided. It seems sufficient to say that two fundamental Restrictions on any translator will be the difficulties experienced in **reading** (with all that that entails) in the language of the ST and, secondly, **writing** in the TL. Now, because translation involves **texts**, even more specifically than languages, we will say that the main part of any translator's competence involves:

- (1) **reading comprehension** of certain text-types in a certain language
- (2) **sufficient writing skills** in order to produce translations of those text-types in a different language.

Another recurrent debate on the point of translator competence is the issue of whether or not the translator should only use his/her mother-tongue as TL. Our answer to this question is the same as for all the other debates in translation theory: we cannot be prescriptive or dogmatic on this point. It all depends on the type of texts being translated, the purpose of the translation, and any number of Factors. It is possible to find cases where there is no harm in translating into a foreign language, or maybe even from one foreign language into another. Sometimes where there is a shortage of translators there is no choice. So we are back to our initial statement that we can **predict that a translation will be better or worse depending on the translator's reading skills (in the LC1) and writing skills (in the LC2) for the type of text to be translated and the purpose of the translation**. To commit oneself any further than that would be to enter an area of generalizations with exceptions.

Let us look at a further requirement of translator competence by Bell (1991: 36)

"The translator must, as a communicator, possess the knowledge and skills that are common to all communicators, in two languages at least."

Because translation is a form of communication it seems only logical to demand that a translator be a **good communicator**, which entails being good at both ends of the communication **as sender and receiver**; but, as we have already mentioned, it is not yet clear how important it really is that the translator be a good writer in the SL or a good



reader in the TL beyond the requirements of:

- (1) reading sufficiently well in the SL and
- (2) writing sufficiently well in the TL.

and, in specific translating contexts, we might add at the end of each requirement: for the purpose of the translating process.

Johnson and Whitlock, as quoted in Bell (1991: 36), set their requirements for optimum translator competence as follows: the professional (technical) translator has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge;

- (1) TL knowledge
- (2) text-type knowledge
- (3) SL knowledge
- (4) subject area ('real world') knowledge
- (5) contrastive knowledge

Then Bell (1991: 36) goes on to say '*Add to this the decoding skills of reading and the encoding skills of writing*'. But surely there is no difference, these are not skills that can be added but are included in the previous five, for surely one cannot be said to be able to know a SL, a TL, know about text-types, etc. and not know how to read and write! It is probably more correct to regard Johnson and Whitlock's five kinds of knowledge as *different aspects of reading and writing, to which others may be added as a result of future research*. Bell (1991: 36), still on the same point says,

"We would argue that the knowledge-base applies to all translators, professional or amateur, technical or non-technical, simply because translation is translation whoever does it.

Further, we would question the extent to which the five kinds of knowledge are, in any useful sense, 'distinct'. On the contrary, we see substantial overlaps."

Bell (1991: 37) then goes on to develop his own model. According to him the translator must have:

- (a) semantic knowledge: know how propositions are structured
- (b) syntactic knowledge: know how clauses can be synthesized to carry propositional content and analysed to retrieve the content embedded in them
- (c) pragmatic knowledge: how the clause can be realized in an information-bearing text and the text decomposed into the clause

Bell (1991: 40) envisages a **translator expert system** containing the following kinds of knowledge and skills:

- 1- a knowledge base consisting of:
  - (a) SL knowledge; the syntactic rule systems of the code, its lexicon and semantics and its text-creating systems
  - (b) TL knowledge; equivalent to that in the SL
  - (c) Text-type knowledge
  - (d) Domain knowledge
  - (e) Contrastive knowledge of each of the above
- 2- an inference mechanism which permits:
  - (a) The decoding of texts, i.e. reading and comprehending SL texts
  - (b) The encoding of texts i.e. writing TL texts, e.g. a writer's assistant system which helps the writing.

Bell (1991: 41) reminds us that from a more theoretical standpoint, the expert system and the more general idea of artificial intelligence have profound intellectual implications for the testing out of linguistic theories, particularly those which claim psychological validity.

Communicative Competence, according to Bell, involves the following four points:

- (a) Grammatical Competence
- (b) Sociolinguistic Competence
- (c) Discourse Competence: cohesion in form and coherence in meaning.
- (d) Strategic Competence: the mastery of communication strategies which may be used to improve communication or to compensate for breakdowns (caused by limiting Factors in actual communication or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other components of communicative competence).

Roger Bell (1991: 42) defines translator communicative competence as *the knowledge and ability possessed by the translator which permits him/her to create communicative acts - discourse- which are not only (and not necessarily) grammatical but... socially appropriate*. A commitment to this position makes Bell assert that the translator must possess linguistic competence in both languages and communicative competence in both cultures. R.T. Bell (1991: 43),

"What, after all, are translators doing when they struggle with the text other than coping with 'limiting Factors in actual communication' (typically, ambiguities in the ST) and compensating for 'insufficient competence in one or more of the other components of the communicative competence', i.e. grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse?"

What, too, is the translator-trainer doing other than attempting to reduce the areas in which the trainees are dependent on their strategic competence by extending competence in the other three and making the application of the skills derived from their strategic competence more efficient and effective?"

We have already said that translating involves reading and writing, but it is clear that a translator neither reads nor writes for the mere sake of reading and writing. As Hatim and Mason (1990: 223) say,

"Unlike the ordinary reader, the translator reads in order to produce, decodes in order to re-encode. (...) Inevitably, a translated text reflects the translator's reading."

Bell's model is clearly the product of a linguist. It is interesting to compare it to Hewson and Martin's (1991: 51) below whose general approach is rather the product of translators theorizing on their activity:

- (1) **The cultural equation.** No translation is ever produced without reproducing, initiating, or reformulating a particular conception about translation.
- (2) **Mediation:** no reformulation is conceivable without a reformulator or mediator. He represents a distinctly psycho-socio-cultural stance; in the most extreme cases translations bear the imprint of their translator. The mediator also accounts for a specific capacity that we call translator competence of 3 kinds:
  - (a) Acquired interlinguistic competence
  - (b) Dissimilative competence (reading and writing). This competence can be taught, and constitutes the object of the didactics of translation
  - (c) Transferred competence: translation methods, dictionaries, data banks, and expert systems.

