**Міністерство освіти і науки України**

**UKRAJNA OKTATÁSI ÉS TUDOMÁNYOS MINISZTÉRIUMA**

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**План-конспект занять з дисципліни /**

**Óravázlat**

**Теорія перекладу/ A fordítás elmélete**

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**Лекція № 1**

**Тема: Equivalence at word level**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 4

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. The word in different languages
2. Lexical meaning
3. The problem of non-equivalence

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

**On words and morphemes**

Bauer, Laurie (2001) *Morphological Productivity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Chapter 1: ‘What’s in a Word?’.

Fawcett, Peter (1997) *Translation and Language*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Chapter 2: ‘Sub-Word Components’.

Katamba, Francis (1993) *Morphology*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Katamba, Francis (1994) *English Words*, London: Routledge.

Palmer, Frank Robert (1976) *Semantics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4, section 4.4: ‘The Word’.

**On lexical meaning and semantic ﬁ elds**

Bolinger, Dwight and Donald Sears (1968) *Aspects of Language*.Chapter 6: ‘Meaning’.

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Cruse, D. A. (1986) *Lexical Semantics*,Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 12: ‘Synonymy’, sections 12.1 and 12.2.

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Palmer, Frank Robert (1976) *Semantics*.Chapter 4: ‘Lexical Semantics: Fields and Collo- cation’, sections 4.1–4.3.

**On dialect and register**

Assis Rosa, Alexandra (2001) ‘Features of Oral and Written Communication in Subtitling’, in Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb (eds) *(Multi)Media Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 213–221.

Findlay, Bill (2000) ‘Translating Standard into Dialect: Missing the Target?’, in Carole-Anne Upton (ed.) *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 35-46.

Hale, Sandra (1997) ‘The Treatment of Register Variation in Court Interpreting’, *The Trans- lator* 3(1): 39–54.

Hatim, Basil and Ian Mason (1990) *Discourse and the Translator*, London: Longman.

Chapter 3: ‘Context in Translating: Register Analysis’.

Leppihalme, Ritva (2000) ‘The Two Faces of Standardization: On the Translation of Region- alisms in Literary Dialogue’, *The Translator* 6(2): 247–269.

Miller, Katrina R. and Vernon McCay (2001) ‘Linguistic Diversity in Deaf Defendants and Due Process Rights’, *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 6(3): 226–234.

Pettit, Zoë (2005) ‘Translating Register, Style and Tone in Dubbing and Subtitling’, *JosTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation* 4. Available at www.jostrans.org/issue04/art\_ pettit.php.

Queen, Robin (2004) ‘“Du hast jar keine Ahnung”: African American English Dubbed into German’, *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8(4): 515–537; reprinted in Mona Baker (ed.) (2009) *Translation Studies*, Volume III, London: Routledge, 169–192.

**On the concept of equivalence**

Hatim, Basil (2001) *Teaching and Researching Translation*, Harlow: Pearson Education.

Chapter 2: ‘From Linguistic Systems to Cultures in Contact’, and Chapter 3: ‘Equiva- lence: Pragmatic and Textual Criteria’.

Kenny, Dorothy (2009) ‘Equivalence’, in Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (eds) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, London: Routledge, 96–99.

Munday, Jeremy (2001) *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, London: Routledge. Chapter 3; ‘Equivalence and Equivalent Effect’.

**On non-equivalence and translation strategies**

Barnwell, Katherine (1974) *Introduction to Semantics and Translation*, High Wycombe: Summer Institute of Linguistics. Chapter 9: ‘Transferring Lexical Meaning from One Language to Another’.

Beekman, John and John Callow (1974) *Translating the Word of God*, Michigan: Zondervan.

Chapters 12 and 13: ‘Lexical Equivalence across Languages’.

Chesterman, Andrew (1997) *Memes of Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Chapter 4: ‘Translation Strategies’, section 4.2: ‘A Classiﬁ cation’; pages 92–112.

Li, Chris Wen-Chao (2007) ‘Foreign Names into Native Tongues: How to Transfer Sound between Languages – Transliteration, Phonological Translation, Nativization, and Impli- cations for Translation Theory’, *Target* 19(1): 45–68.

Pedersen, Jan **(**2007) ‘Cultural Interchangeability: The Effects of Substituting Cultural References in Subtitling’, *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 15(1): 30–48.

Tortoriello, Adriana (2006) ‘Funny and Educational Across Cultures: Subtitling Winnie the Pooh into Italian’, *JosTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation* 6. Available at www. jostrans.org/issue06/art\_tortoriello.php.

**Текст лекції:**

**1.1 THE WORD IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES**

**1.1.1 What is a word?**

As translators, we are primarily concerned with communicating the overall meaning of a stretch of language. To achieve this, we need to start by decoding the units and structures which carry that meaning. The smallest unit which we would expect to possess individual meaning is the **word**. Deﬁ ned loosely, the **word** is ‘the smallest unit of language that can be used by itself’ (Bolinger and Sears 1968:43).1 For our present purposes, we can deﬁ ne the **written word** with more precision as any sequence of letters with an orthographic space on either side.

Many of us think of the word as the basic meaningful element in a language.

This is not strictly accurate. Meaning can be carried by units smaller than the word (see 2.1.3 below). More often, however, it is carried by units much more complex than the single word and by various structures and linguistic devices. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. For the moment, we will content

ourselves with single words as a starting point before we move on to more complex linguistic units.

**1.1.2 Is there a one-to-one relationship between word and meaning?**

If you consider a word such as *rebuild*, you will note that there are two distinct elements of meaning in it: *re* and *build*, that is ‘to build again’. The same applies to *disbelieve*, which may be paraphrased as ‘not to believe’. Elements of meaning which are represented by several orthographic words in one language, say English, may be represented by one orthographic word in another, and vice versa. For instance, *tennis player* is written as one word in Turkish: *tenisçi*; *if it is cheap* as one word in Japanese: *yasukattara*; but the verb *type* is rendered by three words in Spanish: *pasar a maquina*. This suggests that there is no one-to-one corre- spondence between orthographic words and elements of meaning within or across languages.

**1.1.3 Introducing morphemes**

In order to isolate elements of meaning in words and deal with them more effec- tively, some linguists have suggested the term **morpheme** to describe the minimal formal element of meaning in language, as distinct from **word**, which may or may not contain several elements of meaning. Thus, an important difference between morphemes and words is that a morpheme cannot contain more than one element of meaning and cannot be further analysed.

To take an example from English, *inconceivable* is written as one word but consists of three morphemes: *in*,meaning ‘not’, *conceive* meaning ‘think of or imagine’, and *able* meaning ‘able to be, ﬁ t to be’. A suitable paraphrase for *incon- ceivable* would then be ‘cannot be conceived/imagined’. Some morphemes have grammatical functions such as marking plurality (*fund****s***), gender (*manager****ess***) and tense (*consider****ed***). Others change the class of the word, for instance from verb to adjective (*like*: *like****able***), or add a speciﬁ c element of meaning such as negation to it (***un****happy*). Some words consist of one morpheme: *need*, *fast*.Morphemes do not always have such clearly deﬁ ned boundaries, however. We can identify two distinct morphemes in *girls*: *girl* + *s,* but we cannot do the same with *men*,where the two morphemes ‘man’ and ‘plural’ are, as it were, fused together. An orthographic word may therefore contain more than one formal element of meaning, but the bound- aries of such elements are not always clearly marked on the surface.

The above theoretical distinction between words and morphemes attempts, by and large, to account for elements of meaning which are expressed on the surface. It does not, however, attempt to break down each morpheme or word into further components of meaning, for instance, ‘male’ + ‘adult’ + ‘human’ for the word *man*.Furthermore, it does not offer a model for analysing different types of meaning in words and utterances. In the following section, we will be looking at

ways of analysing lexical meaning which will not speciﬁ cally draw on the distinction between words and morphemes. It is nevertheless important to keep this distinction clearly in mind because it can be useful in translation, particularly in dealing with neologisms in the source language (see section on common problems of non- equivalence below, item (i)).

**1.2 LEXICAL MEANING**

every word (lexical unit) has … something that is individual, that makes it different from any other word. And it is just the lexical meaning which is the most outstanding individual property of the word.

*(Zgusta 1971:67)*

The **lexical meaning** of a word or lexical unit may be thought of as the speciﬁ c value it has in a particular linguistic system and the ‘personality’ it acquires through usage within that system. It is rarely possible to analyse a word, pattern or structure into distinct components of meaning; the way in which language works is much too complex to allow that. Nevertheless, it is sometimes useful to play down the complex- ities of language temporarily in order both to appreciate them and to be able to handle them better in the long run. With this aim in mind, we will now brieﬂ y discuss a model for analysing the components of lexical meaning. This model is largely derived from Cruse (1986), but the description of **register** (2.2.3 below) also draws on Halliday (1978). For alternative models of lexical meaning see Zgusta (1971: Chapter 1) and Leech (1974: Chapter 2).

According to Cruse, we can distinguish four main types of meaning in words and utterances (utterances being stretches of written or spoken text): **propositional meaning**, **expressive meaning**, **presupposed meaning** and **evoked meaning**.

**1.2.1 Propositional vs expressive meaning**

The **propositional meaning** of a word or an utterance arises from the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world, as conceived by the speakers of the particular language to which the word or utterance belongs. It is this type of meaning that provides the basis on which we can judge an utterance as true or false. For instance, the propositional meaning of *shirt* is ‘a piece of clothing worn on the upper part of the body’. It would be inaccurate to use *shirt*,under normal circumstances, to refer to a piece of clothing worn on the foot, such as *socks.* When a translation is described as ‘inaccurate’, it is often the propositional meaning that is being called into question.

**Expressive meaning** cannot be judged as true or false. This is because expressive meaning relates to the speaker’s2 feelings or attitude rather than to what words and utterances refer to. The difference between *Don’t complain* and *Don’t whinge* does not lie in their propositional meanings but in the expressiveness of

*whinge*,which suggests that the speaker ﬁ nds the action annoying. Two or more words or utterances can therefore have the same propositional meaning but differ in their expressive meanings. This is true not only of words and utterances within the same language, where such words are often referred to as synonyms or near- synonyms, but also for words and utterances from different languages. The difference between *famous* in English and *fameux* in French does not lie in their respective propositional meanings; both items basically mean ‘well-known’. It lies in their expressive meanings. *Famous* is (normally) neutral in English: it has no inherent evaluative meaning or connotation. *Fameux*,on the other hand, is potentially evalu- ative and can be readily used in some contexts in a derogatory way (for example, *une femme fameuse* means, roughly, ‘a woman of ill repute’).

It is worth noting that differences between words in the area of expressive meaning are not simply a matter of whether an expression of a certain attitude or evaluation is inherently present or absent in the words in question. The same attitude or evaluation may be expressed in two words or utterances in widely differing degrees of forcefulness. Both *unkind* and *cruel*,for instance, are inherently expressive, showing the speaker’s disapproval of someone’s attitude. However, the element of disapproval in *cruel* is stronger than it is in *unkind*.

The meaning of a word or lexical unit can be both propositional and expressive, as in *whinge*,propositional only, as in *book*,or expressive only, for example *bloody* and various other swear words and emphasizers. Words which contribute solely to expressive meaning can be removed from an utterance without affecting its infor- mation content. Consider, for instance, the word *simply* in the following text: Whilst it stimulates your love of action, the MG also cares for your comfort.

Hugging you on the bends with sports seats. Spoiling you with luxuries such as electric door mirrors, tinted glass and central locking. And entertaining you with a great music system as well as a *simply* masterful performance. *(*Today’s Cars*, Austin Rover brochure; my emphasis)*

There are many highly expressive items in the above extract, but the word *simply* in the last sentence has a totally expressive function. Removing it would not alter the information content of the message but would, of course, tone its forcefulness down considerably.

**1.2.2 Presupposed meaning**

Presupposed meaning arises from co-occurrence restrictions, that is restrictions on what other words or expressions we expect to see before or after a particular lexical unit. These restrictions are of two types:

1. **Selectional restrictions**: these are a function of the propositional meaning of a word. We expect a human subject for the adjective *studious* and an inanimate

one for *geometrical*.Selectional restrictions are deliberately violated in the case of ﬁ gurative language but are otherwise strictly observed.

2. **Collocational restrictions**: these are semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word. For instance, laws are *broken* in English, but in Arabic they are ‘contradicted’. In English, teeth are *brushed*,but in German and Italian they are ‘polished’, in Polish they are ‘washed’ and in Russian they are ‘cleaned’. Because they are arbitrary, collocational restric- tions tend to show more variation across languages than do selectional restric- tions. They are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, section 3.1.

The difference between selectional and collocational restrictions is not always as clear cut as the examples given above might imply. For example, in the following English translation of a German leaﬂ et which accompanies Baumler products (men’s suits), it is difﬁ cult to decide whether the awkwardness of the wording is a result of violating selectional or collocational restrictions:

Dear Sir I am very pleased that you have selected one of our garments. You have made a wise choice, as suits, jackets and trousers eminating from our Company are amongst the ﬁ nest products Europe has to offer.

Ideas, qualities and feelings typically *emanate* (misspelt as *eminate* in the above text) from a source, but objects such as *trousers* and *jackets* do not, at least not in English. The awkwardness of the wording can be explained in terms of selectional or collocational restrictions, depending on whether or not one sees the restriction involved as a function of the propositional meaning of *emanate.*

**1.2.3 Evoked meaning**

Evoked meaning arises from **dialect** and **register** variation. A **dialect** is a variety of language which has currency within a speciﬁ c community or group of speakers. It may be classiﬁ ed on one of the following bases:

1. Geographical (e.g. a Scottish dialect, or American as opposed to British English: cf. the difference between *lift* and *elevator*);

2. Temporal (e.g. words and structures used by members of different age groups within a community, or words used at different periods in the history of a language: cf. *verily* and *really*);

3. Social (words and structures used by members of different social classes: cf. *scent* and *perfume*, *napkin* and *serviette*).

**Register** is a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate to a speciﬁ c situation. Register variation arises from variations along the following parameters:

1. ***Field*** *of discourse*: this is an abstract term for ‘what is going on’ that is relevant to the speaker’s choice of linguistic items. Different linguistic choices are made by different speakers depending on what kind of action other than the immediate action of speaking they see themselves as participating in. For example, linguistic choices will vary according to whether the speaker is taking part in a football match or discussing football; making love or discussing love; making a political speech or discussing politics; performing an operation or discussing medicine.

2. ***Tenor*** *of discourse*: an abstract term for the relationships between the people taking part in the discourse. Again, the language people use varies depending on such interpersonal relationships as mother/child, doctor/patient or superior/ inferior in status. A patient is unlikely to use swear words in addressing a doctor and a mother is unlikely to start a request to her child with *I wonder if you could* … Getting the tenor of discourse right in translation can be quite difﬁ cult. It depends on whether one sees a certain level of formality as ‘right’ from the perspective of the source culture or the target culture. For example, an American teenager may adopt a highly informal tenor with his or her parents by, among other things, using their ﬁ rst names instead of *Mum/Mother* and *Dad/Father*.This level of informality would be highly inappropriate in many other cultures. A translator has to choose between changing the tenor to suit the expectations of the target reader and transferring the informal tenor to give a ﬂ avour of the type of relationship that teenagers have with their parents in American society. What the translator opts for on any given occasion will of course depend on what he or she perceives to be the overall purpose of the translation.

3. ***Mode*** *of discourse*: an abstract term for the role that the language is playing (speech, essay, lecture, instructions) and for its medium of transmission (spoken, written).3 Linguistic choices are inﬂ uenced by these dimensions. For example, a word such as *re* is perfectly appropriate in a business letter or as part of the subject line in an email communication, but it is rarely, if ever, used in spoken English.

Different groups within each culture have different expectations about what kind of language is appropriate to particular situations. The amusement and embarrassment often engendered by children’s remarks to perfect strangers testiﬁ es to this; more seriously, people unused to highly ritualized situations like committee meetings and job interviews may ﬁ nd it difﬁ cult to make their points, and may even be ridiculed because their language appears inappropriate to other participants. Translators would normally wish to ensure that their products do not meet with a similar reaction, that their translations match the register expectations of their prospective receivers, unless, of course, the purpose of the translation is to give a ﬂ avour of the source culture or, as advocated by some scholars such as Venuti (1995:20), to deliberately challenge the reader by deviating from target norms in order to ‘stage an alien reading experience’.

Of all the types of lexical meaning explained above, the only one which relates to the truth or falsehood of an utterance and which can consequently be challenged by

a reader or hearer is propositional meaning. All other types of lexical meaning contribute to the overall meaning of an utterance or a text in subtle and complex ways and are often much more difﬁ cult to analyse. To reiterate, it is rarely possible in practice to separate the various types of meaning in a word or utterance. Likewise, it is rarely possible to deﬁ ne even the basic propositional meaning of a word or utterance with absolute certainty. This is because the nature of language is such that, in the majority of cases, words have ‘blurred edges’; their meanings are, to a large extent, negotiable and are only realized in speciﬁ c contexts. The very notion of ‘types of meaning’ is theoretically suspect. Yet, I believe that the distinctions drawn above can be useful for the translator since one of the most difﬁ cult tasks that a translator is constantly faced with is that, notwithstanding the ‘fuzziness’ inherent in language, he or she must attempt to perceive the meanings of words and utterances as precisely as possible in order to render them into another language. Even a trans- lator who sets out to challenge the reader’s expectations cannot do so responsibly without ﬁ rst having understood the source text on its own terms. This requires trans- lators to go beyond what the average reader has to do in order to reach an adequate understanding of a text.

**1.3 THE PROBLEM OF NON-EQUIVALENCE**

Based on the above discussion, we can now begin to outline some of the more common types of non-equivalence which often pose difﬁ culties for the translator and some attested strategies for dealing with them. First, a word of warning. The choice of a suitable equivalent in a given context depends on a wide variety of factors. Some of these factors may be strictly linguistic (see, for instance, the discussion of collocations and idioms in Chapter 3). Other factors may be extra- linguistic (see Chapters 7 and 8). It is virtually impossible to offer absolute guide- lines for dealing with the various types of non-equivalence which exist among languages. The most that can be done in this and the following chapters is to suggest strategies which may be used to deal with non-equivalence ‘in some contexts’. The choice of a suitable equivalent will always depend not only on the linguistic system or systems being handled by the translator, but also on the way both the writer of the source text and the producer of the target text, that is the translator, choose to manipulate the linguistic systems in question; on the expecta- tions, background knowledge and prejudices of readers within a speciﬁ c temporal and spatial location; on translators’ own understanding of their task, including their assessment of what is appropriate in a given situation; and on a range of restrictions that may operate in a given environment at a given point in time, including censorship4 and various types of intervention by parties other than the translator, author and reader.

**1.3.1 Semantic ﬁ elds and lexical sets – the segmentation of experience**

The words of a language often reﬂ ect not so much the reality of the world, but the interests of the people who speak it.

*(Palmer 1976:21)*

It is sometimes useful to view the vocabulary of a language as a set of words that refer to a series of conceptual ﬁ elds. These ﬁ elds reﬂ ect the divisions and sub- divisions ‘imposed’ by a given linguistic community on the continuum of experience.5 In linguistics, the divisions are called **semantic ﬁ elds**. Fields are abstract concepts.

An example of a semantic ﬁ eld would be the ﬁ eld of SPEECH, or PLANTS or VEHICLES. A large number of semantic ﬁ elds are common to all or most languages.

Most, if not all, languages will have ﬁ elds of DISTANCE, SIZE, SHAPE, TIME, EMOTION, BELIEFS, ACADEMIC SUBJECTS and NATURAL PHENOMENA.

The actual words and expressions under each ﬁ eld are sometimes called **lexical sets**.6 Each semantic ﬁ eld will normally have several sub-divisions or lexical sets under it, and each sub-division will have further sub-divisions and lexical sets. So, the ﬁ eld of SPEECH in English has a sub-division of VERBS OF SPEECH which includes general verbs such as *speak* and *say* and more speciﬁ c ones such as *mumble*, *murmur*, *mutter* and *whisper*.It seems reasonable to suggest that the more detailed a semantic ﬁ eld is in a given language, the more different it is likely to be from related semantic ﬁ elds in other languages. There generally tends to be more agreement among languages on the larger headings of semantic ﬁ elds and less agreement as the sub-ﬁ elds become more ﬁ nely differentiated. Most languages are likely to have equivalents for the more general verbs of speech such as *say* and *speak*,but many may not have equivalents for the more speciﬁ c ones. Languages understandably tend to make only those distinctions in meaning which are relevant to their particular environment, be it physical, historical, political, religious, cultural, economic, legal, technological, social or otherwise.