On the nature of the translator, which they call 'Translation Operator', Hewson and Martin (1991: 135) say that he/she may seek to occupy middle ground, but he/she is always anchored -to a greater or lesser extent- in one LC. Occupying the middle ground is an image which allows us to consider the idea of competence.

For Hewson and Martin, this is measured by one's ability to analyse, compare, and convert cultural systems, while respecting both the conflicting forces within one LC, and the interplay of these forces as LCs are brought into contact. This means that the translation operator is constantly working both within the LCs taken separately, and on the comparison and conversion procedures which constitute his activity.

This kind of competence is partly an ability to reflect and question his own role as mediator. This means that he must be aware not just of developing LCs, of developing translation practices, but also the changes brought about in his competence as a result of repeated Translation operations.

On the issue of reading and writing skills, Hewson and Martin (1991: 136) write the following:

"By his very activity, he is constantly going between LCs and creating/recreating links where no specific connection existed before. It follows, then, that the whole process of reading and interpreting the ST is a culture-bound activity which, as far as the translator is concerned, *is carried out in the perspective of the LC2 and of the forthcoming translation*. In practice:

- (1) the text is initially decoded from the LC2 perspective;
- (2) that a degree of LC2-based explanation or commentary is immediately introduced;
- (3) that the TO simply cannot be blindly assimilated to the LC1 reader of the text;
- (4) the TO is not just any foreign reader of the ST, but a reader with a specific motivation."

Most importantly, the translator's attention will be drawn to certain elements which take on a particular importance when considering the text from the TL and target readership perspective. Due to the specific motivation of the translator an exhaustive reading of each text he is confronted with will not always be required, but will allow his vision of the text to be coloured (or predetermined).

An important aspect of the translator as such is his/her **motivation**. The motivations might be economic or otherwise. Conversely, however, as Hewson and Martin (1991: 149) do well to remind us,

"Certain texts have been subjected to what one might call an intense and loving scrutiny, producing what Ladmiral calls a 'hyper-reading' of the original -to the extent that people might well consult a translation of the original. As one can see, therefore, there is no one reading strategy practised by a hypothetical translator, but an ad hoc situation which has to be defined in relation to the parameters governing it."

Interpretation is an important Factor in the reading stage. The extent to which the translator is forced to interpret will depend on a number of Factors: the quality of the ST, gaps between the ST and TT languages and cultures, to name only two. E. Gutt (1991: 164) on the point writes,

"Translation is dependent on the translator's interpretation of the original, or to put it more correctly, on what the translator believes to be the intended interpretation of the original. In all cases where the interpretation of the original is not obvious this opens the possibility of error."

Therefore, difficultu and subjectivity in interpretation is a Restriction. Translation theory should not defend that the translating process be ST-author-centred, or TT-reader-centred, but **translator-centred**. In his conclusions Gutt (1991: 189 - 190) writes;

"Firstly, the translator must be seen and must see himself clearly as a communicator addressing the receptor language audience: whatever his view of translation, even if it is that of a 'phonemic translation' ( . ) This (...) should (...) prevent misunderstandings that arise from the pretense that there is a direct act of communication between the original source and receptor language audience.

Secondly, (...) whatever he does in his translation matters primarily not because it agrees with or violates some principle or theory of translation, but because of the causal interdependence of cognitive environment, stimulus and interpretation.

Thirdly, (...) it will be impossible to give an adequate account of translation *without* reference to the principle of relevance. (...) this proposal entails the claim that translation requires no special mental equipment not used in inferential communication generally. Utterances are translated from one language to another via the comparison of their interpretations.

Fourthly, the choice of a particular approach to translation, such as direct or indirect translation, is not theoretically significant; both kinds of translations are processed by the same principles of communication (...). This implies that there is no *theoretical* necessity for a translator to follow either of the two approaches consistently. (...) unexpected deviations from a given approach (...) are likely to put the communicative success at risk."

Newmark (1982: 5) claims that a translator requires **a knowledge of literary and non-literary textual criticism**, since he has to assess the quality of a text before he decides how to interpret and then translate it. He says that all kinds of false distinctions have been made between literary and technical translation. For Newmark, the target language should be the translator's own, but he offers no proof of why this should be regarded as a universal, objective statement.

According to Newmark (1982: 17), the translator's craft lies in the following points:

- (1) In his command of an exceptionally large vocabulary as well as all syntactic resources - his ability to use them elegantly, flexibly, succinctly. All translation problems finally resolve themselves into problems of how to write well in the target language (we imagine that Newmark is saying this taking for granted that the next two conditions are satisfactorily met).
- (2) The translator as craftsman has to know the foreign language so well that he can determine to what extent the text deviates from the language norms usually used in that topic on that occasion.
- (3) He requires a degree of creative tension between fantasy and common sense: the fantasy for making hypotheses about apparently unintelligible passages, and the common sense for dismissing any unrealistic hypothesis and for eliminating interference and spotting strange acronyms.

We tend to agree with Newmark (1982: 5) when he claims that the translator has to acquire the technique of transferring smoothly between the two basic translation processes: **comprehension**, which may involve interpretation, and **formulation**, which may involve recreation.

Newmark (1982: 123) says that one touchstone of a good translator is his sensitivity to interference, which affects terminology and language, the encyclopaedia as much as it does the dictionary.

"When one is continuously aware of all these pitfalls, one is perhaps on the way to becoming a good translator. On the other hand, a good translator shows neither deliberate opposition nor subservience to interference; its language is uncontaminated by it." (1982: 123)

We think that specialization is one way of preventing interference.

**Rephrasing** Newmark's aspects of interference, we come up with the following nine points:

- (1) 'false friends' / false cognates: collocations or lexemes with similar form in LC1 and LC2, but different meanings.
- (2) true cognates, as above but with the same meaning, deliberately (but unjustifiably) avoided.
- (3) LC1 syntactic structures inappropriately superimposed on LC2
- (4) LC1 word order, inappropriately reproduced. Tempting when there are Restrictions of timing and lip movement in dubbing.
- (5) Interference from third language. A potential trap when translating into Catalan.
- (6) Primary (most frequent) meaning of word interfering with appropriate contextual meaning.
- (7) Stylistic predilections of the translator.
- (8) The primary meaning of a word, interfering with an important secondary meaning, which is also not quite so close to the related word in the TL.
- (9) The translator's idiolect, including his regional and social dialect.

In the area of literary translation, Mallafrè (1991: 131) points out the following requirements for the translator:

"El traductor ha de percebre i ser capaç de valorar els recursos fònics de la LO: ritme, rima, al·literacions, etc., per a comprendre l'estil de l'obra que vol traduir."

#### 4.2.2. TRANSLATOR PERFORMANCE

It has often been said that the theory and the practice of translation should never lose sight of each other. If this is true, then it follows that the theory must develop from an analysis of the translators' various performances. It is obvious that the translator's performance must be assessed by his/her work; likewise, a translation should be assessed as the result of a certain individual's work. Surprisingly, although the first statement is almost universally accepted, as far as the second one is concerned, there has been far too much talk and writing of *the* translation, when the proper expression would have been *this* translation meaning *the translation done by so-and-so regardless of whether we know who did the translation*. The translator's competence is his/her background experience and ability; the translator's performance is the way in which he/she is able to deal with a specific translation; i.e. the ability to recognise the relative importance of all the intervening Factors and Restrictions and establish and account for an adequate set of Priorities that will respond to the goals of each separate translating process. The translator's **performance**, then, will be the ability to devise the most appropriate strategy for a given task in order to produce satisfactory alternatives for a solution or rendering. Like every other aspect of translation, as we have already said, the translator's performance will have to be measured against **the specific purpose and context of the translation**. So, if the translator is working in very difficult conditions, trying to meet an impossible deadline for a ridiculous sum of money, for example, we will have to take these Factors into consideration when it comes to evaluating the standard of performance. If this is so, we would have to include in *translator performance* such Factors as:

- all the material in the translator's reach: dictionaries, CAT, etc.
- available informants and advisors;
- deadlines;
- personal motivation to do the assignment.

These are important variables that cannot be placed under the heading of translation competence, but they do, quite obviously, influence the translator's performance.

To help us explain the arbitrariness and need for Priorities we will resort to Newmark, who writes (1982: 35) "*Most good translations are stamped by the translator's personality more or less firmly.*"

### **The Personal Taste Factor**

Newmark (1982: 102) writes that where a 'straight' translation is not possible, preference between ten or more equally good translated sentences or paragraphs may be a matter of personal taste.

Related to the question of *translator performance*, Newmark (1982: 102) writes the following:

"Note that any replacements by lexical synonyms are further from the sense than the grammatical synonyms. This then becomes a plea for more grammatical dexterity and flexibility, and against lexical licence, in translation practice."

### **4.3. THE ST WRITER AND AUDIENCE**

Newmark (1982: 6) has such great respect for the ST writer that he defines himself as a *sourcerer*, as opposed to *targeteer*.

"A translator must respect good writing scrupulously by accounting for its language, structures and content, whether the piece is scientific or fictional. If the writing is poor it is normally his duty to improve it."

However, this is dangerously bordering on prescriptiveness; we will say that what the translator *must* do is carefully assess the number and nature of ST aspects and items to be considered as Priorities in the process.

#### **Difference in author intention and translator (or TI) intention.**

The translator may not be translating a given text for the same reasons that the ST writer had for writing his/her text, just as when we quote somebody else we may not be using the direct quotation with its original meaning or purpose; Sperber and Wilson (1988: 135), as quoted in Gutt (1991: 161),

"... direct quotations, together with parody, are said to be based ... on resemblances in syntactic and lexical form ... Direct quotations are chosen not for their propositional form but for their superficial linguistic properties."

Newmark introduces the concept of 'authoritative' texts, which is meant to cover great works of literature, philosophy and science, as well as speeches and essays of political and military figures. When a text is considered 'authoritative' it is to be translated more



literally with the intended purpose of letting the ST author speak entirely for himself, so to speak, with as little mediation from the translator as possible. On the other hand in the case of 'anonymous' texts the translator is allowed greater freedom to do whatever is felt necessary to get the message across. One of the many weaknesses of this division between 'authoritative' and 'anonymous' is the practical impossibility of drawing a clear dividing line between the two. Another is the inherent reverence of the word.

More interesting is Newmark's division between standardized and non-standardized language, where standardized expressions are understood to be to a considerable extent glossable. However, discourse analysis adopts a much more useful approach because it is more context-sensitive. Discourse analysis is also very useful when it comes to assessing the relative importance of the ST writer as an identifiable individual in the translation.

"All texts may be regarded by the translator as **an amalgam of standardized and non-standardized language**. (...) For standardized language, there should be only one correct equivalent provided one exists, provided it is used in the same situations by the same kind of person, and that is the 'science' of translation. (...) non-standardized language, language creatively used (...) Here, translation becomes a craft and an art where there are limited choices." Newmark (1982: 16)

There is very rarely only one correct equivalent, even for standardized language, unless Newmark wishes to define standardized language in such narrow terms. If that is the case, then the above words provide an example of a careful definition of intervening Factors for the translating process. Before leaving Newmark in this chapter it is pertinent to remember that he identifies the following Factor related to the ST writer and the translator's performance:

"A successful translation is probably more dependent on the translator's empathy with the writer's thought than on affinity of language and culture." (1982: 54)

On the point of the ST audience, Newmark (1982: 132) reminds us that there does not always have to be one, or we might say that it does not necessarily have to be distinguished from the TT audience as the ST is written for the benefit of both audiences who may be regarded as having the necessary background knowledge in the same degree:

"Problems are simplified when a text is written to be translated, as in some advertising and propaganda material, and the SL reader does not exist."