Before we discuss how an understanding of the nature and organization of semantic ﬁ elds might be useful in translation, let me ﬁ rst spell out the limitations of semantic ﬁ elds as a concept. The idea of semantic ﬁ elds is inapplicable in many cases and is an over- simpliﬁ cation of the way language actually works. A large number of words in any language defy being classiﬁ ed under any heading (Carter and McCarthy 1988, Lehrer 1974). Words like *just*, *nevertheless* and *only*,to name but a few, cannot be easily ﬁ led under any particular semantic ﬁ eld. The idea of semantic ﬁ elds works well enough for words and expressions which have fairly well-deﬁ ned propositional meanings, but not for all, or even most of the words and expressions in a language.

Limitations aside, there are two main areas in which an understanding of semantic ﬁ elds and lexical sets can be useful to a translator: (a) appreciating the ‘value’ that a word has in a given system; and (b) developing strategies for dealing with non-equivalence.

**(a)** Understanding the difference in the structure of semantic ﬁ elds in the source and target languages allows a translator to assess the value of a given item in a lexical set. If you know what other items are available in a lexical set and how they contrast with the item chosen by a writer or speaker, you can appreciate the signiﬁ - cance of the writer’s or speaker’s choice. You can understand not only what some- thing is, but also what it is not. This is best illustrated by an example.

In the ﬁ eld of TEMPERATURE, English has four main divisions: *cold*, *cool*, *hot* and *warm.* This contrasts with Modern Arabic, which has four different divisions: *baarid* (‘cold/cool’), *haar* (‘hot: of the weather’), *saakhin* (‘hot: of objects’) and *daaﬁ ’* (‘warm’). Note that, in contrast with English, Arabic (a) does not distinguish between *cold* and *cool*,and (b) distinguishes between the hotness of the weather and the hotness of other things. The fact that English does not make the latter distinction does not mean that you can always use *hot* to describe the temperature of something, even metaphorically (cf. *hot temper*,but not \**hot feelings*). There are restrictions on the co-occurrence of words in any language (see discussion of collo- cation: Chapter 3, section 3.1). Now consider the following examples from Tai Hung-chao’s *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, one of the texts included in the Translational English Corpus:7

1. The nights were *cool*, but after an hour or two, I was soaked with perspiration and my body ached all over.

2. He was afraid of the Moscow *cold*, and nothing I said could convince him that the buildings would be so well heated that he would never feel the weather.

Bearing in mind the differences in the structure of the English and Arabic ﬁ elds, one can appreciate, on the one hand, the difference in meaning between *cold* and *cool* in the above examples and, on the other, the potential difﬁ culty in making such a distinction clear when translating into Arabic. **(b)** Semantic ﬁ elds are arranged hierarchically, going from the more general to the more speciﬁ c. The general word is usually referred to as **superordinate** and the speciﬁ c word as **hyponym**. In the ﬁ eld of VEHICLES, *vehicle* is a superordinate and *bus*, *car*, *truck*, *coach* and so on are all hyponyms of *vehicle*.It stands to reason that any propositional meaning carried by a superordinate or general word is, by necessity, part of the meaning of each of its hyponyms, but not vice versa. If something is a bus, then it must be a vehicle, but not the other way round. We can sometimes manipulate this feature of semantic ﬁ elds when we are faced with semantic gaps in the target language. Translators often deal with semantic gaps by modifying a superordinate word or by means of circumlocutions based on modifying superordi- nates. More on this in the following section.

To sum up, while not always straightforward or applicable, the notion of semantic ﬁ elds can provide the translator with useful strategies for dealing with non-equivalence in some contexts. It is also useful in heightening our awareness of similarities and differences between any two languages and of the signiﬁ cance

of any choice made by a speaker or writer in a given context. One important thing to bear in mind when dealing with semantic ﬁ elds is that they are not ﬁ xed.

Semantic ﬁ elds are always changing, with new words and expressions being intro- duced into the language and others being dropped as they become less relevant to the needs of a linguistic community.

For a more extensive discussion of semantic ﬁ elds, see Lehrer (1974).

**1.3.2 Non-equivalence at word level and some common strategies for dealing with it**

Non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equiv- alent for a word which occurs in the source text. The type and level of difﬁ culty posed can vary tremendously depending on the nature of non-equivalence. Different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies, some very straightforward, others more involved and difﬁ cult to handle. Since, in addition to the nature of non- equivalence, the context and purpose of translation will often rule out some strat- egies and favour others, I will keep the discussion of types of non-equivalence separate from the discussion of strategies used by professional translators. It is neither possible nor helpful to attempt to relate speciﬁ c types of non-equivalence to speciﬁ c strategies, but I will comment on the advantages or disadvantages of certain strategies wherever possible.

***1.3.2.1 Common problems of non-equivalence***

The following are some common types of non-equivalence at word level, with examples from various languages: **(a)** Culture-speciﬁ c concepts The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as ‘culture-speciﬁ c’. An example of an abstract English concept which is notoriously difﬁ cult to translate into other languages is that expressed by the word *privacy*.This is a very ‘English’ concept which is rarely understood by people from other cultures. *Speaker* (of the House of Commons) has no equivalent in languages such as Russian, Chinese and Arabic, among others. It is often translated into Russian as ‘Chairman’, which does not reﬂ ect the role of the Speaker of the House of Commons as an independent person who maintains authority and order in Parliament. An example of a concrete concept is *airing cupboard* in English which, again, is unknown to speakers of most languages. **(b)** The source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language The source-language word may express a concept which is known in the target culture but simply not lexicalized, that is not ‘allocated’ a target-language word to

express it. The word *savoury* has no equivalent in many languages, although it expresses a concept which is easy to understand. The adjective *standard* (meaning ‘ordinary, not extra’, as in *standard range of products*) also expresses a concept which is very accessible and readily understood by most people, yet Arabic has no equivalent for it. *Landslide* has no ready equivalent in many languages, although it simply means ‘overwhelming majority’. **(c)** The source-language word is semantically complex The source-language word may be semantically complex. This is a fairly common problem in translation. Words do not have to be morphologically complex to be semantically complex (Bolinger and Sears 1968). In other words, a single word which consists of a single morpheme can sometimes express a more complex set of meanings than a whole sentence. Languages automatically develop very concise forms for referring to complex concepts if the concepts become important enough to be talked about often. Bolinger and Sears suggest that ‘If we should ever need to talk regularly and frequently about independently operated sawmills from which striking workers are locked out on Thursday when the temperature is between 500° and 600°F, we would ﬁ nd a concise way to do it’ (*ibid.*:114). We do not usually realize how semantically complex a word is until we have to translate it into a language which does not have an equivalent for it. An example of such a semanti- cally complex word is *arruação*,a Brazilian word which means ‘clearing the ground under coffee trees of rubbish and piling it in the middle of the row in order to aid in the recovery of beans dropped during harvesting’ (*ITI News* 1988:57).8 **(d)** The source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning The target language may make more or fewer distinctions in meaning than the source language. What one language regards as an important distinction in meaning another language may not perceive as relevant. For example, Indonesian makes a distinction between going out in the rain without the knowledge that it is raining (*kehujanan*) and going out in the rain with the knowledge that it is raining (*hujan- hujanan*). English does not make this distinction, with the result that if an English text referred to going out in the rain, the Indonesian translator may ﬁ nd it difﬁ cult to choose the right equivalent, unless the context makes it clear whether or not the person in question knew that it was raining. **(e)** The target language lacks a superordinate The target language may have speciﬁ c words (hyponyms) but no general word (superordinate) to head the semantic ﬁ eld. Russian has no ready equivalent for *facil- ities*,meaning ‘any equipment, building, services, etc. that are provided for a particular activity or purpose’.9 It does, however, have several speciﬁ c words and expressions which can be thought of as types of facilities, for example *sredstva peredvizheniya* (‘means of transport’), *naem* (‘loan’), *neobkhodimye pomesh- cheniia* (‘essential accommodation’) and *neobkhodimoe oborudovanie* (‘essential

equipment’). Brennan (1999) discusses a range of interesting examples that demonstrate this type of difﬁ culty in interpreting between English and British Sign Language (BSL):

An ongoing problem for interpreters is that the speaker often uses an English generic term for which BSL has no direct equivalent: the opposite problem is that BSL is frequently much more speciﬁ c than English. Some examples of generic English terms ... include: *touch*, *hit*, *murder*, *assault*, *hold.* While the English word *hit* does not specify **how** someone was hit (for example with the ﬂ at hand, the ﬁ st, the back of the hand, etc.) or **where** someone was hit (on the face, head, legs, back, etc.), a signed version of *hit* would typically be quite speciﬁ c in relation to how and where.

*(233-234; emphasis in original)*

**(f)** The target language lacks a speciﬁ c term (hyponym) More commonly, languages tend to have general words (superordinates) but lack speciﬁ c ones (hyponyms), since each language makes only those distinctions in meaning which seem relevant to its particular environment. There are endless examples of this type of non-equivalence. English has many hyponyms under *article* for which it is difﬁ cult to ﬁ nd precise equivalents in other languages, for example *feature*, *survey*, *report*, *critique*, *commentary*, *review* and many more. Under *house*,English again has a variety of hyponyms which have no equivalents in many languages, for example *bungalow*, *cottage*, *croft*, *chalet*, *lodge*, *hut*, *mansion*, *manor*, *villa* and *hall*.Under *jump* we ﬁ nd more speciﬁ c verbs such as *leap*, *vault*, *spring*, *bounce*, *dive*, *clear*, *plunge* and *plummet*.**(g)** Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective Physical perspective may be of more importance in one language than it is in another. Physical perspective has to do with where things or people are in relation to one another or to a place, as expressed in pairs of words such as *come/go*, *take/ bring*, *arrive/depart* and so on. Perspective may also include the relationship between participants in the discourse (tenor). For example, Japanese has six equiv- alents for *give*,depending on who gives to whom: *yaru*, *ageru*, *morau*, *kureru*, *itadaku* and *kudasaru* (McCreary 1986). **(h)** Differences in expressive meaning There may be a target-language word which has the same propositional meaning as the source-language word, but it may have a different expressive meaning. The difference may be considerable or it may be subtle but important enough to pose a translation problem in a given context. It is usually easier to add expressive meaning than to subtract it. In other words, if the target-language equivalent is neutral compared to the source-language item, the translator can sometimes add the eval-

uative element by means of a modiﬁ er or adverb if necessary, or by building it in somewhere else in the text. So, it may be possible, for instance, in some contexts to render the English verb *batter* (as in child/wife battering) by the more neutral Japanese verb *tataku*,meaning ‘to beat’, plus an equivalent modiﬁ er such as ‘savagely’ or ‘ruthlessly’. Differences in expressive meaning are usually more difﬁ cult to handle when the target-language equivalent is more emotionally loaded than the source-language item. This is often the case with items which relate to sensitive issues such as religion, politics and sex. Words like *homosexuality* and *homosexual* provide good examples. *Homosexuality* is not an inherently pejorative word in English, although it is often used in this way. On the other hand, the traditional equivalent expression in Arabic, *shithuth jinsi* (literally: ‘sexual perversion’), is inher- ently more pejorative and would be quite difﬁ cult to use in a neutral context without suggesting strong disapproval.10 **(i)** Differences in form There is often no equivalent in the target language for a particular form in the source text. Certain sufﬁ xes and preﬁ xes which convey propositional and other types of meaning in English often have no direct equivalents in other languages. English has many couplets such as *employer/employee*, *trainer/trainee* and *payer/payee*.It also makes frequent use of sufﬁ xes such as *-ish* (e.g. *boyish*, *hellish*, *greenish*) and *-able* (e.g. *conceivable*, *retrievable*, *drinkable*). Arabic, for instance, has no ready mechanism for producing such forms and so they are often replaced by an appro- priate paraphrase, depending on the meaning they convey (e.g. *retrievable* as ‘can be retrieved’ and *drinkable* as ‘suitable for drinking’). Afﬁ xes which contribute to expressive or evoked meaning, for instance by creating buzz words such as *washa- teria*, *carpeteria* and *groceteria* (Bolinger and Sears 1968), and those which convey expressive meaning, such as *journalese*, *translationese* and *legalese* (the *-ese* sufﬁ x usually suggests disapproval of a muddled or stilted form of writing), are more difﬁ cult to translate by means of a paraphrase. It is relatively easy to paraphrase propositional meaning, but other types of meaning cannot always be spelt out in a translation. Their subtle contribution to the overall meaning of the text is either lost altogether or recovered elsewhere by means of compensatory techniques.11 It is important for translators to understand the contribution that afﬁ xes make to the meaning of words and expressions, especially since such afﬁ xes are often used creatively in English to coin new words for various reasons, such as ﬁ lling temporary semantic gaps in the language and creating humour. Their contribution is also important in the area of terminology and standardization. Examples of creative use of afﬁ xes can often be found in advertisements and other types of promotional liter- ature. One advertisement for the chocolate Toblerone which appeared in many outlets in the mid 1990s showed three chocolate triangles against a larger image of the three pyramids in Egypt, with the caption ‘Ancient Tobleronism?’ appearing next to the pyramids. Here, the *-ism* ending evokes spirituality (as in Buddh*ism*) and, possibly, tradition – the kind we associate with established schools of thought that have large numbers of loyal followers, such as Marx*ism*, Existential*ism* and so on.

Eating Toblerone is thus likened to a spiritual experience; at the same time, the making of the chocolate, as well as eating it, are presented as part of a tradition, with a long and stable history. **(j)** Differences in frequency and purpose of using speciﬁ c forms Even when a particular form does have a ready equivalent in the target language, there may be a difference in the frequency with which it is used or the purpose for which it is used. Thus, English uses the continuous *-ing* form for binding clauses much more frequently than other languages which have equivalents for it, for example German and the Scandinavian languages. Consequently, rendering every *-ing* form in an English source text with an equivalent *-ing* form in a German, Danish or Swedish target text would result in stilted, unnatural style. **(k)** The use of loan words in the source text The use of loan words in the source text poses a special problem in translation.

Quite apart from their respective propositional meaning, loan words such as *au fait*, *chic*, *Auf Wiedershen* and *alfresco* in English are often used for their prestige value, because they can add an air of sophistication to the text or its subject matter.

Japanese in particular tends to use loan words widely, ‘just for effect, for example because they sound beautiful or look elegant’ (Jüngst 2008:61). This effect is often lost in translation, both into the language from which the loan word is originally borrowed and into other languages, where it is not always possible to ﬁ nd a loan word with the same meaning or associations. *Dilettante* is a loan word in English, Russian and Japanese, but Arabic has no equivalent loan word. This means that only the propositional meaning of *dilettante* can be rendered into Arabic; its stylistic effect would almost certainly have to be sacriﬁ ced.

Loan words also pose another problem for the unwary translator, namely the problem of **false friends**, or **faux amis** as they are often called.12 **False friends** are words or expressions which have the same form in two or more languages but convey different meanings. They are often associated with historically or culturally related languages such as English, French, Spanish and German, but in fact false friends also abound among totally unrelated languages such as English, Japanese and Russian.

Mayoral Asensio (2003:95–96) discusses several interesting examples of false friends (which he refers to as ‘deceptive cognates’) in English and Spanish in the context of translating ofﬁ cial documents, including *college/colegio* and *graduate/graduado*.

Once a word or expression is borrowed into a language, we cannot predict or control its development or the additional meanings it might or might not take on.

Some false friends are easy to spot because the difference in their meanings is so great that only a very inexperienced translator is likely to be unaware of it. The average Japanese translator is not likely to confuse an English *feminist* with a Japanese *feminist* (*feminist* in Japanese is usually used to describe a man who is excessively soft with women). An inexperienced French or German translator may, however, confuse English *sensible* with German *sensibel* (meaning ‘sensitive’), or English *sympathetic* with French *sympathique* (meaning ‘nice/likeable’).

The above are some of the more common examples of non-equivalence among languages and the problems they pose for translators. In dealing with any kind of non-equivalence, it is important ﬁ rst of all to assess its signiﬁ cance and implications in a given context. Not every instance of non-equivalence you encounter is going to be signiﬁ cant. It is neither possible nor desirable to reproduce every aspect of meaning for every word in a source text. We have to try, as much as possible, to convey the meaning of key words which are focal to the understanding and devel- opment of a text, but we cannot and should not distract the reader by looking at every word in isolation and attempting to present him or her with a full linguistic account of its meaning.

***1.3.2.2 Strategies used by professional translators***

With the above proviso in mind, we can now look at examples of strategies used by professional translators for dealing with various types of non-equivalence. In each example, the source-language word which represents a translation problem is underlined. The strategy used by the translator is highlighted in bold in both the original translation and the back-translated version. Only the strategies used for dealing with non-equivalence at word level will be commented on. Other strategies and differences between the source and target texts are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

**(a)** Translation by a more general word (superordinate) This is one of the commonest strategies for dealing with many types of non- equivalence, particularly in the area of propositional meaning. It works equally well in most, if not all, languages, since the hierarchical structure of semantic ﬁ elds is not language-speciﬁ c.

**(b)** Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word

**(c)** Translation by cultural substitution This strategy involves replacing a culture-speciﬁ c16 item or expression with a target- language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader, for instance by evoking a similar context in the target culture. The main advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the reader a concept with which he or she can identify, something familiar and appealing.

On an individual level, the translator’s decision to use this strategy will largely depend on (a) how much licence is given to him or her by those who commission the translation; (b) the purpose of the translation; and (c) the translator’s own judgement of the desirability or otherwise of obscuring the cultural speciﬁ city of the source text.

On a more general level, the decision will also reﬂ ect, to some extent, the norms of translation prevailing in a given community.17 Tolerance of strategies that involve signiﬁ cant departure from the propositional meaning of the text varies considerably across different communities and temporal locations.18

**(d)** Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation This strategy is particularly common in dealing with culture-speciﬁ c items, modern concepts and buzz words. Following the loan word with an explanation is very useful when the word in question is repeated several times in the text. Once explained, the loan word can then be used on its own; the reader can understand it and is not distracted by further lengthy explanations.

**(e)** Translation by paraphrase using a related word This strategy tends to be used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the source text is signiﬁ cantly higher than would be natural in the target language (see section on common problems of non- equivalence above, items (i) and (j)).

**(f)** Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words If the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts. Instead of a related word, the paraphrase may be based on modifying a superordinate or simply on unpacking the meaning of the source item, particularly if the item in question is semantically complex.

**(g)** Translation by omission This strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts.23 If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question.

**(h)** Translation by illustration This is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the target language refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly if there are restrictions on space and if the text has to remain short, concise and to the point.

**Лекція № 2**

**Тема: Equivalence above word level**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 4

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. Collocation
2. Idioms and fixed expressions
3. The translation of idioms

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

**On collocation**

Barnwell, Katherine (1974) *Introduction to Semantics and Translation*, High Wycombe: Summer Institute of Linguistics. Chapter 6, section 6.8: ‘Collocation’.

Beekman, John and John Callow (1974) *Translating the Word of God*, Michigan: Zondervan.

Chapter 11: ‘Collocational Clashes’.

Carter, Ronald and Michael McCarthy (1988) *Vocabulary and Language Teaching*, London: Longman. Chapter 2, section 7: ‘Linguistic Goings-on’.

Hoey, Michael (2005) *Lexical Priming: A New Theory of Words and Language*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Mackin, R. (1978) ‘On Collocations: Words Shall Be Known by the Company They Keep’, in P. Strevens (ed.) *In Honour of A. S. Hornby*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 149–165.

Sinclair, John (1991) *Corpus Concordance Collocation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**On idioms and ﬁ xed expressions**

Carter, Ronald (1987) *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives*,London: Allen & Unwin.

Chapter 3, section 3.6: ‘Idioms Galore’, and section 3.7: ‘Fixing Fixed Expressions’.

Fernando, Chitra (1996) *Idioms and Idiomaticity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moon, Rosamund (1998) *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English*, Oxford: Clarendon.

**On the translation of collocations, idioms and ﬁ xed expressions**

Al-Wahy, Ahmed Seddik (2009) ‘Idiomatic False Friends in English and Modern Standard Arabic’, *Babel* 55(2): 101–123.

Gottlieb, Henrik (1997) ‘Quality Revisited: The Rendering of English Idioms in Danish Tele- vision Subtitles vs. Printed Translations’, in Anna Trosborg (ed.) *Text Typology and Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 309–338.

Laviosa, Sara (2007) ‘Learning Creative Writing by Translating Witty Ads’, *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 1(2): 197–222.

Sheridan, Sarah (2009) ‘Translating Idiomatic Expressions from English to Irish Sign Language (ISL): Theory and Practice’, *The Sign Language Translator and Interpreter* 3(1): 69–84.

**Текст лекції:**

**2.1 COLLOCATION**

Why do builders not *produce* a building or authors not *invent* a novel, since they do invent stories and plots? No reason as far as dictionary deﬁ nitions of words are concerned. We don’t say it because we don’t say it.

*(Bolinger and Sears 1968:55)*

There are virtually no impossible collocations, but some are much more likely than others.

*(Sinclair 1966:411)*

When I discussed **lexical meaning** in the previous lecture, I made a brief reference to **collo- cation** under **presupposed meaning** and deﬁ ned it tentatively as ‘semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word’. Another way of looking at **collocation** would be to think of it in terms of the tendency of certain words to co-occur regularly in a given language.

At one level, the tendency of certain words to co-occur has to do with their prop- ositional meanings. For example, *cheque* is more likely to occur with *bank*, *pay*, *money* and *write* than with *moon*, *butter*, *playground* or *repair*.As Sinclair explains (1987a:320), ‘To some extent, the nature of the world around us is reﬂ ected in the organization of language. … Things which occur physically together have a stronger chance of being mentioned together’. However, meaning cannot always account for collocational patterning. If it did, we might expect *carry out*, *undertake* or even *perform* to collocate with *visit.* Yet, English speakers typically *pay a visit*,less typi- cally *make a visit* and are unlikely to *perform a visit.* We do not speak of *grilling bread*,even though we put it under the grill (Newman 1988). When butter or eggs go bad they are described in English as *rancid* and *addled*,respectively. Both *rancid* and *addled* mean ‘stale/rotten’, but *addled butter* and *rancid eggs* are unacceptable or at least unlikely collocations in English (Palmer 1976). Moreover, words which we might think of as synonyms or near-synonyms will often have quite different sets of collocates. English speakers typically *break rules* but they do not *break regulations*; they typically talk of *wasting time* but not of *squandering time.* Both *deliver a verdict* and *pronounce a verdict* are acceptable collocations in English. Likewise, *pronounce a sentence* is acceptable and means more or less the same as *deliver/pronounce a verdict.* And yet, *deliver a sentence* is an unlikely collocation. Cruse gives a similar example (1986:281). The adjectives *unblemished*, *spotless*, *ﬂ awless*, *immaculate* and *impeccable* can be thought of as synonyms or near-synonyms, and yet they do not combine freely with the same set of nouns (see Table 1).

When two words collocate, the relationship can hold between all or several of their various forms, combined in any grammatically acceptable order. For example, *achieving aims*, *aims having been achieved*, *achievable aims* and *the achievement of an aim* are all equally acceptable and typical in English. On the other hand, it is often the case that words will collocate with other words in some of their forms but not in others. We *bend rules* in English but are unlikely to describe *rules* as *unbendable.* Instead, we usually talk of *rules* being *inﬂ exible.*

It would seem, then, that patterns of collocation are largely arbitrary and inde- pendent of meaning. This is so both within and across languages. The same degree of mismatch that can be observed when comparing the collocational patterns of synonyms and near-synonyms within the same language is evident in the collocational patterning of dictionary equivalents/near equivalents in two languages. For example, the English verb *deliver* collocates with a number of nouns, for each of which Arabic uses a different verb. The Arabic ‘dictionary equivalent’ of *deliver* is *yusallim.*

Arabic focuses on the woman, whereas English prefers to focus on the baby; it would be unacceptable, under normal circumstances, to speak of *delivering a woman* in Modern English. This suggests that differences in collocational patterning among languages are not just a question of using, say, a different verb with a given noun; they can involve totally different ways of portraying an event. Patterns of collo- cation reﬂ ect the preferences of speciﬁ c language communities for certain modes of expression and certain linguistic conﬁ gurations; they rarely reﬂ ect any inherent order in the world around us. As Sinclair so aptly puts it, ‘there are many ways of saying things, many choices within language that have little or nothing to do with the world outside’ (1987a:320). This is not to say that collocations do not often reﬂ ect the cultural setting in which they are embedded. Some collocations are in fact a direct reﬂ ection of the material, social or moral environment in which they occur. This explains why *bread* collocates with *butter* in English but not in Arabic. *Buy a house* is a frequent collocation in English, but in German it is rare because the practice of house-buying is very different in the two cultures (Alexander 1987). *Law and order* is a common collocation in English; in Arabic a more typical collocation would be *al-qanuun wa al taqaalid* (‘law and convention/tradition’). The English collocation reﬂ ects the high value that English speakers place on order and the Arabic collo- cation reﬂ ects the high respect accorded by Arabs to the concept of tradition.

**2.1.1 Collocational range and collocational markedness**

Every word in a language can be said to have a **range** of items with which it is compatible, to a greater or lesser degree. **Range** here refers to the set of collo- cates, that is other words, which are typically associated with the word in question.

Some words have a much broader collocational range than others. The English verb *shrug*,for instance, has a rather limited collocational range. It typically occurs with *shoulders* and does not have a particularly strong link with any other word in the language. *Run*,by contrast, has a vast collocational range, some of its typical collo- cates being *company*, *business*, *show*, *car*, *stockings*, *tights*, *nose*, *wild*, *debt*, *bill*, *river*, *course*, *water* and *colour*,among others.

Two main factors can inﬂ uence the collocational range of an item (Beekman and Callow 1974). The ﬁ rst is its level of speciﬁ city: the more general a word, the broader its collocational range; the more speciﬁ c, the more restricted its colloca- tional range. The verb *bury* is likely to have a much broader collocational range than any of its hyponyms, such as *inter* or *entomb*. Only *people* can be *interred*,but you can *bury people*, a *treasure*,your *head*, *face*, *feelings* and *memories*.The second factor which determines the collocational range of an item is the number of senses it has. Most words have several senses and tend to attract a different set of collo- cates for each sense. For example, in its sense of ‘manage’, the verb *run* collocates with words like *company*, *institution* and *business.* In its sense of ‘operate or provide’, it collocates with words like *service* and *course*.It is, of course, perfectly reasonable to argue that the opposite is also true, that it is the collocational patterning of a word that determines its different senses (see 3.1.3 below). Either way, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between the number of senses a word has and its collocational range.

It will be obvious from our discussion of collocation so far that, unlike gram- matical statements, statements about collocation are made in terms of what is typical or untypical rather than what is admissible or inadmissible. This means that there is no such thing as an impossible collocation. New and unusual combinations of words occur frequently and we do not necessarily dismiss them as unacceptable.

The reason for this is that collocational ranges are not ﬁ xed. Words attract new collocates all the time; they do so naturally, through processes of analogy, or because speakers create unusual collocations on purpose. But how does this work in practice and what do unusual patterns of collocation achieve?

Patterns of collocation which have a history of recurrence in the language become part of our standard linguistic repertoire and we do not stop to think about them when we encounter them in text. By contrast, collocations which have little or no history of recurrence catch our attention and strike us as unusual. In wording his or her message, a speaker or writer has two broad options. He or she can reinforce the patterns of collocation which already exist in the language by adhering to them: Herman J. Mankiewicz had been a ﬁ ne screenwriter … , a *compulsive gambler*,a famous drunk, a slashing wit, and a man who was almost fero- ciously accident prone. *(Shirley MacLaine,* You Can Get There From Here*, 1975:66–67; my emphasis)*

Alternatively, a speaker or writer can create variations on an existing pattern by, for instance, extending the range of an item: I ﬁ rst met Hugh Fraser in 1977. Charming, rather hesitant, a heavy smoker and *heavy gambler*,he had made such headway through his fortune that he had decided to sell his last major asset, the controlling shares in the business which his father had built up and named Scottish and Universal Investments. *(Lonrho,* A Hero from Zero*:1; my emphasis)*

The difference between *compulsive gambler* and *heavy gambler* is that the ﬁ rst is a common collocation in English, whereas the second represents an attempt to extend the range of *heavy* to include *heavy gambler*,by analogy with *heavy smoker* and *heavy drinker*. The collocation *heavy gambler* does not strike us as particularly unusual because it only involves a slight extension of an existing range. This kind of natural extension of a range is far less striking than **marked** collocations which involve deliberate confusion of collocational ranges to create new images – a **marked** collocation being an unusual combination of words, one that challenges our expectations as hearers or readers.2 Marked collocations are often used in ﬁ ction, poetry, humour, news reporting and advertisements precisely for this reason:

because they can create unusual images, produce laughter or irony, and catch the reader’s attention. Moon (1998:161) offers a good example from the Bank of English corpus:

President Clinton fanned the ﬂ ames of optimism in Northern Ireland.

The expression ‘to fan the ﬂ ames’ is normally associated with very negative collo- cates such as ‘racial tension’ and ‘hatred’. As Louw (2000) explains, what we understand from this line is that the author is ironically suggesting that the peace process in Northern Ireland is ‘almost as aggressive as the war it is designed to end’.

See also the discussion of semantic prosodies in Chapter 7, section 7.3.1.

The following example of marked collocation is from John Le Carré’s *The Russia House* (1989:102; my emphasis): Some tout at the book fair wanted me to take UK rights in a book on *glasnost* and the crisis of peace. Essays by past and present hawks, reappraisals of strategy. Could real *peace break out* after all?

*War* normally *breaks out*,but *peace prevails*.These unmarked collocations suggest that war is a temporary and undesirable situation and that peace is a normal and desirable one. The deliberate mixing of collocational ranges in the above extract conveys the unexpected image of peace being an abnormal, temporary and possibly even an undesirable situation.

To sum up, we create new collocations all the time, either by extending an existing range or by deliberately putting together words from different or opposing ranges. As well as being reinforced, the established patterns in a language can therefore be used as a backdrop against which new images and new meanings can be invoked. New collocations often catch on, are reinforced by usage and eventually become part of the standard repertoire of the language. In turn, they can be used as a backdrop for communicating new meanings by creating new collocations, and so the cycle continues.

**2.1.2 Collocation and register**

Collocational patterns are not always typical/untypical in relation to the language system as a whole. You may have noted that all the examples used so far have been of common, everyday collocations which are more or less familiar to all of us, regardless of our occupations, special interests or hobbies. Some collocations may seem untypical in everyday language but are common in speciﬁ c registers. Sinclair (1966) explains that *dull highlights* and *vigorous depressions* may sound odd in everyday English but are common collocations in the ﬁ elds of photography and meteorology, respectively. In statistics, collocations such as *biased error* and *tolerable error* are common and acceptable. A reader who is not familiar with the register of statistics may wrongly assume that these collocations are marked.

However, collocational markedness is not an absolute quality; it always depends on what the norm is in a given register.

Register-speciﬁ c collocations are not simply the set of terms that go with a disci- pline. They extend far beyond the list of terms that one normally ﬁ nds in specialized dictionaries and glossaries. It is not enough, for instance, to know that *data* in computer language forms part of compound terms such as *data processing* and *data bank* and to become familiar with the dictionary equivalents of such terms in the target language. In order to translate computer literature, a translator must, among other things, be aware that in English computer texts, *data* may be *handled*, *extracted*, *processed*, *manipulated* and *retrieved*,but not typically *shifted*, *treated*, *arranged* or *tackled*.A translator of computer literature must also be familiar with the way in which the equivalent of *data* is used in his or her corresponding target texts, that is, with the set of collocates which are compatible with the equivalent of *data*.

Being a native speaker of a language does not automatically mean that the trans- lator can assess the acceptability or typicality of register-speciﬁ c collocations. This is largely why courses in specialized and technical language form an important component of translation training syllabuses.

**2.1.3 Collocational meaning**

In the previous lecture, meaning was discussed almost as if it was a property that each word possesses in its own right. It is, however, disputable whether a word on its own can ‘mean’ anything. What we do when we are asked to give an account of the meaning of a word in isolation is to contextualize it in its most typical collocations rather than its rarer ones. Asked to explain what *dry* means, we are likely to think of collocations such as *dry clothes*, *dry river* and *dry weather*, which would prompt the deﬁ nition ‘free from water’. As we move away from the most common collocations of *dry*,it becomes clear that the meaning of *dry* depends largely on its pattern of collocation and is not something that the word possesses in isolation.

Try paraphrasing the meaning of *dry* in each of the following combinations: dry cow dry sound dry book dry bread dry voice dry humour dry wine dry country dry run Most, if not all of the above collocations have unique meanings. This suggests that what a word means often depends on its association with certain collocates. When the translation of a word or a stretch of language is criticized as being inaccurate or inappropriate in a given context, the criticism may refer to the translator’s inability to recognize a collocational pattern with a unique meaning different from or exceeding the sum of the meanings of its individual elements. As Hunston and Francis explain, even in the case of a straightforward collocation such as *start a family*, where both *start* and *family* retain their basic dictionary meaning as isolated words, ‘the meaning of the whole … includes also a further meaning: “have one’s ﬁ rst child”’ (2000:9).

Collocations that involve one or both items being used in other than their discrete dictionary meaning raise similar issues. A translator who renders *dry voice* for instance as ‘a voice which is not moist’ would be mistranslating *dry* in this context, having failed to recognize that when it collocates with *voice* it means ‘cold’, in the sense of not expressing emotion. Likewise, a translator who renders *run a car* as ‘drive a car fast’ would be misinterpreting *run* in this context. Taking account of collocational meaning rather than substituting individual words with their dictionary equivalents is therefore crucial at the ﬁ rst stage of translation, that is when the trans- lator is interpreting the source text.

Note that even when there appears to be a close match between collocational patterns in two languages, they may not carry the same meaning. For example, *to run a car* in English means ‘to own, use, and be able to maintain a car ﬁ nancially’. In modern Greek, to speak of a car ‘running’ simply means that it is being driven fast or with excessive speed.

**2.1.4 Some collocation-related pitfalls and problems in translation**

Differences in the collocational patterning of the source and target languages create potential pitfalls and can pose various problems in translation. Some of these problems are more difﬁ cult to handle than others. The following are some of the more common pitfalls and problems that are often encountered in translating non- literary texts. Where applicable, examples are given of strategies used by profes- sional translators to overcome the problems under discussion. The English collocation which poses a translation problem is underlined. The collocation or expression which substitutes it in the target text is highlighted in bold.

***2.1.4.1 The engrossing effect of source text patterning***

It is easy to assume that as long as a collocation can be found in the target language which conveys the same or a similar meaning to that of the source collo- cation, the translator will not be confused by differences in the surface patterning between the two. For example, *strong tea* is literally ‘dense tea’ in Japanese; *break the law* is an unacceptable collocation in Arabic, the common collocation being, literally, ‘contradict the law’; likewise, *keep a dog/cat* is unacceptable in Danish, where the usual expression is ‘hold a dog/cat’. A Japanese, Arabic or Danish translator, one might assume, would not hesitate to make the necessary adjustment since, to all intents and purposes, the English/Japanese, English/ Arabic and English/Danish collocations have the same meanings, respectively.

There are, nevertheless, many published translations which testify to the contrary.

Translators sometimes get quite engrossed in the source text and may produce the oddest collocations in the target language for no justiﬁ able reason. Here is an example from *A Hero from Zero* (p. iv).

Back at the dull mahogany tables of the Commission, I found myself again seated opposite the familiar, tall, languid ﬁ gure of Sir Godfray Le Quesne, rocking gently on his chair, with his hands clasped behind his head, and his eyes closed as he listened or slept through the hearings. He’d been looking into us for four years, and knew our business backwards. What am I doing here, I thought, as I gazed by the hour and by the month at the hole in the sole of his leather shoe, and wondered why Lonrho’s bid was in the hands of a man who couldn’t organise his own shoe repairs.

The French translator of *A Hero from Zero* (a document produced by Lonrho plc about the acquisition of the House of Fraser by Mohamed Fayed) rendered *shoe repairs* as *réparer ses chaussures* (‘to repair his shoes’), which is a literal translation from English. In French, *réparer* collocates with things like ‘fridges’, ‘cars’ and machines in general, but it does not collocate with *chaussures.* The translator should have used *ressemeler ses chaussures* (‘resole his shoes’), which is a far more natural collocation in French.3 Confusing source and target patterns is a pitfall that can easily be avoided once the translator is alerted to the potential inﬂ uence that the collocational patterning of the source text can have on him or her. A good method of detaching oneself from the source text is to put the draft translation aside for a few hours. One can then return to the target text with a better chance of responding to its patterning as a target reader eventually would, having not been exposed to and therefore inﬂ uenced by the source-text patterning in the ﬁ rst place. At any rate, translators are well advised to avoid carrying over source-language collocational patterns which are untypical of the target language, unless there is a good reason for doing so.

***2.1.4.2 Misinterpreting the meaning of a source-language collocation***

A translator can easily misinterpret a collocation in the source text due to inter- ference from his or her native language. This happens when a source-language collocation appears to be familiar because it corresponds in form to a common collo- cation in the target language. I am assuming here that many professional translators would normally work from a foreign language into their native language or language of habitual use, but see Beeby Lonsale (2009) for a detailed overview of this contro- versial issue, and Pokorn (2005) for a defence of translating into the foreign language. The following example is also from *A Hero from Zero* (p. 59):

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

The industrialist saw in him a person whose appearance suggests **modesty and simplicity**.

The collocation *modest means* suggests lack of afﬂ uence in English. The equivalent of ‘modest’ in Arabic (*mutawaadi’*) can suggest a similar meaning in some colloca- tions such as *dakhl mutawaadi’* (‘small income’). However, both the adjective *muta- waadi’* (‘modest’) and the noun *tawaadu’* (‘modesty’) used in connection with a person usually mean that he or she is unassuming. This interpretation is further rein- forced by the addition of *basaata* (‘simplicity’). The translator of the above extract seems to have confused the collocational patterns of English and Arabic, thus misin- terpreting the source collocation and communicating the wrong meaning in the target text.

***2.1.4.3 The tension between accuracy and naturalness***

In rendering unmarked source-language collocations into his or her target language, a translator normally aims to produce a collocation which is typical in the target language while preserving the meaning associated with the source collocation.4 This cannot always be achieved. Translation often involves a tension – a difﬁ cult choice between what is typical and what is accurate.

The nearest acceptable collocation in the target language will often involve some change in meaning. This change in meaning may be minimal, or not particularly sign iﬁ cant in a given context. On the other hand, it may be signiﬁ cant; for example, a *good/bad law* in English is typically a ‘just/unjust law’ in Arabic. The signiﬁ cance of this difference in meaning depends on whether the issue of ‘justice’ is in focus in a given text or whether the context favours avoiding explicit reference to justice. Simi- larly, the nearest acceptable collocation which can replace *hard drink* in Arabic is ‘alco- holic drink’. But *hard drink* refers only to spirits in English, for example whisky, gin and brandy. It does not include other alcoholic drinks such as beer, lager or sherry. The Arabic collocation, however, refers to any alcoholic drink, including beer, lager, sherry, as well as spirits. The meanings of the two collocations therefore do not map completely. Whether the translator opts for the typical Arabic collocation or tries to translate the full meaning of *hard drink*,possibly by a circumlocution, will depend on whether the distinction between hard and soft alcoholic drinks is signiﬁ cant or relevant in a given context. A certain amount of loss, addition or skewing of meaning is often unavoidable in translation; language systems tend to be too different to produce exact replicas in most cases. The degree of acceptability or non-acceptability of a change in meaning depends on the signiﬁ cance of this change in a given context. Accuracy is no doubt an important aim in translation, but it is also important to bear in mind that the use of common target-language patterns which are familiar to the target reader plays an important role in keeping the communication channels open. The use of estab- lished patterns of collocation also helps to distinguish a smooth translation that does not require readers to labour unproductively over irrelevant linguistic infelicities from a clumsy translation which might leave readers with the impression that the translator is simply inexperienced or incompetent.

Here are some examples of translations which have opted for naturalness at the expense of accuracy. The change in meaning involved in the following examples is not signiﬁ cant enough to justify cluttering the text with additional explanations or using untypical target collocations:

***2.1.4.4 Culture-speciﬁ c collocations***

Some collocations reﬂ ect the cultural setting in which they occur. If the cultural settings of the source and target languages are signiﬁ cantly different, there will be instances when the source text will contain collocations which convey what to the target reader would be unfamiliar associations of ideas. Such culture-speciﬁ c collo- cations express ideas previously unexpressed in the target language. Like culture- speciﬁ c words, they point to concepts which are not easily accessible to the target reader.

In English academic writing, it is common and acceptable to talk about ‘lesser-known languages’, as well as ‘major languages’ and ‘minor languages’. Russian has no equivalent collocations. Furthermore, the political and social setting of Russian makes it potentially offensive to draw a distinction between better-known and lesser-known, or major and minor languages. The translator of the above extract seems to be aware of the oddity of such associations in Russian and their potential for causing offence.

Hence, inverted commas are used around ‘small’ and ‘big’, they are each followed by a paraphrase, and the whole expression is preceded by ‘so-called’, which serves to distance the writer/translator from the associations made.

Note that the translation of culture-speciﬁ c collocations involves a partial increase in information. This is unavoidable inasmuch as unfamiliar associations of ideas cannot simply be introduced in a target text without giving the reader some hint as to how to interpret them.

***2.1.4.5 Marked collocations in the source text***

Unusual combinations of words are sometimes used in the source text in order to create new images (see 3.1.1 above). Ideally, the translation of a marked collocation will be similarly marked in the target language. This is, however, always subject to the constraints of the target language and to the purpose of the translation in question.

Generally speaking, collocations are fairly ﬂ exible patterns of language which allow several variations in form. For example, *deliver a letter*, *delivery of a letter*, *a letter has been delivered* and *having delivered a letter* are all acceptable collocations. In addition, although the meaning of a word often depends on what other words it occurs with, we can still say that the word in question has an individual meaning in a given collocation. Thus, *dry cow* means a cow which does not produce milk. We can still identify a particular meaning associated with the word *dry* in this collocation, and, of course, *cow* still retains its familiar meaning of ‘a farm animal kept for its milk’.