We will say that when a potential problem is simplified it is a Reversed Restriction.

#### 4.4. THE TT AUDIENCE

Newmark (1982: 51) at times seems very worried that the TT audience will eventually take over as the overriding Factor in all translating processes:

"I am writing against the increasing assumption that *all* translating is (nothing but) communicating, where the less effort expected of the reader, the better."

The TT audience is a very important Factor indeed, but as a Factor it is also a variable and its importance is relative and must be weighed against all the other Factors for each new translation. There are cases of translators who deliberately make their translations difficult to read by including certain lexical items and allusions, because *readability* is not one of their Higher-order Priorities. They mean the reader to stop and look words up in the dictionary or encyclopaedia. And a translator is surely in his/her right to produce a translation of this sort as long as the method is consistent and coherent.

Whatever the case, the TT audience cannot be completely ignored because it is the main driving force behind the translation. What is needed is a clear understanding that most translations are not written for everybody or anybody so the translator will probably have a mental picture of a prototypical reader while doing the translation. The translator can then decide how easy he/she is going to make it for the reader and/or what kind of response is intended. The translator also needs relevant information on the profile of the prototypical ST reader to know the differences and similarities between the two readerships.

The following statement by Hewson and Martin (1991: 121) is true for all the participants of the translation, as readers:

"The 'perfect' transference is not attainable because, if for no other reasons, EACH READER will bring a particular set of criteria."

Nida (1988: 301), as in Ernst Gutt (1991: 174), points out that readability is not always a Priority,

"One of the greatest surprises for Bible translators is to find that a perfectly intelligible translation of the Scriptures may not be acceptable (...) In fact, many people prefer a translation of the Scriptures which they only partially understand. For example, the archaic and obscure words and grammatical forms of the King James Version seem to many people to fit the esoteric nature of the contents and to lend authority to the text."

Frequently, then, a more important Factor than readability is readership expectations.

Gutt (1991: 181) talks of the TT audience in the following terms:

'To determine what is close enough resemblance [equivalence] in relevant aspects [according to Priorities], the translator needs to look at both the likely benefits, that is, the contextual effects [TT audience Factors], and also at the processing effort involved for the audience [Restrictions].

Two radically different situations are presented here from E. Gutt:

(1)

'In many cases and especially when addressing a wide or varied audience, the translator will do well to make his intentions explicit. Thus the practice of some translators to explain their 'translation principles' in a foreword makes good sense." (1991: 183)

(2)

"translations can be, and often are, read with enjoyment on the audience's part *without* them realizing that they are, in fact, reading a translation rather than an original." (1991: 187)

Some audiences seem much more critical of dubbed versions of feature films (consequently taking a hostile attitude towards them) than TV serials.

Newmark (1982: 133):

"The success of the translation with a strong excitatory function can be crudely assessed by its practical effect on the reader (e.g. did he buy the product? did he keep off the grass?) but this may not be possible."

For the assessment of success in TV there are the well-known popularity ratings, which is a fundamentally important Factor for the survival of any television programme. There is no doubt that truly outstanding quality only too often plays second suit to popularity ratings.

## Chapter Five

### The Contextual Factors

The concept of context has been a crucial contribution towards making progress in theories on translation. It is important to constantly remember that translating does not take place in a vacuum. Hence, the limitation behind any prescriptive theory. In the previous Chapter we discussed the participants of the translation. In the following Chapter we will look at the language and communication Factors involved in translating. All these Factors help to make up the context in which the process is carried out, produced and received. The aforementioned Factors have been considered important enough to merit chapters of their own, so in this chapter we are going to look at other Factors that make up the context of the translation along with the participants, the languages and aspects of communication. Here we understand *context* as every relevant aspect that has a bearing on the ST (and on the TT in its respective case), but is not made explicit in the ST for the translator or in the TT for the TT audience. Thus, **we will distinguish between textual Factors and contextual (extratextual) Factors** although we will also acknowledge the existence of a very close interrelationship between the two, the most important relationship possibly being that of dependence of the textual Factors on the contextual Factors for their meaning and relevance.

The existence of contextual Factors as being important and variable at the same time explains much of need for different renderings of a single ST according to changes in one or more aspects of the context in which the TT is to be received. Likewise, a careful study, a wide experience and a complete understanding of the contextual Factors involved

in the making of the ST are essential for an adequate reading of the ST in order to properly understand its original relevance.

Ernst Gutt (1991: 150) says that contextual effects are defined as resulting from the inferential combination of utterance and context, and that (p. 189) "*As far as solutions are concerned, they are determined by context-specific considerations of relevance.*"

## **5.1. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS**

The Contextual Factors that can be operative in a given translation process are varied and numerous. Here, as in the case of the other Factors we do not aim at presenting a comprehensive itemized list of Factors; we simply intend to make a point of how important they are. It should then be inferred that any theory that does not take into consideration all of the relevant aspects of context during the communicative process of translating is not giving the whole picture. We stress here the importance of professional, social, technical and educational Factors as being part of the context in which the translation as a communicative act takes place.

### **5.1.1. PROFESSIONAL FACTORS**

Hewson and Martin (1991: 163) stress the importance of the material conditions

"Translation can be placed within a socio-economic framework which at times can be the determining factor in the production of a TT."

The professional aspects include the ideas that all the various participants have of translation, what it involves and what it is worth. It is clear that one of the Restrictions that has fostered so many bad translations has been the degree to which translating as a profession and a vocation has been so considerably underrated and either taken for granted or considered some kind of evil, necessary or otherwise. The consequences of this have been that translators have been underpaid and/or people without the right qualifications have been hired to do the job. There is a glaring contrast between what is theoretically demanded of translators (see *translator competence*), and the consideration many of their employers and clients have of them. Translators' fees actually vary enormously, depending on a combination of a number of Factors (like all the other aspects of translation) such as:

- (1) country
- (2) employer
- (3) the relationship between the SL and the TL
- (4) whether the text is considered technical or 'general'
- (5) availability of other translators with similar skills

In short, the situation is close to a description of a free market model; it mostly depends on what is on offer and what is in demand. However, there have been some improvements, especially in the areas of translator training schools. Translators are rarely paid more for producing better work; they are simply not hired again if the work is below standard, as long as the employer can afford to do without them and hire others.