Idioms and ﬁ xed expressions are at the extreme end of the scale from collocations in one or both of these areas: ﬂ exibility of patterning and transparency of meaning.

They are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their indi- vidual components.

An idiom such as *bury the hatchet* (‘to become friendly again after a disa greement or a quarrel’) or *the long and the short of it* (‘the basic facts of the situation’) allows no variation in form under normal circumstances. Unless he or she is consciously making a joke or attempting a play on words, a speaker or writer cannot normally do any of the following with an idiom:

1. change the order of the words in it (e.g. \*‘the *short* and the *long* of it’);

2. delete a word from it (e.g. \*‘spill beans’);

3. add a word to it (e.g. \*‘the *very* long and short of it’; \*‘face the *classical* music’);

4. replace a word with another (e.g. \*‘the *tall* and the short of it’; \*‘bury *a* hatchet’);

5. change its grammatical structure (e.g. \*‘the music was faced’).

As their name suggests, ﬁ xed expressions such as *having said that*, *as a matter of fact*, *Ladies and Gentlemen* and *all the best*,as well as proverbs such as *practise what you preach* and *waste not want not*,allow little or no variation in form. In this respect, they behave very much like idioms. Unlike idioms, however, ﬁ xed expres- sions and proverbs often have fairly transparent meanings. The meaning of *as a matter of fact* can easily be deduced from the meanings of the words which constitute it, unlike the meaning of an idiom such as *pull a fast one* or *ﬁ ll the bill*.But in spite of its transparency, the meaning of a ﬁ xed expression or proverb is somewhat more than the sum meanings of its words; the expression has to be taken as one unit to establish meaning. This is true of any ﬁ xed, recurring pattern of the language. A ﬁ xed expression evokes in the mind of the reader or hearer a range of associations connected with the typical contexts in which the expression is used. It is precisely this feature which lies behind the widespread use of ﬁ xed and semi-ﬁ xed expres- sions in any language. They encapsulate stereotypical aspects of experience and therefore perform a stabilizing function in communication. Situation- or register- speciﬁ c formulae such as *Many happy returns*, *Merry Christmas*, *Further to your letter of* …, and *Yours sincerely* are particularly good examples of the stabilizing role and the special status that a ﬁ xed expression can assume in communication.

**2.2.1 Idioms, ﬁ xed expressions and the direction of translation**

Although most idioms resist variation in form, some are more ﬂ exible than others.

For example, a BBC radio reporter once quoted a conference speaker as saying ‘There was too much *buck passing*’ (Baker and McCarthy 1988). The common form of the idiom is *pass the buck* (‘refuse to accept responsibility for something’).

And yet, we would not expect to hear *There was too much way giving* for *give way* (‘allow someone to do something you disapprove of’).

A person’s competence in actively using the idioms and ﬁ xed expressions of a foreign language hardly ever matches that of a native speaker. The majority of trans- lators working into a foreign language cannot hope to achieve the same sensitivity that native speakers seem to have for judging when and how an idiom can be manip- ulated. This lends some support to the argument that translators should only work into their language of habitual use or mother tongue, at least in genres which are characterized by creative or playful use of language (but see Beeby Londsdale 2009 and Pokorn 2005 for alternative arguments). The Code of Professional Ethics of the Translators’ Guild of Great Britain6 states: A translator shall work only *into* the language (in exceptional cases this may include a second language) of which he has native knowledge. ‘Native knowledge’ is deﬁ ned as the ability to speak and write a language so ﬂ uently that the expression of thought is structurally, grammatically and *idiomatically* correct.

*(quoted in Meuss, 1981:278; my emphasis)*

Assuming that a professional translator would, under normal circumstances, work only into his or her language of habitual use, the difﬁ culties associated with being able to use idioms and ﬁ xed expressions correctly in a foreign language need not be addressed here. The main problems that idiomatic and ﬁ xed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and the difﬁ culties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a ﬁ xed expression conveys into the target language. These difﬁculties are much more pronounced in the case of idioms than they are in the case of ﬁ xed expressions.

**2.2.2 The interpretation of idioms**

As far as idioms are concerned, the ﬁ rst difﬁ culty that a translator comes across is being able to recognize that he or she is dealing with an idiomatic expression. This is not always so obvious. There are various types of idiom, some more easily recog- nizable than others. Those which are easily recognizable include expressions that violate truth conditions, such as *It’s raining cats and dogs*, *throw caution to the wind*, *storm in a tea cup*, *jump down someone’s throat* and *food for thought*.They also include expressions which seem ill-formed because they do not follow the grammatical rules of the language, for example *trip the light fantastic*, *blow someone to kingdom come*, *put paid to*, *the powers that be*, *by and large* and *the world and his friend*.Expressions which start with *like* (simile-like structures) also tend to suggest that they should not be interpreted literally. These include idioms such as *like a bat out of hell* and *like water off a duck’s back*.Generally speaking, the more difﬁ cult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely that a translator will recognize it as an idiom. Because they do not make sense if interpreted literally, the highlighted expressions in the following text are easy to recognize as idioms (assuming one is not already familiar with them): This can only be done, I believe, by a full and frank **airing of the issues**. I urge you all to **speak your minds** and not to **pull any punches**. *(*Language and Society *(1985), 14:6)*

Provided a translator has access to good reference works and monolingual diction- aries of idioms, or, better still, is able to consult native speakers of the language, opaque idioms which do not make sense for one reason or another can actually be a blessing in disguise. The very fact that he or she cannot make sense of an expression in a particular context will alert the translator to the presence of an idiom of some sort.

There are two cases in which an idiom can be easily misinterpreted if one is not already familiar with it:

**(a)** Some idioms are ‘misleading’; they seem transparent because they offer a reasonable literal interpretation and their idiomatic meanings are not necessarily signalled in the surrounding text. A large number of idioms in English, and probably all languages, have both a literal and an idiomatic meaning, for example *go out with* (‘have a romantic or sexual relationship with someone’) and *take someone for a ride* (‘deceive or cheat someone in some way’). Such idioms lend themselves easily to manipulation by speakers and writers who will sometimes play on both their literal and idiomatic meanings. In this case, a translator who is not familiar with the idiom in question may easily accept the literal interpretation and miss the play on idiom. The

following example illustrates how easy it is to accept a literal interpretation that seems plausible in a given context. The text from which the extract is taken is quoted in the *Translator’s Guild Newsletter* (January 1985, 10:1).

I’d just done my stint as rubber duck, see, and pulled off the grandma lane into the pitstop to **drain the radiator**.

This is an extract from a highly idiomatic passage of Citizen Band (CB) Radio special ‘trucking talk’. *Rubber duck* is the ﬁ rst trucker in a convoy, *grandma lane* is the slow lane, and *pitstop* refers to services or a place where one stops for a rest. In the context of trucks, motorways and stopping at a service station, a literal interpretation of *drain the radiator* seems highly plausible. It is, however, a special idiom used by CB drivers and means ‘to urinate; use the toilet’. **(b)** An idiom in the source language may have a very close counterpart in the target language which looks similar on the surface but has a totally or partially different meaning. For example, the idiomatic question *Has the cat had/got your tongue?* is used in English to urge someone to answer a question or contribute to a conversation, particularly when their failure to do so becomes annoying. A similar expression is used in French with a totally different meaning: *donner sa langue au chat* (‘to give one’s tongue to the cat’), meaning to give up, for example when asked a riddle. *To pull someone’s leg*,meaning to tell someone something untrue as a joke in order to shock them temporarily and amuse them when they ﬁ nd out later that it was a joke, is iden- tical on the surface to the idiom *yishab rijlu* (‘pull his leg’) which is used in several Arabic dialects to mean tricking someone into talking about something he or she would have rather kept secret. In French, a similar expression: *tirer la jambe* (‘pull the leg’) means to drag one’s steps. Instances of superﬁ cially identical or similar idioms which have different meanings in the source and target languages lay easy traps for the unwary translator who is not familiar with the source-language idiom and who may be tempted simply to impose a target-language interpretation on it.

Apart from being alert to the way speakers and writers manipulate certain features of idioms and to the possible confusion which could arise from similarities in form between source and target expressions, a translator must also consider the collocational environment which surrounds any expression whose meaning is not readily accessible. Idiomatic and ﬁ xed expressions have individual collocational patterns. They form collocations with other items in the text as single units and enter into lexical sets which are different from those of their individual words. Take, for instance, the idiom *to have cold feet*. *Cold* as a separate item may collocate with words like *weather*, *winter*, *feel* or *country*. *Feet* on its own will perhaps collocate with *socks*, *chilblain*, *smelly* and so on. However, *having cold feet*,in its idiomatic use, has nothing necessarily to do with *winter*, *feet* or *chilblains* and will therefore generally be used with a different set of collocates.

The ability to distinguish senses by collocation is an invaluable asset to a trans- lator working from a foreign language. It is often subsumed under the general umbrella of ‘relying on the context to disambiguate meanings’, which, among other things, means using our knowledge of collocational patterns to decode the meaning of a word or a stretch of language. Using our knowledge of collocational patterns may not always tell us what an idiom means, but it could easily help us in many cases to recognize an idiom, particularly one which has a literal as well as a non-literal meaning.

**2.2.3 The translation of idioms: difﬁ culties**

Once an idiom or ﬁ xed expression has been recognized and interpreted correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the target language. The difﬁ culties involved in translating an idiom are totally different from those involved in interpreting it. Here, the question is not whether a given idiom is transparent, opaque or misleading. An opaque expression may be easier to translate than a transparent one. The main difﬁ culties involved in translating idioms and ﬁ xed expressions may be summarized as follows:

**(a)** An idiom or ﬁ xed expression may have no equivalent in the target language. The way a language chooses to express, or not express, various meanings cannot be predicted and only occasionally matches the way another language chooses to express the same meanings. One language may express a given meaning by means of a single word, another may express it by means of a transparent ﬁ xed expression, a third may express it by means of an idiom and so on. It is therefore unrealistic to expect to ﬁ nd equivalent idioms and expressions in the target language as a matter of course.

Like single words, idioms and ﬁ xed expressions may be culture-speciﬁ c.

Formulae such as *Merry Christmas* and *say when* which relate to speciﬁ c social or religious occasions provide good examples. Bassnett-McGuire (1980:21) explains that the expression *say when* is ‘directly linked to English social behavioural patterns’ and suggests that ‘the translator putting the phrase into French or German has to contend with the problem of the non-existence of a similar convention in either TL culture’. Less problematic, but to some extent also culture-speciﬁ c, are the sort of ﬁ xed formulae that are used in formal correspondence, such as *Yours faithfully* and *Yours sincerely* in English. These, for instance, have no equivalents in Arabic formal correspondence. Instead, an expression such as *wa tafadalu biqbuul fa’iq al-ihtiraam* (literally: ‘and be kind enough to accept [our] highest respects’) is often used, but it bears no direct relationship to *Yours faithfully* or *Yours sincerely*.The same mismatch occurs in relation to French and several other languages.

Idioms and ﬁ xed expressions which contain culture-speciﬁ c items are not neces- sarily untranslatable. It is not the speciﬁ c items an expression contains but rather the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-speciﬁ c contexts which can make it untranslatable or difﬁ cult to translate. For example, the English expression *to carry coals to Newcastle*,though culture-speciﬁ c in the sense that it contains a reference to Newcastle coal and uses it as a measure of abundance, is nevertheless closely paralleled in German by *Eulen nach Athen tragen* (‘to carry owls to Athens’).

Both expressions convey the same meaning, namely: to supply something to someone who already has plenty of it (Grauberg 1989). In French, the same meaning can be rendered by the expression *porter de l’eau à la rivière* ‘to carry water to the river’. Palmer (1976) explains that in Welsh it rains ‘old women and sticks’ rather than ‘cats and dogs’, and yet to most intents and purposes both expressions mean the same thing.

**(b)** An idiom or ﬁ xed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations, for instance, or they may not be pragmatically transferable.

*To sing a different tune* is an English idiom which means to say or do something that signals a change in opinion because it contradicts what one has said or done before.

In Chinese, *chang-dui-tai-xi* (‘to sing different tunes/to sing a duet’) also normally refers to contradictory points of view, but has quite a different usage. It has strong political connotations and, in certain contexts, can be interpreted as expressing complementary rather than contradictory points of view.7 *To go to the dogs* (‘to lose one’s good qualities’) has a similar counterpart in German, but whereas the English idiom can be used in connection with a person or a place, its German counterpart can only be used in connection with a person and often means to die or perish.

Fernando and Flavell (1981) compare *to skate on thin ice* (‘to act unwisely or court danger voluntarily’) with a similar Serbian expression: *navuci nekoga na tanak led* (‘to pull someone onto the thin ice’). The Serbian idiom differs from the English one in that it implies forcing someone into a dangerous position. Though similar in meaning, the contexts in which the two idioms can be used are obviously different. **(c)** An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time (see 3.2.2 (a) above). Unless the target-language idiom corresponds to the source-language idiom both in form and in meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the target text. The following extract is from a passage which constituted part of the British Translators’ Guild Intermediate Examinations for all languages (1986).

In creating Lord Peter Wimsey, Dorothy L Sayers demonstrated all the advantages of the amateur private eye. As a wealthy dilettante he was able to pursue the clues without the boring necessity of earning a living. His title as the younger son of a duke pandered to reader snobbery and to the obsessive fascination of some readers with the lifestyle of the aristocracy, or with what they imagined that lifestyle to be. He had sufﬁ cient inﬂ uence to be able to **poke his nose into** the private affairs of others where less aristocratic **noses** might have been speedily bloodied.

The above play on idiom can only be reproduced in languages such as French or German which happen to have an identical idiom, or at least an idiom which refers to interfering in other people’s affairs and which has the equivalent of *nose* in it.

Another example comes from *Arab Political Humour* by Kishtainy (1985).

Although this book was originally written in English, the writer quotes jokes and anecdotes of Arab origin, so that English is in fact the target language here. The following joke emerged after the defeat of the Arab forces in 1967, which resulted in the annexation of Arab territory by Israel: Egypt’s Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Amin, was horriﬁ ed to see Pres- ident Nasser ordering a tattoo artist to print on his right arm the names of all the territories seized by Israel like Sinai, Gaza, Sharm al-Shaykh, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights. ‘Why are you doing this?’ ‘Lest I should forget them.’ ‘But why tattooed? What will you do if we get them back?’ ‘If we get them back **I’ll cut off my right arm**.’

*(Kishtainy 1985:157–158; my emphasis)*

Unless you are an Arab speaker, you will ﬁ nd it difﬁ cult to appreciate the humour of the above passage, which relies totally on the manipulation of literal and idiomatic meanings. To cut off one’s arm, or cut off one’s right arm for emphasis, is an idiom which is similar in meaning to *pigs might ﬂ y* in English. It means that something is impossible or at least highly unlikely to happen. Neither this English expression nor any other English idiom with a similar meaning can be used to replace ‘I’ll cut off my right arm’ in the above passage, because the literal meaning of the Arabic expression is as important as its idiomatic meaning in this context. The literal translation that the author gives above is just as ineffective since the non-Arab reader has no access to the idiomatic meaning. This book was translated into Arabic by Al-Yaziji in 1988 and, not surprisingly, the jokes work much better in the Arabic version.

It is also possible, and with more recent technological developments increasingly common, to produce plays on idiom by drawing on the visual and verbal channels simultaneously. Chaume Varela (1997:323) discusses an example from Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction*, where the following exchange takes place: Vincent: Come on, Mia. Let’s go get a steak.

Mia: You can get a steak here, daddy-o. Don’t be a … (Mia draws a square with her hands. Dotted lines appear on the screen, forming a square. The lines disperse.) Used idiomatically, as part of expressions such as ‘don’t be square’ and ‘you’re so square’, *square* means ‘old-fashioned’, ‘boring’. Mia plays on both meanings, the literal and the idiomatic, but uses a combination of verbal and visual channels to communicate her message. According to Chaume Varela (*ibid.*), the Spanish dubbed version of the ﬁ lm adopts the following solution (back-translation added; italics in original):

Vincent: *Vayamos a comernos un ﬁ lete.*

Mia: *Puedes comerte uno aquí, colega. No me seas ...*

Back-translation: Vincent: Let’s go and grab a steak.

Mia: You can eat one here, mate. Don’t be … A better solution for Mia’s line, Chaume Varela argues, would have been ‘Puedes comerte uno aquí, mente cuadriculada’ (lit.: You can eat one here, grid-mapped/ square mind). Someone who is described as ‘mente cuadriculada’ in Spanish is understood to be very rigid and unwilling to accommodate other people’s sugges- tions – a meaning that overlaps to some extent with ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘boring’ as signalled by *square* in English.8 The play on idiom can be reproduced in this instance, but not without some shift in meaning.

This type of verbal-cum-visual play on idioms is not restricted to multimodal envi- ronments such as ﬁ lm, web pages and television advertisements. In Figure 5, the title of an article which appeared in *New Scientist* on 5 February 2000 (p. 41) makes use of the same strategy. It plays on the idiomatic meaning of ‘It’s a funny old world’, an expression normally used when something doesn’t make sense, when some aspect of the world seems strange and incomprehensible, or when we wish to communicate, more graphically, that ‘the world is upside down’, as it were.

**(d)** The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target languages. English uses idioms in many types of text, even in serious, inter- national magazines such as *New Scientist* (see Figure 5), and especially frequently in advertisements, promotional material and the tabloid press. The following example from a glossy brochure released in 1989 by the former car manufacturer Austin Rover illustrates the heavy use of idioms in this type of English written discourse.

The whole passage is highly idiomatic and very informal in style. The main idioms are highlighted in bold: METRO

Your own sense of style is all your own. Brilliant. Colourful. Original.

With loads of **get up and go**.

There’s a car **after your own heart**. The new 1989 Metro. Sporty new models which look great – and **don’t hang around**. A new range. With vivid new colours and trim. Full of fresh ideas. Luxurious. And wickedly stylish.

**Get going** in the new Metro GTa. Where else would you ﬁ nd 73PS performance, alloy wheels and looks like that – at such a price?

Or **show what you’re made of** at the wheel of the new Metro Sport. It’s got style. And a performance engine that says **it’s a lot more than just a pretty face**.

Fancy something really special in the sports luxury department? With a sunroof, central locking, tinted glass and a lot more, the new Metro 1.3GS **is just the ticket**. And so is the price. *(*Today’s Cars*,* *Austin Rover, 1989)*

Using idioms in English is thus very much a matter of style. Languages such as Arabic and Chinese, which draw a sharp distinction between written and spoken discourse and where the written mode is associated with a high level of formality, tend, on the whole, to avoid using idioms in written texts. Fernando and Flavell (1981:85) discuss the difference in rhetorical effect of using idioms in general and of using speciﬁ c types of idiom in the source and target languages and quite rightly conclude that ‘[t]ranslation is an exacting art. Idiom more than any other feature of language demands that the translator be not only accurate but highly sensitive to the rhetorical nuances of the language.’

**2.2.4 The translation of idioms: strategies**

The way in which an idiom or a ﬁ xed expression can be translated into another language depends on many factors. It is not only a question of whether an idiom with a similar meaning is available in the target language. Other factors include, for example, the signiﬁ cance of the speciﬁ c lexical items which constitute the idiom, that is whether they are manipulated elsewhere in the source text, whether verbally or visually, as well as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using idiomatic language in a given register in the target language. The acceptability or non- acceptability of using any of the strategies described below will therefore depend on the context in which a given idiom is translated. The ﬁ rst strategy described, that of ﬁ nding an idiom of similar meaning and similar form in the target language, may seem to offer the ideal solution, but that is not necessarily always the case. Ques- tions of style, register and rhetorical effect must also be taken into consideration.

Fernando and Flavell are correct in warning us against the ‘strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor-language, however inappropriate it may be’ (1981:82). **(a)** Using an idiom of similar meaning and form This strategy involves using an idiom in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items. This kind of match can only occasionally be achieved.

**(b)** Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form It is often possible to ﬁ nd an idiom or ﬁ xed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items. For example, the English expression *One good turn deserves another* and the French expression *À beau jeu, beau retour* (‘a handsome action deserves a handsome return’) use different lexical items to express more or less the same idea (Fernando and Flavell 1981).

**(c)** Borrowing the source language idiom Just as the use of loan words is a common strategy in dealing with culture-speciﬁ c items (see Chapter 2), it is not unusual for idioms to be borrowed in their original form in some contexts. In Figure 6, taken from a promotional leaﬂ et available to visitors to the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester (UK), *Out of this World* refers to a space gallery that is signposted as such throughout the Museum.

It is of course a play on the idiomatic meaning of *out of this world* (‘fantastic’, ‘superb’), and the more concrete meaning of ‘from another galaxy, beyond the earth environment’, referring to what a visitor might expect to see in a space gallery.