Here is an interesting observation by J. Mallafrè (1991: 53) regarding the social appreciation of professional and vocational translation:

"Com l'actor que adopta la pell del personatge, sota la qual s'esborra la pròpia personalitat, l'adaptació a l'estil dels altres escriptors pot assecar la vena de la creació original. «I tu que tradueixes, no escrius res?» és la pregunta adreçada a qui es dedica a una tasca que bàsicament serveix la d'un altre, esborrant la pròpia possible. Si ens posem «lírics», sempre ens queda el recurs de pensar que això és un acte de servei: de fet, és preferible que el lector conegui una obra d'altri, de qualitat garantida, que la possible mediocritat de la nostra."

It is frustrating to see how in actual practice translation is regarded as a second rate profession or writing activity, but in theory the translator is expected to produce "perfect" translations when there are very few professionals who do "perfect" work of any kind. Here is an enlightening description of how Mallafrè went about working on one of his translations. This sort of description is extremely rare. Moreover, the sort of working plan described would be materially impossible for many translators who have to meet a deadline that is just around the corner:

"Aquesta adaptació a la llengua del lector català em feia apuntar a l'esborrany diverses solucions possibles, entre les quals després hauria de triar, i no solament diverses solucions adequades a la traducció, sinó associacions diverses. Vaig acabar fent fitxes de tot aquest llenguatge que se m'acudia, quan es tractava de l'al·lusió a un joc infantil, a un conte, a una frase revessa, a determinades oracions o frases històriques, que em permetria de recórrer-hi quan en necessités alguna per a la traducció, i que em van furnir un material no directament utilitzable, però no per això menys ric per un aprofundiment d'una sistematització traductora que em podia ser útil. També comptava amb llibres, diccionaris i enciclopèdies en català que em permetien trobar moltes solucions. (...) I quan no ho recordava, sabia qui m'ho podria dir." Mallafrè (1991: 142)

### 5.1.2. SOCIAL FACTORS

Social Factors include such aspects as social values, political views, the social importance of religion and religious values, the status of the SL, the LC1 and SL-speaking countries and societies for the TT audience, the status of the ST writer and translator if they are not 'anonymous'; the social and political implications, allusions, parallelisms and conclusions that may emanate from the translation for a given target audience; covert and overt censorship. In the specific case of translating TV comedy, it is important to look into the social role of television as mass media and a means to political and financial ends and the possible existence of a 'national sense of humour', and if it exists its basic characteristics. Comparatively, we need to ask what is the degree of 'social' overlap between the ST and TT communities? Needless to say sociology and sociolinguistics can help the translation theorist tremendously on this issue.

### 5.1.3. TECHNICAL FACTORS

Technical Factors in translation, as in most other walks of life, are gaining importance all the time, even to the point that they are changing some of the basic tools and other features of the translator's craft, so much so that this aspect of translation merits a specific in-depth study of its own.

- (1) **Technical means** such as computer aids like word-processing programmes, computerized dictionaries, encyclopaedias and glossaries, data-banks, on-line consulting; all of which is known as computer assisted translation.
- (2) **The relationship between machine translation and human translation**, which at the theoretical level, at least, should be one of interdependency and exchange of information.
- (3) **Technical devices and developments** have to be considered for special kinds of translation such as simultaneous interpreting, dubbing, subtitling and others.

#### 5.1.4. EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

Education is an important aspect that will help to define *all* of the participants of the communication act of translation. Here are a couple of examples:

- (1) The level of education and expertise required for a full understanding and/or proper enjoyment of the TT, as compared to the actual knowledge and level of education of the TT audience.
- (2) Very often translation is the principal means of education for certain communities and/or certain subject-matters.

Some authors understand contextual Factors as being almost entirely a question of explaining the cultural Factor, others define it as the situation. Here are three examples from Hatim and Mason (1990);

"Malinowski believed **the cultural context** to be crucial in the interpretation of the message, taking in a variety of factors ranging from the ritualistic, to the most practical aspects of day-to-day existence." (p. 36)

"Firth (1951) proposes a number of levels of meaning, each of which has its own contribution to make and confronts the translator with particular problems: phonological, grammatical, collocational and **situational**. It is in terms of these levels of meaning that, for Firth, the limits of translatability are to be found." (p. 36)

"Under the influence of Firth and Malinowski, description of **communicative events** is now fairly widely recognised as a proper goal of linguistic analysis. (...) Translators, for their part, have long been aware of the role of **situational factors** (source, status, client, use to be made of translation, etc.); it was only in linguistics that the realization was slow to come about." (p. 38)<sup>1</sup>

However, the term *culture* (and even *situation*) is rather vague and needs to be looked at more closely, hence the need for a division as the one presented above. Discourse analysis and sociolinguistics have worked hard at establishing relationships between context and text, and translation studies have certainly benefited from many of their discoveries. However, it seems to go against the multidisciplinary nature of translation studies to go as far as to say that discourse analysis and sociolinguistics in their present state can provide the answers to all of the translator's problems. This is why I have endeavoured to propose

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<sup>1</sup> Bold-type in all three excerpts is mine.



a model that will allow the incorporation of new contributions and discoveries that may help to draw a clearer picture of translation Factors.

## 5.2. CONTEXT AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

We do not intend to go into the details of discourse analysis, but merely make a brief outline of some important Factors in text production and comprehension, since they have a bearing on translating. To this end we will take Hatim and Mason's model (1990). Hatim and Mason distinguish between **use-related variation** (register) and **user-related variation** (dialect).