**(d)** Translation by paraphrase

This is by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages. You may or may not ﬁ nd the paraphrases accurate; the examples below are quoted as they appear in the original documents to illustrate the strategy of paraphrase rather than to explain the meanings of individual idioms.

**(e)** Translation by omission of a play on idiom This strategy involves rendering only the literal meaning of an idiom in a context that allows for a concrete reading of an otherwise playful use of language. The example in Figure 12 comes from a promotional leaﬂ et handed out to visitors at the Wedgwood factory and exhibition – home of the famous British brand of pottery and ornamental china, in Stoke-on-Trent, UK.

Something that comes or is handed *on a plate* is made easy to acquire. The English text plays on the idiomatic meaning of the expression as well as the concrete meaning of *plate*, which is particularly salient here given that Wedgwood are famous for producing crockery. This play on idiom is very difﬁ cult to reproduce in other languages.

**(f)** Translation by omission of entire idiom

One strategy which cannot be adequately illustrated, simply because it would take up a considerable amount of space, is the strategy of compensation. Brieﬂ y, this means that one may either omit or play down a feature such as idiomaticity at the point where it occurs in the source text and introduce it elsewhere in the target text.

This strategy is not restricted to idiomaticity or ﬁ xed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss of meaning, emotional force or stylistic effect which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text. Mason (1982:29) explains that, because they were unable to translate speciﬁ c puns at the points at which they occurred in the text, the translators of *Astérix* ‘have sometimes resorted to inserting English puns (of equivalent impact rather than equivalent meaning) in different frames of the cartoon’. For a detailed discussion of compensation as a translation strategy, see Harvey (1995, 1998).

Using the typical phraseology of the target language – its natural collocations, its own ﬁ xed and semi-ﬁ xed expressions, the right level of idiomaticity, and so on – will greatly enhance the readability of your translations. Getting this level right means that you will avoid unintentionally producing a text that feels ‘foreign’.9 But naturalness and readability are also affected by other linguistic features, and these will be discussed at various points in the following chapters.

**Лекція № 3**

**Тема: Grammatical equivalence**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 4

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. Grammatical vs lexical categories
2. The diversity of grammatical categories across languages
3. A brief note on word order
4. Introducing text

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

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**Текст лекції:**

The lexical structure of a language, its stock of words and expressions and its established patterns of collocation, provides its speakers with ready-made ways of analysing and reporting experience. We do ﬁ nd new ways of reporting experience when necessary, but on the whole, we tend to rely heavily on existing lexical resources in order to communicate successfully and easily with other members of our language community.

Lexical resources are not the only factor that inﬂ uences the way in which we analyse and report experience. Another powerful factor which determines the kind of distinctions we regularly make in reporting experience is the grammatical system of our language. In the course of reporting events, every language makes a different selection from a large set of possible distinctions in terms of notions such as time, number, gender, shape, visibility, person, proximity, animacy and so on. There is no uniform or objective way of reporting events in all their detail, exactly as they happen in the real world; the structure of each language highlights, and to a large extent preselects, certain areas which are deemed to be fundamental to the reporting of any experience.

**Grammar** is the set of rules which determine the way in which units such as words and phrases can be combined in a language and the kind of information which has to be made regularly explicit in utterances. A language can, of course, express any kind of information its speakers need to express, but the grammatical system of a given language will determine the ease with which certain notions such as time reference or gender can be made explicit. Centuries ago, the Greeks and Romans assumed that notional categories such as time, number and gender existed in the real world and must therefore be common to all languages. All languages, they thought, must express these ‘basic’ aspects of experience on a regular basis. With greater exposure to other languages, it later became apparent that these so-called ‘basic’ categories are not in fact universal, and that languages differ widely in the range of notions they choose to make explicit on a regular basis. In this chapter, we will take a brief look at the variety of grammatical categories which may or may not be expressed in different languages and the way this area of language structure affects decisions in the course of translation. But before we do so, it may be helpful to outline some of the main differences between lexical and grammatical categories.

**3.1 GRAMMATICAL VS LEXICAL CATEGORIES**

the grammatical pattern of a language (as opposed to its lexical stock) deter- mines those aspects of each experience that must be expressed in the given language.

*(Jakobson 1959:235–236)*

Grammar is organized along two main dimensions: **morphology** and **syntax**.

**Morphology** covers the structure of words, the way in which the form of a word changes to indicate speciﬁ c contrasts in the grammatical **system**.1 For instance, most nouns in English have two forms, a singular form and a plural form: *man*/*men*, *child*/*children*, *car*/*cars*.English can therefore be said to have a grammatical category of number. The morphological structure of a language determines the basic information which must be expressed in that language. **Syntax** covers the grammatical structure of groups, clauses and sentences: the linear sequences of classes of words such as noun, verb, adverb and adjective, and functional elements such as subject, predicator and object, which are allowed in a given language.2 The syntactic structure of a language imposes certain restrictions on the way messages may be organized in that language.

Choices in language can be expressed grammatically or lexically, depending on the type and range of linguistic resources available in a given language. Choices made from closed systems, such as the number system (singular/plural) or the pronoun system in English, are grammatical; those made from open-ended sets of items or expressions are lexical. Grammatical choices are normally expressed morphologically, as in the case of the singular/plural contrast in English. They may also be expressed syntactically, for instance by manipulating the order of elements in a clause to indicate certain relations between them or to signal the function of the clause (cf. the difference between the order of elements in a statement and a question in English: *She had forgotten about the party.*/*Had she forgotten about the party?*).

The most important difference between grammatical and lexical choices, as far as translation is concerned, is that grammatical choices are largely obligatory while lexical choices are largely optional. Languages which have morphological resources for expressing a certain category such as number, tense or gender have to express these categories regularly; those which do not have morphological resources for expressing the same categories do not have to express them except when they are felt to be relevant. Because a grammatical choice is drawn from a closed set of options, it is (a) obligatory, and (b) rules out other choices from the same system by default. The fact that number is a grammatical category in English means that an English speaker or writer who uses a noun such as *student* or *child* has to choose between singular and plural. Apart from a few nouns which allow a choice of singular or plural concord (e.g. *The committee is/are considering the question*), the choice of singular in English rules out the possibility of plural reference by default, and vice versa. The same is not true in Chinese or Japanese, where number is a lexical rather than a grammatical category (see 4.2.1 below). A Chinese or Japanese speaker or writer does not have to choose between singular and plural, unless the context demands that this information be made explicit.

Where necessary, number is indicated in these languages by means of adding a word such as ‘several’ or a numeral such as ‘one’ or ‘ﬁ ve’ to the noun, rather than by changing the form of the noun itself.

Grammatical structure also differs from lexical structure in that it is more resistant to change. It is much easier to introduce a new word, expression or collocation into a language than to introduce a new grammatical category, system or sequence. The grammatical structure of a language does, of course, change, but this does not happen overnight. Grammatical change occurs over a much longer time scale than lexical change. On the whole, the grammatical structure of a language remains fairly constant throughout the lifetime of an individual, whereas one encounters new words, expressions and collocations on a daily basis. Grammatical rules are also more resistant to manipulation by speakers. A deviant grammatical structure may occasionally be accepted in very restricted contexts, for instance in order to maintain rhyme or metre in poetry. A very small number of text types, such as poems, adver- tisements and jokes, will occasionally manipulate or ﬂ out the grammatical rules of the language to create special effect. The well-known poet e. e. cummings does precisely that; he achieves special effect by using unusual grammatical conﬁ gura- tions, as he does in his poem ‘a pretty a day’, which starts as follows:

a pretty a day (and every fades) is here and away (but born are maids to ﬂ ower an hour in all, all)

Likewise, modelled on Louis Jordan’s 1944 song ‘Is You Is or Is You Ain’t My Baby’, the following advertisement by Access, a former credit card company, provides an example of a similar type of manipulation in non- literary contexts: Does you does or does you don’t take access? 7 million outlets worldwide does.

On the whole, however, deviant grammatical conﬁ gurations are simply not acceptable in most contexts. This means that, in translation, grammar often has the effect of a straitjacket, forcing the translator along a certain course which may or may not follow that of the source text as closely as the translator would like it to.

**3.2 THE DIVERSITY OF GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES**

**ACROSS LANGUAGES**

It is difﬁ cult to ﬁ nd a notional category which is regularly and uniformly expressed in all languages. Even categories such as time and number, which many of us take as reﬂ ecting basic aspects of experience, are only optionally indicated in some Asian languages such as Chinese and Vietnamese. On the other hand, a number of American Indian languages such as Yana and Navaho have grammatical categories which in many other languages would hardly ever be expressed even by lexical means. These languages, for instance, have a category of ‘shape’, which means that an object must be classiﬁ ed according to whether it is long, round or sheet-like (Sapir and Swadesh 1964). Some languages, such as Amuesha of Peru, regularly indicate whether a person is dead or alive by adding a sufﬁ x to the name of any person referred to after his or her death (Larson 1984). The absence of the sufﬁ x indicates that the person concerned is alive, in much the same way as the absence of a plural sufﬁ x such as *-s* in English indicates a choice of singular as opposed to plural reference.3 Languages therefore differ widely in the way they are equipped to handle various notions and express different aspects of experience, possibly because they differ in the degree of importance or relevance that they attach to such aspects of experience. Time is regarded as a crucial aspect of experience in English, so that it is virtually impossible to discuss any event in English without locating it in the past, present or future. In Aztec, the notion of deference is regarded as crucial. Conse- quently, according to Nida, ‘it is impossible to say anything to anyone without indi- cating the relative degree of respect to which the speaker and hearer are entitled in the community’ (1964:95). Korean and Japanese similarly draw on a complex system of honoriﬁ cs to signal the relative status of participants in an interaction.

Differences in the grammatical structures of the source and target languages often result in some change in the information content of the message during the process of translation. This change may take the form of adding to the target text information which is not expressed in the source text. This can happen when the target language has a grammatical category which the source language lacks. In translating from English or French into an American Indian language such as Yana or Navaho, one would have to add information concerning the shape of any objects mentioned in the text. Likewise, in translating into Amuesha, one would have to indicate whether any person mentioned in the text is dead or alive. Details which are ignored in the source text but which have to be speciﬁ ed in the target language can pose a serious dilemma for the translator if they cannot be reasonably inferred from the context.

The change in the information content of the message may be in the form of omitting information speciﬁ ed in the source text. If the target language lacks a gram- matical category which exists in the source language, the information expressed by that category may have to be ignored. Jakobson suggests that ‘no lack of gram- matical device in the language translated into makes impossible a literal translation of the entire conceptual information contained in the original’ (1959:235). This is true in theory, but in practice the lack of a grammatical device can make the trans- lation of ‘the entire conceptual information’ very difﬁ cult indeed. First, the lack of a grammatical category in a given language suggests that the indication of information associated with that category is regarded as optional. The frequency of occurrence of such optional information tends to be low, and a translation which repeatedly indi- cates information that is normally left unspeciﬁ ed in the target language is bound to sound unnatural. Second, because such information would have to be expressed lexically, it is likely to assume more importance in the target text than it does in the source text. The fact that lexical choices are optional gives them more weight than grammatical choices.

The following discussion of some major categories, with examples, is intended to illustrate the kinds of difﬁ culty that translators often encounter because of differ- ences in the grammatical structures of source and target languages.

**3.2.1 Number**

The idea of countability is probably universal in the sense that it is readily accessible to all human beings and is expressed in the lexical structure of all languages.

However, not all languages have a grammatical category of number, and those that do do not necessarily view countability in the same terms. As explained above, English recognizes a distinction between one and more than one (singular and plural). This distinction has to be expressed morphologically, by adding a sufﬁ x to a noun or by changing its form in some other way to indicate whether it refers to one or more than one: *student*/*students*, *fox*/*foxes*, *man*/*men*, *child*/*children*.Some languages, such as Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese, prefer to express the same notion lexically or, more often, not at all. The form of a noun in these languages does not normally indicate whether it is singular or plural. For example, *my book* and *my books* are both *wo-de-shu* in Chinese (Tan 1980).

Unlike Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese, most languages have a gram- matical category of number, similar but not necessarily identical to that of English.

Arabic, Inuit and some Slavonic languages formally distinguish between one, two and more than two. These languages have a dual form in addition to singular and plural forms. In most European languages today, dual is a lexical rather than a gram- matical category; it can only be indicated by the use of a numeral. And so English regularly expresses a meaning contrast between *house* and *houses*,whereas Inuit regularly expresses a meaning contrast between *iglu*, *igluk* and *iglut* (‘one/two/ more than two houses’). A small number of languages, such as Fijian, even distin- guish between singular, dual, trial (covering three or a small number) and plural (Robins 1964). Such additional reﬁ nements to a system can sometimes pose problems in translation.

A translator working from a language which has number distinctions into a language with no category of number has two main options: he or she can (a) omit the relevant information relating to number, or (b) encode this information lexically.

**3.2.2 Gender**

Gender is a grammatical distinction according to which a noun or pronoun is clas- siﬁ ed as either masculine or feminine in some languages.4 The distinction applies to nouns which refer to animate beings as well as those which refer to inanimate objects. For example, French distinguishes between masculine and feminine gender in nouns such as *ﬁ ls*/*ﬁ lle* (‘son’/‘daughter’) and *chat*/*chatte* (‘male cat’/‘female cat’). In addition, nouns such as *magazine* (‘magazine’) and *construction* (‘construction’) are also classiﬁ ed as masculine and feminine respectively. Deter- miners,5 adjectives, and sometimes verbs (as in the case of Arabic and Swahili), usually agree with the noun in gender as well as in number.

English does not have a grammatical category of gender as such; English nouns are not regularly inﬂ ected to distinguish between feminine and masculine. The gender distinction nevertheless exists in some semantic areas and in the **person** system. Different nouns are sometimes used to refer to female and male members of the same species: *cow*/*bull*, *sow*/*boar*, *doe*/*stag*, *mare*/*stallion*, *ewe*/*ram*.A small number of nouns which refer to professions have masculine and feminine forms, with the sufﬁ x *-ess* indicating feminine gender. Examples include *actor*/ *actress*, *manager*/*manageress*, *host*/*hostess* and *steward*/*stewardess*.These, however, do not always reﬂ ect straightforward gender distinctions as in the case of other European languages; some carry speciﬁ c connotations. For instance, the distinction between *author* and *authoress* may carry more expressive than proposi- tional meaning: *authoress* tends to have derogatory overtones, with *author* being the unmarked form for both sexes.6 In addition to gender distinctions in speciﬁ c semantic areas, English also has a category of **person** (see 4.2.3 below) which distinguishes in the third-person singular between masculine, feminine and inanimate (*he*/*she*/*it*).

This distinction does not apply to the third-person plural (*they*). Russian and German make similar gender distinctions in the third-person singular pronouns and, like English, do not apply these distinctions to the third-person plural. On the other hand, languages like French and Italian maintain the gender distinction in the third-person plural: for example, *ils* vs *elles* in French. In some languages, such as Arabic, gender distinctions apply to second- as well as third-person pronouns. In addition to gender distinctions in the third-person singular and plural, Arabic has different forms for ‘you’, depending on whether the person or persons addressed is/are male or female. Other languages such as Chinese and Indonesian do not have gender distinctions in their person systems at all.

In most languages that have a gender category, the masculine term is usually the ‘dominant’ or ‘unmarked’ term. In French, *elles* is used only when all persons or things referred to are feminine; if one or more persons or things in a group are masculine the form used is *ils*, even if the feminine referents outnumber the masculine ones. Similarly, if the sex of a referent is not known, the masculine rather than the feminine form is used. In effect, this means that the use of feminine forms provides more speciﬁ c information than the use of masculine forms can be said to provide; it rules out the possibility of masculine reference, whereas the use of masculine forms does not rule out the possibility of feminine reference.

There is now a conscious attempt to replace the unmarked masculine form *he* in English with forms such as *s/he*, *he or she* and *him or her*.This is particularly true of academic writing. But even among the general public, overtly masculine nouns such as *chairman*, *spokesman* and *businessman* are consciously and systematically being replaced by more neutral ones such as *chairperson* and *spokesperson*,or by speciﬁ cally feminine nouns such as *businesswoman* when the referent is clearly feminine. Viaggio (1996:189) reports an incident in a debate on linguistic sexism at the United Nations where the delegates variously addressed the British female presiding ofﬁ cer as *Madam Chairman*, *Madam Chairperson*, *Madam Chairwoman* and *Madam Chairlady*. When one of the delegates ﬁ nally addressed her as *Madam Chair*, she responded ‘I’d rather you called me a man than a piece of furniture’.

Viaggio (*ibid.*) offers several possible strategies for dealing with this type of gender- based humour in the context of simultaneous interpreting, including retaining the key English nouns as loan words, and possibly adding an explanation. In Spanish, the result would be:

Llámeme ***man*** pero no ***chair***, **que no soy un meuble**.

Call me ***man*** but not ***chair***: **I’m no piece of furniture**.

Gender-based humour and wordplay aside, another challenge comes from a growing trend to use the feminine form as the unmarked form, especially in academic writing.

Diane Blakemore, for instance, uses *she* and *her* to mean any person, male or female:

It is clear that because of the role of the context in all aspects of utterance interpretation, a speaker who intends *her* utterance to be taken in a particular way must expect it to be interpreted in a context that yields that interpretation.

*(1987:27; my emphasis)*

This ideological stance is somewhat difﬁ cult to transfer into languages in which gender distinctions pervade the grammatical system. It is fairly easy to make the switch from *he* to something like *s/he* or *him/her* in English because the change affects these items only. But in a language such as Arabic, where gender distinc- tions are reﬂ ected not only in nouns and pronouns but also in the concord between these and their accompanying verbs and adjectives, the resulting structures would clearly be much more cumbersome than in English. With all the good will in the world, an Arab writer or translator cannot side with this admittedly more enlightened approach to gender without sacriﬁ cing the readability of the target text. By contrast, the syntax of other languages offers much more ﬂ exible ways of avoiding sexist language. In revising the Irish and English versions of the Constitution of Ireland, for example, in order to eliminate traces of sexist language, the Irish text posed much fewer problems than the English (Ó Cearúil 1999:47): While the clause ‘such resolution shall operate to remove the President from his ofﬁ ce’ in Article 12.10.7° is gender-proofed in the version published by the All-Party Oireachtas Committeee on the Constitution to ‘such resolution shall operate to remove the President from his **or her** ofﬁ ce’, … the Irish text needs no gender-prooﬁ ng, reading ‘… is é is feidhm don rún sin an tUachtarán a chur as oiﬁ g’, literally ‘such resolution shall operate to remove the President from ofﬁ ce’.

Ó Cearúil thus concludes that ‘[g]ender-prooﬁ ng the English text from “from his ofﬁ ce” to “from ofﬁ ce”, following the Irish text, would appear to be the better course rather than emending to read ‘from his or her ofﬁ ce’’ (*ibid.*:47–48).

Gender distinctions are generally more relevant in translation when the referent of the noun or pronoun is human. Gender distinctions in inanimate objects such as ‘car’ or ‘ship’ and in animals such as ‘dog’ and ‘cat’ are sometimes manipulated in English to convey expressive meaning, particularly in literature, but they do not often cause difﬁ culties in non-literary translation.7 Making the necessary adjustments, for instance by adding the gender dimension in the target text (English *table* : French *la/une table*) is usually straightforward and automatic because the distinctions themselves are largely arbitrary. But gender distinctions in the case of human referents are not arbitrary, and this is why Lyons (1968), for instance, suggests that what is important in communication is the pronominal function of gender rather than the category of gender in general. The pronominal function of gender reﬂ ects a genuine, non-arbitrary distinction between male and female. Although languages differ in the extent to which they regularly specify the gender of human referents (cf.

English *they* and French *ils/elles*), we all readily recognize the distinction and expect it to reﬂ ect a genuine aspect of experience.

– For obtaining maximum effectiveness, the hair **is covered** by means of a cap, that is a plastic hat which covers the hair, or by means of a towel. – Kolestral-Super is left for a period of 10–20 minutes. – After the end of the reaction period, the hair **should be rinsed** well and in depth before starting on the desired hair-do. No need for shampoo in this ﬁ nal stage. – The hair **is styled** and **combed** as usual and in the desired fashion and the result is ideal and marvellous.

I mentioned earlier that the gender distinction in Arabic applies to the second as well as third person. An Arabic speaker or writer has to select between ‘you, masculine’ (*anta*) and ‘you, feminine’ (*anti*) in the case of the second-person singular. Moreover, this type of information must be signalled in the form of the verb itself: an Arabic verb has different forms depending on whether its subject is, for instance, second-person singular feminine or third-person plural masculine. In fact, pronouns such as ‘she’ and ‘I’ are usually redundant in Arabic and are used mainly for emphasis, since all the information they carry is incorporated in the form of the verb.

In translating the imperative verbs in the above text into Arabic, the translator would normally have to choose, as far as gender is concerned, between a masculine and a feminine form for each verb. As is the case in most languages which have a gender category, the masculine form is the unmarked form in Arabic and is therefore normally selected in most advertisements, leaﬂ ets and in wording general instruc- tions. However, the *Kolestral Super* text is a leaﬂ et which accompanies a hair condi- tioner, the sort of product which is predominantly used by women rather than men.

In the Arab context, it is likely to be used exclusively by women. This situation would make the use of the masculine form in this instance highly marked. The translator could have used the feminine form of the verb, but he or she possibly felt that it would also have been marked or that it might have unnecessarily excluded potential male users. The gender distinction is avoided by using a totally different structure throughout the whole set of instructions. The use of the **passive voice** (see 4.2.5 below) instead of the imperative form of the verb allows the translator to avoid specifying the subject of the verb altogether.

Although gender is also a grammatical category in French, gender distinctions are only expressed in nouns, articles and adjectives, and in third-person pronouns; they do not affect the form of the verb. The French translation of the *Kolestral Super* leaﬂ et can therefore follow the source text more closely than the Arabic translation. The in ﬁ nitive form of the verb is used, as is the norm in wording instructions in French. The ﬁ rst few lines of the instruction section are quoted below for illustration:

**3.2.3 Person**

The category of person relates to the notion of participant roles. In most languages, participant roles are systematically deﬁ ned through a closed system of pronouns which may be organized along a variety of dimensions.

The most common distinction is that between ﬁ rst person (identifying the speaker or a group which includes the speaker: English *I/we*), second person (iden- tifying the person or persons addressed: English *you*), and third person (identifying persons and things other than the speaker and addressee: English *he/she/it/they*).

A number of languages spoken in North America have four rather than three distinc- tions in the category of person. In these languages, the fourth person refers to ‘a person or thing distinct from one already referred to by a third person form’ (Robins 1964:264). Russian similarly uses a form of the pronominal adjectives *svoj* (masculine), *svoja* (feminine), *svojo* (neuter) and *svoi* (plural) to refer to a participant already referred to in the same clause, but in Russian this is not restricted to third- person forms; the participant referred to by the pronominal adjective may be ﬁ rst, second or third person. For instance, in *I’m meeting my teacher*, *my* would be trans- lated by *svoj* or *svoja* (depending on the gender of the following noun). Likewise, in *He’s meeting his teacher*, *his* would be translated by the appropriate case form of *svoj/svoja* provided the referent of *his* is the same as the referent of *he*; otherwise the pronoun used is *jego* (Halliday 1964).

In addition to the main distinction based on participant roles, the person system may be organized along a variety of other dimensions. As mentioned earlier, the person system in some languages may have a gender or number dimension which applies to the whole system or to parts of it. Although number is not a grammatical category in Chinese (see 4.2.1 above), the pronoun system in Chinese features a number distinction (e.g. *Wo* ‘I’ vs *Wo-men* ‘we’; *Ni* ‘you’ singular vs *Ni-men* ‘you’ plural). On the other hand, it does not feature any gender distinctions at all in speech (e.g. *Ta* ‘he/she/it’ vs *Ta-men* ‘they’), though it does in writing, where different characters are used for ‘he’, ‘she’ and ‘it’ and their plural forms.8 In Japanese, the person system features distinctions in gender as well as social status and level of intimacy (Levinson 1983). Some languages have rather elaborate person systems.

Catford (1965) explains that Bahasa Indonesia has a nine-term pronoun system where English has only seven. The gender dimension is absent from Bahasa Indo- nesia, but two other dimensions are of relevance:

1. the inclusive/exclusive dimension: English *we* has two translations in Bahasa Indonesia, involving a choice between *kami* and *kita*,depending on whether the addressee is included or excluded;

2. the familiar/non-familiar dimension, which necessitates a choice between, for instance, *aku* and *saja* for English *I*,depending on the relationship pertaining between speaker and hearer.

A large number of modern European languages, not including English, have a formality/politeness dimension in their person system.9 In such languages, a pronoun other than the second-person singular, usually the second- or third-person plural, is used in interaction with a singular addressee in order to express deference and/or non-familiarity: French *vous* as opposed to *tu*; Italian *lei* (third-person singular) and in certain regions, classes and age groups *voi* (second-person plural) as opposed to *tu*; Spanish *usted* as opposed to *tu*; German *Sie* as opposed to *du*; Greek *esi* as opposed to *esis*; and Russian *vy* as opposed to *ty.* Some languages also have different forms of plural pronoun which are used to express different levels of famil- iarity or deference in interaction with several addressees.10 All languages have modes of address which can be used to express familiarity or deference in a similar way: compare the difference between *you*, *mate*, *dear*, *darling* and *Mr Smith*, *Sir*, *Professor Brown*, *Mrs Jones*, *Madam*.The difference between modes of address and pronouns is that the use of pronouns is unavoidable, particu- larly since pronominal reference is coded in the inﬂ ection of verbs in many languages, whereas one can often avoid addressing a person directly (Brown and Gilman 1960/1972).

What all this amounts to, among other things, is that in translating pronouns from English to, say, French, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Russian, German or Bahasa Indonesian, decisions may have to be made along such dimensions as gender, degree of intimacy between participants, or whether reference includes or excludes the addressee. This information may or may not be readily recoverable from the context. Translating in the other direction, from one of the above languages into English, will frequently involve loss of information along the dimensions in question.

It is possible in theory to encode all the relevant information in an English translation, for example by using a circumlocution such as ‘he and I but not you’ for an exclusive ‘we’, but this kind of detail would be too cumbersome in most contexts.

You may agree or disagree with these decisions; the important thing is that we learn to appreciate the inﬂ uence that the grammatical system of a language has on the way events are presented in that language. The difﬁ culties that arise from the different demands made by the grammatical systems of different languages in translation should not be underestimated.

The familiarity/deference dimension in the pronoun system is among the most fascinating aspects of grammar and the most problematic in translation. It reﬂ ects the tenor of discourse (see Chapter 2) and can convey a whole range of rather subtle meanings. The subtle choices involved in pronoun usage in languages which distinguish between familiar and non-familiar pronouns is further complicated by the fact that this use differs signiﬁ cantly from one social group to another and that it changes all the time in a way that reﬂ ects changes in social values and attitudes.

Brown and Gilman suggest that the Gujarati and Hindi languages of India have very strict norms of pronoun usage, reﬂ ecting asymmetrical relations of power between, for example, husband and wife. And yet, they explain, ‘the progressive young Indian exchanges the mutual *T* with his wife’11 (1960/1972:269).

Pronominal shifts in translation and interpreting can also have ideological impli- cations, for example in terms of strengthening institutional presence and constructing in-group and out-group identities. Some simultaneous interpreters working between English and German in the European Parliament have been shown to introduce the inclusive *we* where it is not used by the speaker, partly by turning passive construc- tions into active ones, as in the following example (Beaton-Thome 2010:133):

**3.2.4 Tense and aspect**

Tense and aspect are grammatical categories in a large number of languages. The form of the verb in languages which have these categories usually indicates two main types of information: time relations and aspectual differences. Time relations have to do with locating an event in time. The usual distinction is between past, present and future. Aspectual differences have to do with the temporal distribution of an event, for instance its completion or non-completion, continuation or momentariness.

In some languages, the tense and aspect system, or parts of it, may be highly developed, with several ﬁ ne distinctions in temporal location or distribution. Bali, for instance, has a rather precise system of time reference. Apart from indicating past, present and future reference, each past or future reference is marked to show whether the event in question is immediately connected to the present, is separated from it by a period of time but taking place on the same day, or is separated from the present by at least one night. Wishram, an American Indian language, makes no fewer than four distinctions in reference to past events alone, each distinction expressing a certain degree of remoteness from the moment of speaking (Sapir and Swadesh 1964). In some languages, it is obligatory to specify more unusual types of temporal and aspectual relations. For instance, in the Villa Alta dialect of Zapotec (Mexico), it is necessary to distinguish between events which take place for the ﬁ rst time with respect to particular participants and those which are repetitions (Nida 1959).

Some languages, such as Chinese, Malay and Yurok, have no formal category of tense or aspect. The form of the verb in these languages does not change to express temporal or aspectual distinctions. If necessary, time reference can be indicated by means of various particles and adverbials. The following examples show how time relations are typically signalled in Chinese when the context demands that such information be made explicit:

ta *xian-zai* zai bei-jing gong-zuo (lit.: ‘he *now* in Peking work’, i.e. ‘he is working in Peking’) ta *dang-shi zai* bei-jing gong-zuo (lit.: ‘he *at that time* in Peking work’, i.e. ‘he was working in Peking’)

*(from Tan 1980:111)*

Because tense and aspect are not grammatical categories in Chinese, their speciﬁ - cation is largely optional. Context is relied on much more often than in English or Bali to establish time reference. If the adverbials in the above examples were not included in the clause, one would have to rely entirely on the context to establish the time of the event. The following examples from *China’s Panda Reserves* illustrate (a) the use of adverbials to indicate time reference where necessary and feasible in a Chinese translation, and (b) the omission of time reference altogether where it can be inferred from the context or where the information is not judged to be important.

The connotations of pastness in the above extract can be inferred from the context, because of the reference to nineteenth-century botanists. There is therefore no need to signal the past overtly in the Chinese text.

Although the main use of the grammatical categories of tense and aspect is to indicate time and aspectual relations, they do not necessarily perform the same function in all languages. For instance, the main function of the tense system in Hopi is to signal modal meanings such as certainty, uncertainty, possibility and obligation.

Hockett (1958) describes Hopi as having three main ‘tenses’: the ﬁ rst is used to express timeless truths, as in ‘The sun is round’; the second is used in connection with events which are either known or presumed to be known, as in ‘Paris is the capital of France’; and the third is used for events which are in the realm of uncer- tainty, as in ‘They will arrive tomorrow’.

Tense and aspect distinctions may also take on additional, more subtle meanings in discourse. In a brief discussion of the use of tense in English and Brazilian academic abstracts, Johns (1991) points out that some verbs refer to what is stated in the academic paper itself (these he calls **indicative verbs**), while other verbs refer to what was actually done in the research on which the paper reports (these he calls **informative verbs**).12 Johns suggests that in both English and Brazilian academic papers, the indicative/informative distinction correlates with the choice of tense: the present tense is used for indicative and the past tense for informative statements. Verbs such as *present*, *mention*, *propose* and *refer to*,which relate to what the writer is doing in the paper itself, are usually in the present tense, while verbs such as *determine*, *record*, *select* and *detect*,which have to do with actual research, are usually in the past tense. This regular correlation inﬂ uences the way we interpet statements in academic papers. As Johns points out, ‘the fact that the results of an experiment *are* analyzed reports the contents of the paper, but that they *were* analyzed reports one of the procedures undertaken in the research’ (1991:5).

Johns (personal communication) also suggests that in English science and engineering academic abstracts, the present perfect is speciﬁ cally used to refer to the work of other scientists. For example, *It is proposed that* … suggests that the writer of the abstract is doing the proposing, but *It has been proposed that* … suggests that the proposing is done by someone other than the writer. This signalling system is apparently more or less the same in Brazilian Portuguese. However, Johns found that translated Brazilian abstracts tend to follow textbook rules of grammar which favour ‘consistent’ use of tense and aspect. Many translators, for instance, use the present perfect or the simple past throughout the abstract in order to achieve ‘consistency’, thereby disrupting the natural signalling system of the target language.

Signalling systems such as those outlined above can be signiﬁ cantly different in the source and target languages, even when the basic tense and aspect systems are very similar. Japanese has a grammatical category of tense which is not too dissimilar to that of English. The sufﬁ xes *-ru* and *-ta* are regularly added to verbs to indicate non-past and past reference respectively.13 However, this does not mean that every past tense in an English text can be translated into Japanese with a *-ta* form or that every present or future tense can be translated using a *-ru* form. A translator has to bear in mind the additional meanings that these forms can assume in a Japanese text. In the following example, the past tense in the English text is rendered by a non-past form in the Japanese translation because the non-past is often used in Japanese to express personal judgement.

**3.2.5 Voice**

A Chinese translator … uses a preposition bei ‘by’ whenever he sees a passive voice in the original verb, forgetting that Chinese verbs have no voice. … Once this sort of thing is done often enough, it gets to be written in orig- inals, even where no translation is involved. … Such ‘translatese’ is still unpalatable to most people and no one talks in that way yet, but it is already common in scientiﬁ c writing, in newspapers, and in schools.

*(Chao 1970; in Li and Thompson 1981:496)*

The use of the passive voice is extremely common in many varieties of written English and can pose various problems in translation, depending on the availability of similar structures, or structures with similar functions, in the target language.

Because of its widespread use in technical and scientiﬁ c English in particular, it has had a strong inﬂ uence on similar registers in other languages through translation.

The tendency to translate English passive structures literally into a variety of target languages which either have no passive voice as such or which would normally use it with less frequency is often criticized by linguists and by those involved in training translators.

Voice is a grammatical category which deﬁ nes the relationship between a verb and its subject. In active clauses, the subject is the agent responsible for performing the action. In passive clauses, the subject is the affected entity, and the agent may or may not be speciﬁ ed, depending on the structures available in each language.

Active: (a) Nigel Mansell opened the Mansell Hall in 1986.

Passive: (b) The Mansell Hall was opened in 1986. (c) The Mansell Hall was opened by Nigel Mansell in 1986.

Note that the form of the verb changes in a passive structure to indicate that its subject is the affected entity rather than the agent. Chao’s comment above about Chinese verbs having no voice refers to the fact that the form of the verb in Chinese does not change to indicate its relationship with the subject of the clause.

The structure illustrated in (c), where the agent is speciﬁ ed in a passive clause, is much less frequent than the structure illustrated in (b), where the agent is left unspeciﬁ ed. This is because the main function of the passive in most languages is to allow the construction of ‘agentless’ clauses.14 In some languages, such as Turkish, this seems to be its only function (Lyons 1968). In other languages, the use of the passive is obligatory in certain contexts; for instance, the passive has to be used in Yana, an American Indian language, when the agent is a third person acting upon a ﬁ rst or second person (Sapir and Swadesh 1964).

Most languages have a variety of mechanisms for constructing ‘agentless’ clauses; for instance, the French statement *On parle anglais* and the German *Man spricht Englisch* leave the agent unspeciﬁ ed by using a ‘dummy’ subject, *on* and *man* respectively. They can be translated into English either by using a similar ‘dummy’ subject, *They speak English*,where *they* does not refer to a speciﬁ c agent, or by using the passive voice, *English is spoken* (Lyons 1968).

Languages which have a category of voice do not always use the passive with the same frequency. German uses the passive much less frequently than English.

The same is true of Russian and French, where reﬂ exive structures15 are relied on much more heavily to fulﬁ l similar functions. The frequency of use of the passive in languages which have a category of voice usually expresses a stylistic choice and, in some registers, may be a question of pure convention. Scientiﬁ c and technical writing in English, for instance, relies heavily on passive structures. This is done to give the impression of objectivity and to distance the writer from the statements made in the text.16 It has, however, come to represent the ‘norm’ in technical writing to such an extent that, even if a writer was not particularly interested in giving an impression of objectivity, he or she might ﬁ nd it difﬁ cult to break away from the convention of using predominantly passive structures in technical writing. The more pervasive a structure becomes in a given context, the more difﬁ cult it becomes for speakers and writers to select other structures or to depict events differently.

Some languages use the passive more frequently than English in everyday contexts. In Tjolobal of Mexico, passive structures are the norm, with active struc- tures being used very rarely (Beekman and Callow 1974). Nida similarly explains that ‘in some Nilotic languages the passive forms of verbs are so preferred that instead of saying “he went to town”, it is much more normal to employ an expression such as “the town was gone to by him’” (1975:136).

Rendering a passive structure by an active structure, or conversely an active structure by a passive structure in translation can have implications for the amount of information given in the clause, the linear arrangement of semantic elements such as agent and affected entity, and the focus of the message.17 However, one must weigh this potential change in content and focus against the beneﬁ ts of rendering a smooth, natural translation in contexts where the use of the passive might, for instance, be stylistically less acceptable than the use of the active or an alternative structure in the target language. The conference circular (in English and Russian) and the back- translated version of the Russian text that follow are quoted at length to illustrate that, in some contexts, professional translators may decide to replace passive structures in the source text with stylistically more acceptable alternative structures, such as the active and reﬂ exive in the case of Russian. The relevant structures are highlighted in the English and back-translated Russian texts for ease of comparison.

Source Text (Euralex Conference Circular, 1987): CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited for the EURALEX Third International Congress 4–9 September 1988 Budapest, Hungary.

Papers are invited on all aspects of lexicography, theoretical and practical, diachronic and synchronic. The main ﬁ elds of interest reﬂ ected in the Congress programme will be: general (monolingual or bilingual), computational terminological and specialized translation lexicography.

Papers relating to the lesser-known languages will be particularly welcome.

The format of the Congress will embrace plenary sessions, symposia, section meetings, workshop sessions, project reports and demon- strations of computational and other work; there will also be ample time for discussion. Individual presentations should be timed to last 20 minutes, with a discussion period to follow. Abstracts (approximately 1,000 words) in any of the Congress languages, English, French, German or Russian, should be sent to the Lecture Programme Organizer, Dr. Tamas Magay, at the above address by 15 November 1987. A response will be sent before the end of February 1988. Any other correspondence should be addressed to the Congress organizer, Ms Judit Zigany. It is conﬁ dently expected that a volume of collected papers from this Congress will subsequently be published by Akademiai Kiado in Budapest. This Congress will, like its predecessors at Exeter and Zurich, be a meeting place for lexicographers, academics and publishers. It will also offer a unique opportunity for participants from the East and from the West to strengthen professional and personal contacts and thus to lay the foundations of further exchanges and cooperation in the future.

The most important things to bear in mind as far as voice is concerned are the frequency of use of active, passive and similar structures in the source and target languages, their respective stylistic value in different text types, and – most important of all – the function(s) of the passive and similar structures in each language. The idea is not to replace an active form with an active one and a passive form with a passive one; it is always the function of a category rather than the form it takes that is of paramount importance in translation.

The categories discussed and exempliﬁ ed above are among the most prob- lematic in translation but are by no means the only ones that cause difﬁ culty. The expression of modal meanings, for instance, can vary widely from language to language and has to be handled sensitively and carefully in translation. Modality has to do with the attitude of the speaker to the hearer or to what is being said; in other words, it has to do with such things as certainty, possibility and obligation. The expression of modal meanings can take quite a different form in each language. In an article on political interviews on Israeli television, Blum-Kulka (1983) explains that English tends to use expressions such as *Let’s* … and *Shall we* … in directing the actions of others, in controlling talk, and in making polite requests that have the force of commands. Hebrew, on the other hand, expresses similar modal meanings by ‘addressing a question about the possibility of getting something done. For example, “Perhaps you’ll go to sleep” (*ulay telex li[scaron]on*) from a mother to a child simply means “go to sleep”’ (*ibid.*:147). Throughout her article, Blum-Kulka renders Hebrew expressions used by the interviewer to direct each talk with natural- sounding English expressions which are not literal renderings of the Hebrew but which express similar modal meanings. For example, she uses *Let’s go on to another topic* where a literal translation of the Hebrew would be ‘Perhaps we shall/ should go on to another topic’, and *Let’s begin with the question of defence policy* where the Hebrew is literally ‘Perhaps we shall start with the question of defence policy’. Becker (2009) offers a similar analysis of differences in the use of modality in German and British political interviews; Kim and Thompson (2010) analyse the use of modal expressions of obligation in English and Korean newspaper science popularization texts and relate the ﬁ ndings to cultural norms characteristic of the two groups: individualism and task-orientatedness in the case of English and collectivism and relation-orientatedness in the case of Korean.

Other grammatical categories which can pose difﬁ culties in translation include mood, direct and indirect speech, and causativity, among many others. Translators should ﬁ nd it useful to investigate and compare the expression of such categories and the meanings associated with various structures in their source and target languages.

For a good overview of a number of grammatical categories and their expression in various languages, see Robins (1964) and Lyons (1968). For a detailed discussion of the main categories and their realization and function in English, see the *Collins COBUILD English Grammar* (Sinclair 1990).

**3.3 A BRIEF NOTE ON WORD ORDER**

The syntactic structure of a language imposes restrictions on the way messages may be organized in that language. The order in which functional elements such as subject, predicator and object may occur is more ﬁ xed in some languages than in others.19 Languages vary in the extent to which they rely on word order to signal the relationship between elements in the clause. Compared to languages such as German, Russian, Finnish, Arabic and Eskimo, word order in English is relatively ﬁ xed. The meaning of a sentence in English, and in languages with similarly ﬁ xed word order such as Chinese, often depends entirely on the order in which the elements are placed (cf. *The man ate the ﬁ sh* and *The ﬁ sh ate the man*).

Some languages have **case inﬂ ections** which indicate the relationship between the elements in a clause, for instance who does what to whom. In such languages, the form of a noun changes depending on its function in the clause. In Russian, both *Ivan videl Borisa* and *Borisa videl Ivan* mean ‘John saw Boris’ (Lyons 1968), because *-a* marks *Boris* as the object, regardless of its position with respect to the subject and verb.