### 5.2.1. DIALECTS

Hatim and Mason (1990) say that an awareness of geographical variation, and of the ideological and political implications that this Factor may have, is essential for translators and interpreters. Accent, for example, is one of the more recognisable features of geographical variation and is often a source of problems. They provide the example of a controversy in Scotland some years ago over the issue of Scottish accents in representing the speech of Russian peasants in TV dramatization of a foreign play:

"The inference was allowed that a Scottish accent might somehow be associated with low status, something which, no doubt, was not intended. Like producers and directors, translators have to be constantly alert to the social implications of their decisions. The representation in a ST of a particular dialect creates an inescapable problem: which TL dialect to use? (...) The difficulty of achieving dialectal equivalence in translation will be apparent to anyone who has translated for the stage. Rendering ST dialect by TL standard has the disadvantage of LOSING THE SPECIAL EFFECT INTENDED in the ST, while rendering dialect by dialect runs the risk of creating UNINTENDED EFFECTS." (1990: 40)

In understanding and describing standards/non-standards, it is important to take into consideration functional variation and the way this finds expression in language. Certain accents or other such features of dialects may be of considerable importance in one text and be merely coincidental in another. Moreover, there are different *kinds* of importance as well as different *degrees* of importance, for accent as for many other operative Factors, so there can be no *a priori* procedural recipe for dealing with these Factors.

An example of this sort of problem could be seen in the TV3 version of *The Singing Detective* series, where the Welsh accent was rendered as a Majorcan dialect. It is

practically the only major example of an attempt to provide some sort of dialectal equivalence. Its relative success only proves that many solutions are accepted only after a long period of habituation by the receptors and critics, rather than by any objective parameters of correctness. A possible solution is to create artificial dialects that sound as if they should be some real nonstandard variety of the language but actually are not. Here the translator can play on the perceptual Factors that are involved rather than real sociolinguistic faithfulness. An example of how this procedure can actually work can be seen in how people 'put on' accents of foreigners speaking their own language. The differences the natives actually perceive are not always phonetically accurate. Another case for the adoption of such a solution is that many novelists (e.g. George Orwell in *1984* and Anthony Burgess in *A Clockwork Orange*) have made up dialects and idiolects to fit their own convenience, for functional purposes.

"Code switching is not random and the translator or interpreter, like all language users, must be able to recognise the question of 'identity' involved. (...) In translating *Pygmalion* into Arabic the equivalence will be established functionally. The aim<sup>1</sup> will be to bring out the users' social/linguistic 'stigma', not necessarily by opting for a particular regional variety but by modifying the standard itself. The user's status may have to be reflected not primarily through phonological features but through non-standard handling of the grammar or deliberate variation in the lexis of the TL." Hatim and Mason (1990: 42)

**Idiolect** as an extreme case of dialect should be looked at in very similar terms. What the translator has to be aware of is whether or not there is systematic variation and whether this is related to the purpose of the utterance. Often a difficult task is that of distinguishing stylistic features from idiolect.

We agree entirely with the following lines from Mallfrè (1991: 63):

"Però en certes traduccions - penso en allò que em proposava a les meves de *Tom Jones* o de la *Utopia*, i fins i tot en certes parts de *l'Ulisses* - cal fer servir els recursos que permetin crear la il·lusió d'arcaic o exòtic que resulti equivalent, amb plausibilitat, amb versemblança, més que amb un paral·lisme de vegades impossible."

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. a Priority.



### 5.2.2. REGISTER

On the notion of register Hatim and Mason say (1990: 39) that the following Factors determine variation in language use:

- (1) the medium
- (2) formal patterning
- (3) situational significance.

They (1990: 45) define register as variation according to use, what people do with their language; situational conventions of linguistic utterances; significant combinations of lexical and grammatical features. Users' awareness of conventional situation types facilitates effective communication.

Register can subsequently be subdivided into the aspects of field, mode, channel and tenor of discourse (1990: 48-51):

**Field of Discourse;** level of technicality; the social function of the text. Field is not the same as subject-matter; it is only when subject matter is highly predictable in a given situation or when it is constitutive of a given social activity that we can legitimately recognise a close link between field and subject matter.

**Mode of Discourse;** the medium of the language activity, basically distinguishing **s p e e c h** and **w r i t i n g** and the various permutations on such a distinction.

**Channel ;** as the vehicle through which communication takes place, is an important aspect of mode. It transcends speech vs writing to include other communicative occurrences such as the telephone conversation, the essay, the business letter, etc. Likewise, when audiovisual texts such as films and television productions are subtitled or dubbed certain phonological features of mode have to be represented in writing. The mode shift can create problems, such as how to represent in writing the slurred speech of a drunkard. The area is worthy of greater attention than it has so far received.

**Tenor of Discourse;** tenor relays the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. In addition to personal tenor, Gregory and Carroll (1978: 53) suggest that there is a further kind of tenor, namely **f u n c t i o n a l t e n o r**: the category used to describe what language is being used for in the situation. Is the speaker trying to persuade? to exhort? to discipline? The values accruing from the three dimensions of language use (field, mode, tenor) help us define and identify registers. The three variables are interdependent.

It is important to perceive the multifunctional nature of texts. There are shifts of register within texts in the same way they can combine more than one function of language (informative, expressive, vocative, etc). This kind of fluctuation in one and the same text is of crucial importance in translating.

Hatim and Mason (1990: 53) point out the existence of a Restriction regarding registers. The Restriction in question refers to the purpose of the communication. One basic feature of such registers is the predictable and limited number of formal items and patterns in use within a fairly well-defined domain of language activity. MT has been mostly successful in the area of restricted registers. As Gregory and Carroll say (1978: 68),

"The more typical or stereotyped the situation, the more restricted will be the range of options from which choices in the field, mode and tenor can be made . . ."

Thus, whereas our concept of register is a fairly adequate device for predicting language use in restricted domains, it becomes less powerful in unrestricted areas. Here, other Factors are at work which translators need to respond to.

Here is a summary of how context influences the structure of texts, by Hatim and Mason (1990: 169):

<b>Communicative dimension</b> (transaction)	
field	mode tenor
<b>Pragmatic dimension</b> (action)	
intentionality	implicature
speech act sequence	inference
<b>Semiotic dimension</b> (interaction)	
intertextuality signs	discourses
genres	texts

Another potential Factor is the existence of other translations whose influence can also constitute a stylistic and normative Restriction on the TT.

### 5.3. CULTURAL FACTORS

"La complicitat cultural és element bàsic per a la cohesió de grup, en diversos plans i extensions. No cal dir que les diverses llengües tenen les seves claus autòctones." Mallfrè (1991: 99)

A proper understanding of the importance of the cultural Factors in translating (and many other human and social activities) has been fully recognised by recent theories in translation, language studies and communication. The cultural Factor, among other things, helps to explain the arbitrary nature of both languages and translation. All of the most recent specialized literature has something to say or add to the cultural Factor. Many agree that a recurrent Priority in translation is what they call *cultural equivalence*. On the importance of the cultural Factor Hewson and Martin (1991: 38) write the following,

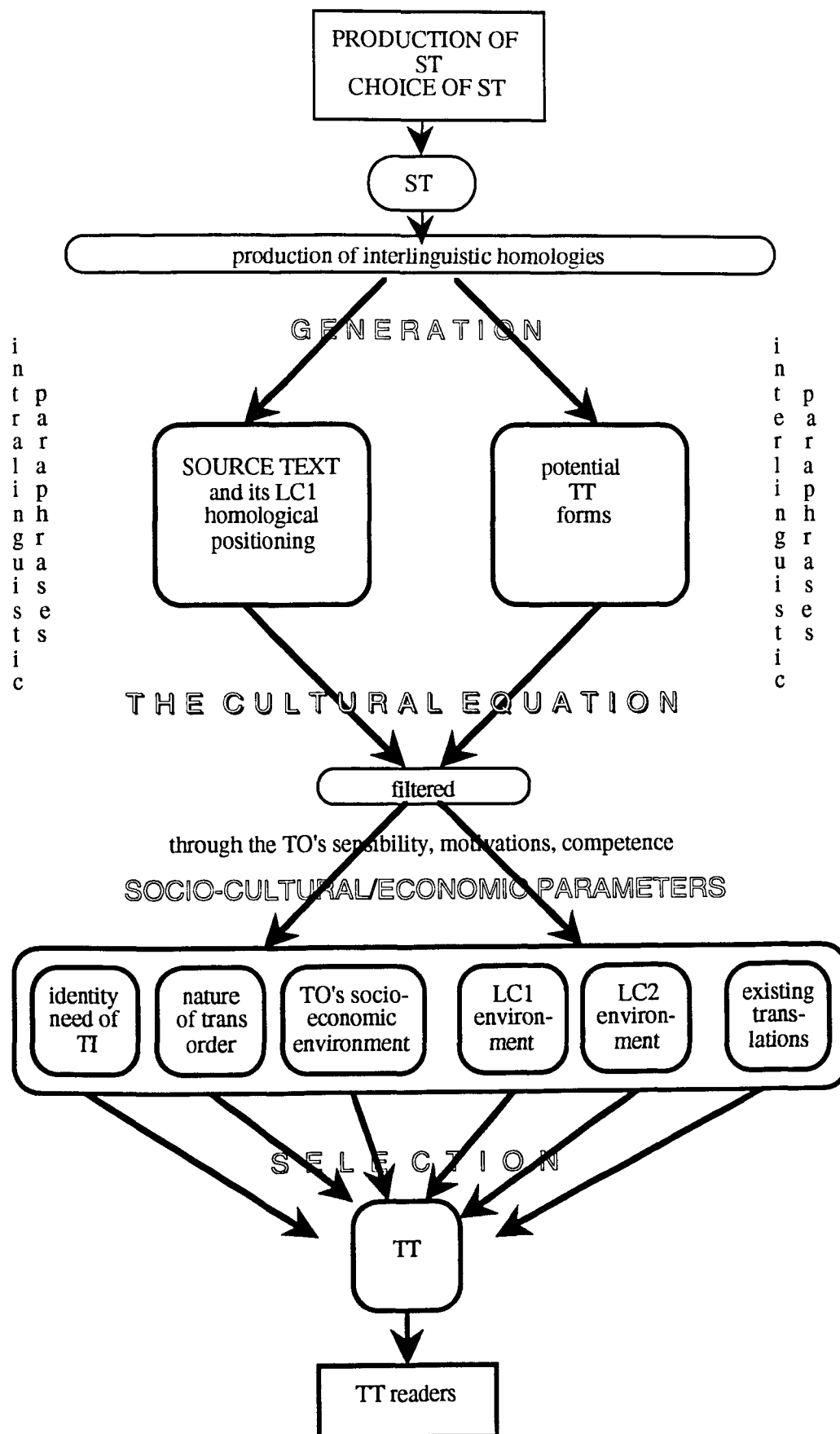
"The translator can only contribute to improving the conciliation of LCs by refining his or her own perception of cultural factors, not in any way by eschewing personal or idiosyncratic preoccupations."

Hewson and Martin (1991: 112) further discuss the importance and complexity of the question in terms that are in complete agreement with the outlook and intention of this thesis. They say that translation theory is often based on an unscientific notion of an LC 'gap' which the translator must 'bridge'. They redefine what might have been thought of as a 'gap' first of all as a 'relationship' -i.e. the bringing together of two or more LCs through the work of a translator- and then as an 'equation', or complex of variable Factors which must all be defined and redefined for each new translation undertaken. What is not so clear for them is that a cultural relationship is never a limited and stable reality, but a complex of Factors dependent first and foremost on the communication circuit being instigated by the translator. This goes beyond what is called traditionally 'contextualization', or in broader terms 'co-textualization', and is seen to include every element going from the genesis of a text to the foreseen or actual receivers in LC2. They find that it is enough to stress that their whole focus constantly includes as wide a range of elements as possible<sup>1</sup>, and thus transcends both the limitations of *general* theories advocating transfers between different LCs, and, of course, the restrictive vision of the LC 'gap'. Thus if, in the first case, translation is possible as a principle, nothing is said about the variables that have to be taken into account, and in the second, the translator is faced with both an insurmountable and *unreferenced* chasm which he or she will try to 'cross' as best as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> What we call Factors here.