Languages which have elaborate systems of case inﬂ ection tend to have fewer restrictions on word order than languages like English, which have very few case inﬂ ections. In languages with elaborate case inﬂ ections, word order is largely a matter of stylistic variation and is available as a resource to signal emphasis and contrast and to organize messages in a variety of ways. Word order is extremely important in translation because it plays a major role in maintaining a coherent point of view and in orientating messages at text level. Because of its particular importance to the overall organization of discourse, the next chapter will be devoted to discussing word order at length from a purely textual point of view. But before we move from discussing the lower levels of language – words, phrases, grammatical categories – to talking about the text as a unit of meaning, it would perhaps be useful to explain brieﬂ y what a text is and why we identify a given stretch of language as a text rather than assume that it is a set of unrelated words and sentences.

**3.4 INTRODUCING TEXT**

So far in this book we have attempted to deal with some of the basic ‘building blocks’ of language: its lexical stock and grammatical structures. In order to make some headway in describing and analysing language, we have had to treat linguistic units and structures temporarily as if they had an independent status and possessed ‘meaning’ in their own right. We now need to take a broader look at language and to consider the possibility that, as part of a language system, lexical items and gram- matical structures have a ‘meaning potential’. This ‘meaning potential’ is only realized in communicative events, that is, in **text**. Following Brown and Yule (1983:6), **text** is deﬁ ned here as ‘the verbal record of a communicative event’; it is an instance of language in use rather than language as an abstract system of meanings and relations.

**3.4.1 Text vs non-text**

The nearest we get to non-text in actual life, leaving aside the works of those poets and prose writers who deliberately set out to create non-text, is probably in the speech of young children and *in bad translations*. *(Halliday and Hasan 1976:24; my emphasis)*

As translators, we have to operate with lexical items and grammatical structures at various stages of the translation process. It is nevertheless imperative that we view the text as a whole, both at the beginning and at the end of the process. With the exception of extremely repetitive and predictable texts such as computer manuals, a conscientious translator does not begin to translate until he or she has read the text at least once and got a ‘gist’ of the overall message. But this is only the ﬁ rst step.

Once the source text is understood, the translator then has to tackle the task of producing a target version which can be accepted as a text in its own right. Depending on the type of text being translated (e.g. an experimental novel vs a set of instruc- tions for operating a machine) and the purpose assigned to the translation by the translator or the commissioner,20 the phraseology and the collocational and gram- matical patterning of the target version may – and usually do – have to conform to target-language norms, but even then the translation may still sound foreign or clumsy. Worse still, it may not even make sense to the target reader. Acceptable collocational patterns and grammatical structures can only enhance the readability of individual sentences, but they do not in themselves ensure that sentences and para- graphs add up to a readable or coherent text. In an unpublished manuscript, ‘Ingre- dients of good, clear style’, Wilson comments as follows on the difference between an old and a revised version of the Bible in Dagbani:

For a native speaker it was difﬁ cult to express what was wrong with the earlier version, except that it was ‘foreign’. Since superﬁ cially there seemed to be no obvious grammatical blunders, and the vocabulary was not obviously faulty, the ingredients of this foreignness were not at ﬁ rst apparent. Now, however, a comparison … has made clear that what the older version mainly suffers from are considerable deﬁ ciencies in ‘discourse structure’, i.e., in the way the sentences are combined into well-integrated paragraphs, and these in turn into a well-constructed whole. The new version, on the contrary, shows native-speaker mastery over the means of signposting the text into a coherent, clear prose, which is … a real pleasure to read.

*(quoted in Callow 1974:10–11)*

A text, then, has features of organization which distinguish it from non-text, that is, from a random collection of sentences and paragraphs. Just like collocational and grammatical patterning and a host of other linguistic phenomena, these features of text organization are language- and culture-speciﬁ c. Each linguistic community has preferred ways of organizing its various types of discourse. This is why target readers can often identify what appears to be a lexically and grammatically ‘normal’ text as a translation, or as ‘foreign’.

A translation may be undertaken for a variety of purposes. However, in the chapters that follow we will assume that the ultimate aim of a translator, in most cases, is to achieve a measure of equivalence at text level, rather than at word or phrase level.21 More often than not, a translator will want the reader to accept a given translation as a text in its own right, if possible without being unduly alerted to the fact that it is a translation. To achieve this, the translator will need to adjust certain features of source-text organization in line with preferred ways of organizing discourse in the target language. The following chapters will attempt to outline some of the main features of discourse organization by looking at a number of factors which constrain or aid the way we produce and understand text.

This area of language study is somewhat ‘messier’ than the study of lexis and grammar. Texts may be organized in a variety of ways, the naturalness or otherwise of their organization being determined by a multitude of factors. De Beaugrande and Dressler rightly point out that it is ‘much more straightforward to decide what consti- tutes a grammatical or acceptable sentence than what constitutes a grammatical or acceptable sentence sequence, paragraph, text, or discourse’ (1981:17). More importantly, text studies are a relatively recent development in linguistics. There is, admittedly, a long tradition both in linguistics and in literary studies of analysing the works of individual writers, particularly literary writers, but relatively little work has been done on such areas of text studies as the conventions of non-literary writing within a community or the preferred patterns of organization in different types of discourse. Moreover, of the studies now available, most are concerned with describing the patterning and conventions of spoken and written English. Very little is available in the way of describing the types of text available in, say, Chinese or

Spanish, or of how such texts are organized. Readers will note that the rest of this book will sometimes raise more questions than it answers, but they will, I hope, agree that raising questions is at least a step towards providing answers and solving problems.

**3.4.2 Features of text organization**

Any text, in any language, exhibits certain linguistic features which allow us to identify it as a text. We identify a stretch of language as a text partly because it is presented to us as a text – and we therefore do our utmost to make sense of it as a unit – and partly because we perceive connections within and among its sentences.

These connections are of several kinds. First, there are connections which are established through the arrangement of information within each clause and the way this relates to the arrangement of information in preceding and following clauses and sentences; these contribute mainly to topic development and maintenance through **thematic** and **information structures** (Chapter 5). Second, there are surface connections which establish interrelationships between persons and events; these allow us to trace participants in a text and to interpret the way in which different parts of the text relate to each other (**cohesion**; Chapter 6). Finally, there are underlying semantic connections which allow us to ‘make sense’ of a text as a unit of meaning; these are dealt with under the heading of **coherence** and **implicature** in Chapter 7 (‘Pragmatic equivalence’).

Another important feature of text organization derives from the overlapping notions of **genre** and **text type**. Both relate to the way in which textual material is packaged by the writer along patterns familiar to the reader. Texts have been clas- siﬁ ed in two main ways to capture this type of ‘packaging’. The ﬁ rst and more straightforward classiﬁ cation is based on the contexts in which texts occur and results in institutionalized labels such as ‘journal article’, ‘science textbook’, ‘news- paper editorial’ or ‘travel brochure’. The second is a more subjective, less institution- alized and therefore much vaguer classiﬁ cation which does not normally apply to a whole text but rather to parts of it. Typical labels used in this type of classiﬁ cation include ‘narration’, ‘exposition’, ‘argumentation’ and ‘instruction’. The ﬁ rst classiﬁ - cation abstracts across contexts, the second abstracts across such factors as the nature of the messages involved or the addresser/addressee relationship. Both types of classiﬁ cation are useful in deﬁ ning translation problems and in justifying speciﬁ c strategies to overcome them. Reference to institutionalized genres, such as ‘religious texts’ and ‘newspaper editorial’, is made wherever applicable throughout this book. For an interesting discussion of translation problems which makes frequent references to the second type of classiﬁ cation, see Hatim and Mason (1990). For a broader discussion of the issue of text type and genres, see Trosborg (1997).

**Лекція № 4**

**Тема: Textual equivalence: thematic and information structures**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 4

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. A Hallidayan overview of information flow
2. The Prague school position on information flow: functional sentence perspective

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

**On Halliday’s model of thematic and information structures**

Eggins, Suzanne (2004) *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, second edition, London: Continuum. Chapter 1: ‘The Grammar of Textual Meaning: Theme’.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, London: Edward Arnold.

Chapter 3: ‘Clause as Message’, and Chapter 8: ‘Beside the Clause: Intonation and Rhythm’.

Young, David (1980) *The Structure of English Clauses*, London: Hutchinson. Chapter 12: ‘Theme’.

**On functional sentence perspective**

Firbas, Jan (1986) ‘On the Dynamics of Written Communication in the Light of the Theory of Functional Sentence Perspective’, in C. R. Cooper and S. Greenbaum (eds) *Studying Writing: Linguistic Approaches*, New York: Sage, 40–71.

Firbas, Jan (1992) *Functional Sentence Perspective in Written and Spoken Communi- cation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**For a general overview and discussion of aspects of information ﬂ ow**

Brown, Gillian and George Yule (1983) *Discourse Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4 : ‘“Staging” and the Representation of Discourse Structure’, and Chapter 5 : ‘Information Structure’.

Fries, Peter H. (1983) ‘On the Status of Theme in English: Arguments from Discourse’, in J. S. Petöﬁ and E. Sözer (eds) *Micro and Macro Connexity of Texts*, Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 116–152.

Ward, Gregory and Betty Birner (2005) ‘Information Structure and Non-canonical Syntax’, in Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (eds) *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, Oxford: Blackwell Reference Online. Available to subscribers at www.blackwellreference.com/ public/tocnode?id=g9780631225485\_chunk\_g97806312254859#citation.

**On aspects of word order and information ﬂ ow in the context of translation**

De Regt, Lenart J. (2006) ‘Hebrew Syntactic Inversions and their Literary Equivalence in English: Robert Alter’s Translations of Genesis and 1 and 2 Samuel’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30(3): 287–314.

Fawcett, Peter (1997) *Translation and Language*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Firbas, Jan (1999) ‘Translating the Introductory Paragraph of Boris Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago*: A Case Study in Functional Sentence Perspective’, in Gunilla Anderman and Margaret Rogers (eds) *Word, Text, Translation*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 129–141.

Hasselgård, Hilde (1998) ‘Thematic Structure in Translation between English and Norwegian’, in Stig Johansson and Signe Oksefjell (eds) *Corpora and Cross-linguistic Research: Theory, Method and Case Studies*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 145–167.

Hatim, Basil and Ian Mason (1990) *Discourse and the Translator*, London: Longman.

Chapter 10: ‘Discourse Texture’, pages 212–222: ‘Thematisation: Functional Sentence Perspective’.

Lorés Sanz, Rosa (2003) ‘The Translation of Tourist Literature: The Case of Connectors’, *Multilingua* 22(3): 291–308.

Mason, Ian (1994/2010) ‘Discourse, Ideology and Translation’, in Robert de Beaugrande, Abdullah Shunnaq and Mohamed Heliel (eds) *Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and Middle East*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 23–34; reprinted, with a post- script, in Mona Baker (ed.) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, London: Routledge, 83–95.

Rogers, Margaret (2006) ‘Structuring Information in English: A Specialist Translation Perspective on Sentence Beginnings’, *The Translator* 12(1): 29–64.

Schmid, Monika S. (1999) *Translating the Elusive. Marked Word Order and Subjectivity in English–German Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Williams, Ian A. (2009) ‘Discourse Style and Theme–Rheme Progression in Biomedical Research Article Discussions: A Corpus-based Contrastive Study of Translational and Non-translational Spanish’, *Languages in Contrast* 9(2): 225–266.

**Текст лекції:**

We ended the last lecture with a brief discussion of **word order** and of **text**. It was suggested then that the linear arrangement of linguistic elements plays a role in organizing messages at text level. In this chapter, we resume our discussion of word order as a textual strategy (rather than a grammatical feature) and explore a number of ways in which its role in controlling information ﬂ ow can be explained.

To illustrate what is meant by ‘information ﬂow’, consider some possible formu- lations of sentence (2) in the following extract from Stephen Hawking’s *A Brief History of Time* (1988:3).

Linear arrangement, then, has a role to play in processing information and organizing messages at text level. Of the numerous formulations available for expressing a given message, a speaker or writer will normally opt for one that makes the ﬂ ow of information clearer in a given context. In order to appreciate the factors that motivate a writer or speaker to make this kind of selection, one needs to think of the clause as a message rather than as a string of grammatical and lexical elements. Over and above its propositional organization in terms of elements such as subject/object and agent/patient, a clause also has an interactional organization which reﬂ ects the addresser/addressee relationship. This interactional organization generally motivates us to make choices that ensure a clear progression of links is achieved and a coherent point of view is maintained throughout a text. But it also allows us to exploit word order occasionally in order to generate special effects, such as emphasis, by employing marked structures.

Clause as a message can be analysed in terms of two types of structure: (a) **thematic structure** (5.1.1) and (b) **information structure** (5.1.2). The Halli- dayan approach to the analysis of the clause as a message treats thematic and infor- mation structures as separate, though often overlapping features of discourse organization. The two structures are seen to be essentially distinct from each other.

Linguists belonging to the Prague School, on the other hand, by and large conﬂ ate the two structures and combine them in the same description (see section 5.2 below). The two approaches are often at odds with each other and can produce completely different analyses of the same clause. However, translators with different linguistic backgrounds should beneﬁ t from a brief exposure to both points of view. Here, as elsewhere, a translator would be well advised to use those explanations which are compatible with the languages that are of interest to him or her and ignore the rest.

Both approaches are outlined below, starting with a general overview which follows the Hallidayan or ‘separating’ approach. For a good overview of both posi- tions, see Fries (1983), who refers to them as the ‘separating’ approach and the ‘combining’ approach.

**4.1 A HALLIDAYAN OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION FLOW**

**4.1.1 Thematic structure: theme and rheme**

One way of explaining the interactional organization of sentences is to suggest that a clause consists of two segments. The ﬁ rst segment is called the **theme**. The theme is what the clause is about. It has two functions: (a) it acts as a point of orien- tation by connecting back to previous stretches of discourse and thereby main- taining a coherent point of view, and (b) it acts as a point of departure by connecting forward and contributing to the development of later stretches. In *Ptolemy’s model provided a reasonably accurate system for predicting the positions of heavenly bodies in the sky*, the theme is *Ptolemy’s model*.This is what the clause is about. At clause level, a speaker announces the topic of his or her message by thematizing it, that is, by putting it in initial position.

The second segment of a clause is called the **rheme**. The rheme is what the speaker says about the theme. It is the goal of discourse. As such, it is the most important element in the structure of the clause as a message because it represents the very information that the speaker wants to convey to the hearer. It is the rheme that fulﬁ ls the communicative purpose of the utterance. In the above example, the rheme is: *provided a reasonably accurate system for predicting the positions of heavenly bodies in the sky*,which is what the writer has to say about *Ptolemy’s model*.This basically means that every clause has the structure of a message: it says something (the rheme) about something (the theme).

Let us now look at a slightly more extended example of how a Hallidayan- style thematic analysis of a text might proceed in English. The following short extract selected for analysis is from Stephen Hawking’s *A Brief History of Time* (1988:2):

Aristotle thought that the earth was stationary and that the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars moved in circular orbits about the earth. He believed this because he felt, for mystical reasons, that the earth was the center of the universe, and that circular motion was the most perfect.

A number of interesting points arise from the above analysis: **(a)** Thematic analysis can be represented hierarchically. Since sentences often consist of more than one clause, they will have several layers of thematic structure.

Each clause will have its own theme–rheme structure which may be subordinate to a larger theme–rheme structure. The above visual representation of the hierarchical nature of theme–rheme structures is meant to illustrate the point without having to go through complex technical discussions. **(b)** You will note that I have put some elements in parentheses, for example *because*,to suggest that they do not quite ﬁ t into the analysis. The reason is that, strictly speaking, some elements are not part of the basic thematic structure of the text because they are not part of the propositional meaning of the message. These include special linking devices such as *however*, *nevertheless*, *because* and *moreover*,which are called **conjunctions** (see Chapter 6, section 6.3). They also include items which express the attitude of the speaker, such as *unfortunately*, *in my opinion*, *frankly* and *clearly* (these are called **disjuncts**). Both conjunctions and disjuncts usually come at the beginning of English clauses; it is natural for the speaker to place in initial position an element which relates what he or she is about to say to what has been said before (conjunction) or an element which expresses his or her own judgement on what is being said (disjunct). In this sense, conjunctions and disjuncts are inherently thematic (Halliday 1985). However, because conjunc- tions and disjuncts are not part of the propositional content of the message, they are not considered thematic in the same way as the main clause elements **subject**, **predicator**, **object**, **complement** and **adjunct**.1 There are ways of incorporating conjunctions and disjuncts into thematic analysis, but this type of detailed analysis is not necessary for our current purposes. For a fuller discussion of this subject, see Halliday (1985:Chapter 3, ‘Clause as message’). **(c)** Conjunctions and disjuncts aside, there tends to be a very high correlation between theme/rheme and subject/predicate in the Hallidayan model (cf. the Prague position, section 5.2). The correlation does not hold in the case of **marked themes** as we shall see shortly (section 5.1.1.3), but, generally speaking, the distinction between theme and rheme is more or less identical to the traditional grammatical distinction between subject and predicate. In fact, Plato, who as far back as the fourth century BC had divided the sentence into what we now know as subject and predicate, used the terms **ónoma** and **rhema** (which originally meant ‘name’ and ‘saying’ respectively). However, the modern distinction between theme and rheme differs from Plato’s original dichotomy in one important respect. The theme–rheme distinction is text-based. Its real value does not lie in explaining the structure of individual sentences but rather in shedding light on a number of important areas which control information ﬂ ow. These are discussed brieﬂ y in sections 5.1.1.1– 5.1.1.3 below.

***4.1.1.1 Thematic structure: grammaticality vs acceptability***

Unlike the subject–predicate distinction, the notions of theme and rheme can be used to account for the acceptability (rather than grammaticality) of a given sequence in a given context. Theme and rheme are not grammatical notions. They have little to do with whether a given sequence is or is not grammatical.2 Grammatical sequences are part of the abstract system of language. In context, grammaticality does not necessarily ensure acceptability or coherence. For example, the following text is well-formed grammatically, but is ill-formed in terms of its thematics: Now comes the President here. It’s the window he’s stepping through to wave to the crowd. On his victory his opponent congratulates him. ‘Gentlemen and ladies. That you are conﬁ dent in me honours me …’

*(from Halliday 1978:134)*

A grammatical sequence such as *On his victory his opponent congratulates him* can be reordered in a number of different ways without affecting its propositional content.

The writer could have selected a sequence such as *His opponent congratulates him on his victory* or *He is congratulated on his victory by his opponent.* The accepta- bility, rather than grammaticality, of any of these sequences in a given context depends on how it ﬁ ts into its surrounding textual environment. Reasons for the thematic ill-formedness of the above extract will become clear as we explore various aspects of thematic organization. At this stage, it is sufﬁ cient to point out that it is difﬁ cult to see a link between the themes of the above clauses, or even between a rheme and a following theme, for instance. The result is that the text feels disjointed and lacks orientation. The individual clauses are perfectly grammatical but, taken together, they are not acceptable as a stretch of discourse.

The above text is fabricated for the purposes of illustration. Halliday argues that one does not normally meet non-text of this sort in real life (1978). Those of us who read a lot of translated texts of a particular type, for instance tourist brochures, know otherwise. Unlike the above constructed text, the following is an authentic adver- tisement for Mazda cars (most likely a translation of an Italian text) which appeared in the Alitalia inﬂ ight magazine (February 1991, 20–21).

What inspired that rebellious young poet called Rimbaud? What drove him to reach into the innermost part of his soul in search of the undiscovered? It allowed him to take words that already existed and yet express himself in a completely new way. Some creators are brave enough to realise their dreams without compromise. It is men like this who created the MX-5 in 1989. By ignoring the rules they are constantly reshaping the future. Even now they are realising a new dream. They work for Mazda.

The Mazda text has the same feel of awkwardness and lack of orientation about it as Halliday’s constructed example. To start with, none of the themes seem to link in with a previous theme or rheme; each sentence seems to stand on its own in a sort of vacuum. For instance, the theme of the third sentence, *It*,does not relate to either of the previous themes or rhemes. The theme of the fourth sentence, *Some creators*,relates to *Rimbaud* only indirectly on the basis that poets are some sort of creators, but it does not link in with the theme or rheme of the previous sentence.

The reader initially gets the impression that the purpose of the text is to identify Rimbaud’s source of inspiration. In the fourth sentence, the focus suddenly shifts to talking about creators in general and how they realize their dreams.

Another source of distraction is that the initial *what*-questions (ﬁ rst and second sentences) are followed not, as one might expect, by an identiﬁ cation of the thing that inspired Rimbaud and drove him to reach into his soul, but by the pronoun *It*. *It* suggests that the reader should know what inspired Rimbaud. But the reader has no way of knowing because the relevant information has not been given by the writer.

The arrangement of given and new elements is discussed in detail under **infor- mation structure** (section 5.1.2).