The articulation of the Variational approach, according to Hewson and Martin (1991: 183)



#### 5.4. LC1 INFLUENCES V. LC2 INFLUENCES <sup>1</sup>

LC1 influences include cultural elements mirroring the unique structure of each system of references. Two distinct levels of untranslatability can be identified

- (1) The literal one, "Public School" produces the opposite image when translated.
- (2) The LC2 readership level, where an assumption is made of knowledge about the LC1.

Hewson and Martin say that it would be wrong to assume that there exists a homogeneous and defined 'British' culture to which we could unflinchingly refer on all occasions. Distinctions must be drawn on every possible level, whether it be regional, social class, professional, political, sexual, etc. The lexical item 'tea' designates different realities depending on geographical area (a beverage, a light meal, dinner, or supper), social class (with all the different qualities and blends of tea available), etc. They conclude, then, that **the very statements about the genius, etc. of a culture need to be finely tuned in relation to each text translated**: that is to say that the Factors that are operative in each case are variables and need to be defined every time. In other words, 'culture' is not some homogeneous eternal truth, but a specific collection of features which have to be minutely examined in each Translation situation. On another level it can be argued that certain cultures (or cultural traits) go beyond national borders, as in the case of similar languages or related languages (in this case we would be talking of Reversed Restrictions). This can, by stretching the imagination, be extended to comparable political and economic systems, enabling 'direct' transfers to be made in certain contexts. This is further complicated by multilingual and multicultural countries. On this point Hewson and Martin (1991: 124) conclude,

"In short, 'culture' is of little interest to us as a general concept, but must always be related to the Translation situation under study, that is the global communication process."

They also say on the same page that the lexical items reflecting a specific plane of extralinguistic reality is actually a subcategory of the cultural plane; and on the question of culturally identifiable and stable connotations that if connotations are thought by some to belong to the genius of a language, then it should be said that:

- (1) Their stability is only at best relative, and each text will 'vibrate' in a specific way according to the communication situation in which it is being made to function; and

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<sup>1</sup> According to Hewson and Martin (1991: 121)

- (2) Each language possesses its own 'genius', which the translator can exploit at will.

In the matter of the cultural equation, Hewson and Martin (1991: 131) conclude that the translator must bring together and fully define the two separate levels (SL culture and TL culture influences) for each translation undertaken, in order not to fall into the trap of highlighting one particular element, and thus distorting the overall balance of Factors to be taken into account. They reiterate their claim, as we do, that the cultural equation should be an essential part of translation theory and practice alike.

It is not enough just to think of a Translator as being SL or TL influenced (*sourcerer* or *targeteer* in Newmark's terminology); the very richness of all the intermediate positions between the two is such that he/she must redefine his/her own position both for a text as a whole, and for each individual component of that text.

The tension induced between two languages and their respective cultures in translation should not be considered in terms of a language and cultural 'gap', but to use Hewson and Martin's words, "*as highly fertile ground to be reassessed by each translator for each translation.*"

Ernst Gutt talks of this 'gap' in terms of *secondary communication situations*; and on the problem of secondary communication situations he (1991: 73-78) says that for communication to be successful the text or utterance produced must be inferentially combined with the right (that is, speaker-envisaged) contextual assumptions. He calls communication situations where this condition is fulfilled *primary communication situations*. However, he writes, it can happen (for various reasons) that in interpreting a text an audience may fail to use the contextual assumptions intended by the communicator and perhaps use others instead. This, we think, may explain the difficulty in translating culture-bound expressions and texts, including culture-bound jokes. He refers to such situations as *secondary communication situations*, and in most cases they will lead to misinterpretations of any aspect of interpretation that is dependent on context. Following Gutt we have:

- (1) Context determines the disambiguation of linguistically ambiguous expressions: wrong contextual assumptions can lead to the choice of the wrong semantic representation of such expressions.
- (2) Context is usually needed to determine the propositional form of an utterance.
- (3) Context is needed to determine whether a propositional form is intended as an explicature, or whether it serves only to convey implicatures.
- (4) Context is needed to derive the implicatures of an utterance. Use of the wrong context can lead to the derivation of implicatures not intended - or it can cause intended implicatures to be missed.



There is a wide range of secondary communication situations, and it comes as no surprise that translation, too, can find itself in secondary communication situations. Having understood the nature of the problem of secondary communication, the next question for the translation theorist, according to Gutt, is what should or could be done about such losses in translation. We propose the setting up of a system of Priorities that will be realistically attainable in relation to the Restrictions and other relevant Factors of each text as communication act. Gutt also acknowledges the need to accept variance within translation:

"It<sup>1</sup> may be achievable in primary or near-primary communication situations, but it seems unrealistic for secondary communication situations with significant differences in cognitive environment, such as are usually encountered when translating biblical texts for present day readers." Ernst Gutt (1991: 78)

Many other examples easily come to mind such as the problems and Factors that must surely be involved in translating British TV situation-comedies for a rural Vietnamese audience. Gutt (1991: 90) thinks that it is difficult to see how a translator could effectively prevent the receptor language audience from bringing all their particular cultural assumptions to bear on the interpretation of the TT, especially when a number of points in the text seem to corroborate the misinterpretation. Note that the problem here is not of what is said or how it is said - the problem is that the events reported in some stories or other texts readily combine with a number of highly accessible contextual assumptions that result in a **highly plausible, though mistaken, interpretation for the receptor language audience**. This indeed would result in a translating process with serious Restrictions imposed on it. In Gutt (1991: 92) we also find Dye's 'principle of personal relevance': "*the degree to which the receptor language audience was able to see the relevance of the translated texts to their lives.*"

If there is a lack of adequate contextual effects this may give the TT audience the impression that the text is irrelevant to them, and a natural reaction to irrelevance is termination of the communicative process: in other words, the receptor puts the translation aside. There is probably no greater threat to a translation approach committed to communication than such a complete breakdown.

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<sup>1</sup> A high degree of equivalence of response, as proposed in Nida and Taber (1969: 24)