The Mazda text illustrates that, quite apart from any considerations of grammat- icality, it is necessary to take account of thematic structure and to maintain a coherent point of view in any act of communication.

***4.1.1.2 Thematic structure: text organization and development***

In addition to complementing the notion of grammaticality with notions of accept- ability and naturalness, the theme–rheme distinction can also be useful in explaining methods of organization and development in different types of text; see Hatim and Mason (1990, Chapter 10) and Hatim (1997, Chapter 8) for extensive discussion of this issue.

In this area, a great deal of emphasis has traditionally been placed on theme rather than on rheme. By deﬁ nition, theme represents the speaker’s or writer’s point of departure in each clause, which suggests that its organizational role is more important than that of rheme. The selection of an individual theme of a given clause in a given text is not in itself particularly signiﬁ cant. But the overall choice and ordering of themes, particularly those of independent clauses, plays an important part in organizing a text and in providing a point of orientation for a given stretch of language. It is no surprise, for instance, that travel brochures, at least in English, are characterized by a proliferation of place adjuncts in theme position. In the context of travel, location provides a natural point of orientation around which the text as a whole can be organized.

The following extract from Lonrho’s *A Hero from Zero* shows how a series of homogeneous themes can provide a point of orientation and a method of devel- opment for a given stretch of language. The extract comes right at the end of the Foreword. Here, Tiny Rowland concludes his version of events leading up to the Fayed brothers’ acquisition of the House of Fraser with a ﬁ rst-hand account of the situation in question against the background of his personal experience in business. The high frequency of *I* as theme helps to maintain a sense of conti- nuity and a coherent point of view.

*I* had nothing against his [Fayed’s] being a wealthy commission agent – *I* had everything against his cheating his way into House of Fraser, helped by Kleinwort Benson and Norman Tebbit.

It was bitter, but funny, to see that Professor Smith had doubled his own salary before recommending the offer from Fayed, and added a pre-dated bonus for good measure.

*I* saw how Brian Basham of Broad Street Associates and the barrister, Royston Webb, helped venal journalists to turn a sow’s ear into a golden purse, and how that golden purse was well received everywhere that it opened.

*I* saw how the well-documented material containing the truth about Fayed that we began to put before the DTI was received in embarrassed silence.

*I* saw how Leon Brittan, the incoming Secretary of State for Trade, was prepared to say he could ﬁ nd nothing wrong with the matter.

*I* took my ﬁ rst job in the City in 1936, working for Kittel and Company at 5 Fenchurch Street. *I*’ve been a director of British public companies for thirty- one years. It is the worst thing I’ve ever seen in business, that deceits triumph so well, and can even ﬁ nd apologists when they are exposed. *I* am glad that after two years inspectors were appointed, and that they have expended 18 months upon investigating the take-over of House of Fraser.

The above pattern can be reproduced in many, but not in all, languages. The Arabic translation adopts a very different pattern of organization.

The thematic structure of the Arabic translation of this extract deviates from the original for a number of reasons. First, Arabic rarely uses independent pronouns because Arabic verbs are inﬂ ected for person, number and gender. This means that any combination of pronoun plus verb, such as *I took* or *I saw*,is rendered by an inﬂ ected verb as theme in Arabic. It is important to bear in mind that while inﬂ ected verbs in languages such as Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese (to name but a few) do carry the same information as an English pronoun-plus-verb combination, the effect of placing them in theme position is not the same. The impact of a series of *I*s in theme position is not the same as the impact of a series of verbs inﬂ ected for ﬁ rst person, such as ‘saw-I’, ‘took-I’ and so on, where it is difﬁ cult to discern a theme line as clearly as in the pronoun-plus-verb combination. Second, Arabic negative particles come in front of the verb, so that an expression such as *I had nothing against* becomes literally ‘not was for me any objection’, thus pushing the ‘me’ further away from thematic position. Third, Arabic does not have an equivalent of the present perfect: *I’ve been a director* is rendered into Arabic as ‘since then become-I’, thus putting a temporal adjunct in theme position and pushing the inﬂ ected verb further towards the rheme. Here is a summary of the elements occurring in initial position in the English and Arabic versions of the extract. A literal translation is given of the Arabic themes to highlight the partial loss of orientation through discontinuity of theme.

English: I, I, It, I, I, I, I, I, It, I.

Arabic: not-was, but-I, was-it, saw-I, saw-I, saw-I, occupied-I, since then, among the worst saw-I, pleases-me.

Having said that there is a partial loss of orientation in the Arabic version, it must be emphasized that it does display a reasonable level of thematic continuity in its own right. What gives the Arabic version its sense of continuity is not, as in the case of English, the use of a series of identical themes (*I*, *I*, *I*,. . .) but rather the frequent thematization of processes as expressed in verbs, mainly ‘saw’ but also ‘occupied’ and ‘pleases’.

Attempting to analyse verb-initial languages such as Arabic in terms of Halli- day’s model highlights the fact that, for some languages, this type of analysis may not be as workable as it is in English. But whatever its status in other languages, exploring the thematic analysis of English is useful in illuminating certain areas of discourse organization. In so far as it applies to Arabic, for instance, it suggests that an ego-centred pattern which is perfectly feasible and natural in English has to be replaced in most contexts by a process-centred pattern which is far more typical of Arabic.

It seems to me that at this level of textual analysis translators generally face three main possibilities:

**(a)** You may ﬁ nd that you can preserve the thematic patterning of the original without distorting the target text. If the elements placed in theme position in the source text can easily and naturally be placed in theme position in the target text, the method of development of the two texts will be the same or very similar. The French translation of the above extract from *A Hero from Zero* manages to maintain ‘I’ as theme in all instances as the original and even adds one of its own: instead of *It was bitter, but funny*,the French literally goes ‘I felt bitterness, but also amusement’.

**(b)** You may ﬁ nd that you cannot preserve the thematic patterning of the original without distorting the target text. There are many factors which can restrict the choice and ordering of themes in translation. These factors may be grammatical; for instance it is ungrammatical to put verbs in theme position in English,3 though not in Arabic or Spanish. On the other hand, the restriction on placing inde- pendent pronouns in theme position in Arabic is not, strictly speaking, gram- matical. An independent pronoun may occasionally be placed in theme position for emphasis, but a series of independent pronouns in theme position would be highly unnatural.

If the thematic patterning of the original cannot be reproduced naturally in the target language, then you will have to abandon it. If you do, you must ensure that your target version has its own method of development and maintains a sense of continuity in its own right.

**(c)** You may ﬁ nd that Halliday’s model of thematic analysis does not apply to your language at all or does not apply to some of its sentence patterns. If this is the case, you may ﬁ nd the Prague model discussed in section 5.2 more helpful.

Whatever the difﬁ culties involved in applying Halliday’s model of thematic analysis to a given language, and irrespective of whether it is possible to reproduce the thematic patterning of the source text on a given occasion, one thing is certain: translators must not underestimate the cumulative effect of thematic choices on the way we interpret text. As Fries (1983:135) points out: if the themes of most of the sentences of a paragraph refer to one semantic ﬁ eld (say location, parts of some object, wisdom vs chance, etc.) then that semantic ﬁ eld will be perceived as the method of development of the para- graph. If no common semantic element runs through the themes of the sentences of a paragraph, then no simple method of development will be perceived.

And this is why you have to ensure that whatever elements you put in initial-clause position in your target text or in a given part of your target text add up to something that can be understood as a method of development and that can provide a point of orientation for that part of the text.

***4.1.1.3 Thematic structure: marked vs unmarked sequences***

A further area in which the notions of theme and rheme have proved very useful relates to marked and unmarked structures. This particular aspect of thematic organization is of special relevance in translation because understanding it can help to heighten our awareness of meaningful choices made by speakers and writers in the course of communication.

Thematic choice involves selecting a clause element as theme. The main clause elements are **subject**, **predicator**, **object**, **complement** and **adjunct**.4 In the Hallidayan model, thematic choice is expressed by placing one of these elements in initial position in the clause. Thematic choice is always meaningful because it indi- cates the speaker’s/writer’s point of departure. But some choices are more mean- ingful than others, because they are more **marked** than others.

Meaning, choice and markedness are interrelated concepts. A linguistic element carries meaning to the extent that it is selected. Meaning is closely asso- ciated with choice, so that the more obligatory an element, the less marked it will be and the weaker will be its meaning. The fact that adjectives have to be placed in front of nouns in English, for instance, means that their occurrence in this position has little or no signiﬁ cance because it is not the result of choice. On the other hand, putting a time or place adverbial, such as *today* or *on the shelf*, at the beginning of the clause carries more meaning because it is the result of choice: there are other positions in which it can occur. This is one aspect of the rela- tionship between meaning, markedness and choice. A second aspect has to do with the degree of expectedness or unexpectedness of a choice. The less expected a choice, the more marked it is and the more meaning it carries; the more expected, the less marked it is and the less signiﬁ cance it will have. For example, it is possible but uncommon to place a complement in initial position in an English clause (as in *Beautiful were her eyes*,rather than *Her eyes were beautiful*)*.* A complement is therefore highly marked in this position and indicates a more conscious effort on the part of the speaker or writer to highlight this particular element as his or her point of departure. It carries more textual meaning than an adverbial occurring in the same position. The more marked a choice the greater

the need for it to be motivated. Conversely, unmarked options are those which are normally selected unless the context motivates the selection of another option from the same system.

It follows from the above discussion that placing a certain element in theme position does not necessarily constitute a marked thematic choice. The degree of markedness involved will depend on the frequency with which the element in question generally occurs in theme position and the extent to which it is normally mobile within the clause. A given type of clause will therefore have one unmarked thematic structure, variations of which will produce different types of marked theme. In English, it has been shown that an unmarked theme is one that signals the mood of the clause: in declarative clauses the unmarked theme is the subject (***Jane*** *said nothing for a moment*); in interrogative clauses it is the *wh*-word (***What*** *did Jane say?*), or the auxiliary in the case of polar questions (***Did*** *Jane say anything?*); in imperative clauses it is the verb (***Say*** *something*).

These unmarked choices are a natural extension of the function of theme, which is to provide a point of departure and orientation. Speakers normally signal their point of departure by indicating whether they are making a statement, asking a question or giving an order. Thus, in the case of an imperative clause, for instance, the verb naturally occupies thematic position because that is what the message is about: getting the addressee to do something. Going back to the question of markedness, we can say that subject as theme in a declarative clause is not marked at all because this is the position it normally occupies in English declarative clauses. In other words, the subject is never *selected* as theme in an English declarative clause, it occupies that position by default.5 By contrast, a predicator hardly ever occurs in theme position in English declarative clauses, and so, when it does, it is highly marked. The same cannot be said about languages in which the predicator frequently comes at the beginning of the clause and therefore represents an unmarked – or at least less marked – thematic choice.

So far so good, but what is the function of marked theme? Is it, as one might expect, a question of rejecting the default option (such as thematizing the subject in English declarative clauses) in favour of an element which provides a smoother link with the preceding discourse? This may partly explain why a speaker or writer opts for a marked theme in a given context. However, there are always unmarked options in every language which provide ways of changing the position of elements in a clause to ﬁ t in with the surrounding context. The passive is one such option in English (cf. *John gave me this book* and *This book was given to me by John*,which are both unmarked). This suggests that a marked theme has an additional or different function. A marked theme is selected speciﬁ cally to foreground a particular element as the topic of the clause or its point of departure.

This is often explained in terms of making the element in question more prom- inent or emphasizing it, an explanation which some may ﬁ nd confusing. I have already suggested (p. 133) that rheme, which comes in ﬁ nal position in the clause, is more important than theme, which comes in initial position. We might then expect that ﬁ nal rather than initial position in the clause is where prominence can be achieved. How can this statement be reconciled with the suggestion that in order to make an element prominent a speaker places it in theme position? The answer may lie in making a distinction between local prominence and overall discourse prominence (John Sinclair, personal communication). In marked thematic structures, theme position is associated with local prominence at the level of the clause. Rheme position, on the other hand, is prominent on an overall discourse level. In other words, placing an element in theme position gives that element local, temporary prominence within the clause. Putting an element in rheme position means that it is part of what the speaker has to say, and that is the very core of any message. Kirkwood, who adopts the Prague School rather than the Hallidayan deﬁ nition of theme and rheme, suggests that placing an element in initial position will give it a certain prominence but that it will still ‘carry less weight than the actual rheme’ (1979:73).

It may be helpful at this point to illustrate the function of marked theme by discussing some examples of the way it works in one language, English. Hallidayan linguists identify three main types of marked theme in English: fronted theme, predicated theme and identifying theme. These are explained below with examples from translated texts where applicable.

(A) FRONTED THEME

Fronting involves ‘the achievement of marked theme by moving into initial position an item which is otherwise unusual there’ (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990:407).

Taking an unmarked structure such as *The book received a great deal of publicity in China* as a starting point, we can suggest a number of possible thematic structures in English, starting with the least marked and ending with the most marked. Fronted thematic elements are underlined.

*Fronting of time or place adjunct*

In China the book received a great deal of publicity.

This is a marked structure, but it is not highly marked because adverbials are fairly mobile elements in English. As I suggested earlier, thematizing place adjuncts is very common in certain types of text in English, such as travel brochures, where locative themes offer a natural method of text development. Enkvist (1987) found that the same is true of guidebooks. Thematizing temporal adjuncts is similarly common in any type of narrative text, that is, any text which recounts a series of events. In the following example from the Foreword to *A Hero from Zero*,Tiny Rowland presents a summary of the events leading up to the Fayed brothers’ acquisition of the House of Fraser. Thematized temporal adjuncts are highlighted in bold.

**On 4th March 1985**, the Fayed brothers made an offer of four pounds a share for House of Fraser. We applied twice more to the DTI for release.

We immediately notiﬁ ed the Department of Trade that Mohamed Fayed’s representations were incorrect, and gave what information we had at the time, which was sufﬁ cient to alarm, or at least give pause for basic investigations.

**On 11th March** the merchant bank Kleinwort Benson announced on behalf of its brand new client, Fayed, that they had acceptances from House of Fraser shareholders for more than ﬁ fty per cent of the issued share capital.

**Three hours later** a junior ofﬁ cial of the DTI sent a note, uselessly releasing Lonrho from the undertakings not to bid.

**In ten days**, the unknown Fayeds gained permission to own House of Fraser, and **throughout the ten days** they put continuous lies before the public to justify the Government permissions they had got with such ease.

Thematizing place and time adjuncts is less marked in some languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese, than in English. In German, a structure such as *Hier steigen wir aus* (literally: ‘Here we get out’) is totally unmarked (Kirkwood 1979).

Similar choices in other languages may, on the other hand, be even more marked than in English. Wilkinson (1990) suggests that temporal adjuncts are rarely placed in theme position in Dutch. A temporal adjunct therefore represents a more marked thematic choice in Dutch than in English.

The series of marked themes in the above extract from *A Hero from Zero* basi- cally foreground temporal sequence as the writer’s point of departure. They can be reproduced with similar effect in French and Arabic. The French and Arabic trans- lators of the above extract are therefore able to follow the same method of thematic development by placing the temporal adjuncts in theme position. This document has not been translated into Dutch, but I imagine that, had it been, extracts such as the one quoted above would have presented the Dutch translator with a problem – bearing in mind that the above is only a short extract and that a similar pattern of thematic development runs throughout the Foreword. On the one hand, placing all the above temporal adjuncts in theme position would be highly marked in Dutch; on the other hand, changing the thematic structure of the original may disrupt the natural development of the text – unless the translator ﬁ nds a thematic element other than time which can provide a consistent point of orientation.

*Fronting of object or complement*

Object: A great deal of publicity the book received in China.

Complement: Well publicized the book was.

The fronting of objects and complements is much more marked than the fronting of adjuncts in English because objects and complements are fairly restricted in position.

Again, the same is not true of other languages. Fronting an object is less marked in Chinese than in English. In German, it is totally unmarked if accompanied by a deﬁ nite determiner (Kirkwood 1979).

Note that, unlike fronting, using the passive voice allows the speaker to select as theme what would have been the object of an active clause without making it marked. Fronting the object, on the other hand, foregrounds it and gives it local prominence (cf. *A great deal of publicity was received in China* and *A great deal of publicity the book received in China*).

You are unlikely to ﬁ nd a series of fronted objects or complements similar to the series of fronted temporal adjuncts quoted above. This is because, unlike adjuncts, objects and complements are not usually fronted to provide a point of orientation or method of development for a stretch of language. The effect of thematizing an object or complement in English is to provide contrast and to emphasize the speaker’s attitude to the message.6 It foregrounds the expressive meaning of the utterance.

This can be seen in the following examples. The ﬁ rst, from John Le Carré’s *The Russia House* (1989:19), illustrates a fronted nominal object: But Landau’s clients were young and rich and did not believe in death. ‘Niki boy,’ said Bernard, walking round behind him and putting a hand on his shoulder, which Landau didn’t like, ‘in the world today, we’ve got to show the ﬂ ag. We’re patriots, see, Niki? Like you. That’s why we’re an offshore company. With the *glasnost* today, the Soviet Union, it’s the Mount Everest of the recording business. And you’re going to put us on the top, Niki.

Because if you’re not, we’ll ﬁ nd somebody who will. Somebody younger, Niki, right? Somebody with the drive and the class.’ The drive Landau had still. But the class, as he himself was the ﬁ rst to tell you, the class, forget it.

It is also possible to front a that-clause as object, as in the following example from Le Carré’s *Our Game* (1995:150):

But after a time my revulsion gave way to a furtive curiosity and the house attracted me despite myself. I would leave the tube a stop early and scurry across the Heath just to peer into its lighted windows. How do they live?

What do they talk about, apart from me? Who was I when I lived there? That Diana had left the Ofﬁ ce I knew only too well, for she had written Merriman one of her letters.

The next two examples illustrate a fronted complement. The ﬁ rst comes from Le Carré’s *The Little Drummer Girl* (1983:19): In my next life I shall be a Jew or a Spaniard or an Eskimo or just a fully committed anarchist like everybody else, Alexis decided. But a German I shall never be – you do it once as a penance and that’s it.

*Fronting of predicator*

They promised to publicize the book in China, and publicize it they did.

This is the most marked of all thematic choices in English. In addition to fronting the predicator, this choice also involves re-arranging other clause elements and adjusting the form of the verbal group. Authentic examples are hard to ﬁ nd because fronted predicators are rather uncommon in English. This one comes from Le Carré’s *Our Game* (1995:30):

... He licked a ﬁ nger and gaily ﬂ ipped a page. ‘Then all of a sudden you turn round and cut off the Doctor without a shilling. Well, well. No more incomings, no more outgoings, for three whole weeks. What you might term a radio silence. Slammed the door in his face, you did, Mr Cranmer, sir, and me and Oliver here were wondering why you did that to him. ...

In languages such as Arabic, verbs frequently occur in thematic position, and the fronting of a predicator is therefore not a marked thematic choice. In translating from a language such as Arabic to a language such as English, the unmarked predicator + subject structure would normally be translated by an equally unmarked structure such as subject + predicator, rather than by an identical but highly marked structure which places the predicator in initial position. Going in the other direction, say from English into Arabic, a translator should try to ﬁ nd some way of conveying the emphasis attached to a fronted predicator. I cannot comment on the devices available in other languages, but in Arabic, for instance, the particle *qad* may be used with the past tense of the verb to convey emphasis. A lexical item such as ‘in fact’ may also be used to convey even stronger emphasis. The effect would be similar to some- thing like *and they did in fact publicize it* in English, except that the verb in Arabic would be in theme position (literally: *qad* publicize-they-it in fact).

(B) PREDICATED THEME

Predicating a theme involves using an ***it*-structure** (also called a **cleft structure**) to place an element near the beginning of the clause, as in *It was the book that received a great deal of publicity in China*, *It was a great deal of publicity that the book received in China* or *It was in China that the book received a great deal of publicity*.Apart from conjunctions and disjuncts which we have decided not to take into account for our current purposes, this is the only instance in which the theme of the clause is not the element that occurs in initial position. The theme of an *it*-structure is not *it* but rather the element which occurs after the verb *to be*. *It* simply acts as an empty subject which allows a certain element such as *the book* or *in China* to be placed near the beginning of the clause and to be interpreted as its theme, that is, what the message is about.

Predicating an element foregrounds it by placing it in theme position. One of the options it allows a speaker is to select the element acting as subject as a marked thematic choice, an option not normally available since the subject is the unmarked theme of a declarative clause in English.

Like all marked themes, predicated themes often imply contrast. *It was in China that the book received a great deal of publicity* would generally suggest that *in China* contrasts with other places where the book did not receive a great deal of publicity. The predicated theme in the following example, from Thomas Bernhard’s *Wittgenstein’s Nephew* (translated into English by Ewald Osers),7 fulﬁ ls a similar function by contrasting the years during which Wittgenstein didn’t drink with the rest of his life:

At the Obenaus, a small restaurant on Weihburggasse, he would drink several litres of white wine during an evening. He suffered for that. I believe it was ﬁ ve or six years before his death that he gave up drinking. Otherwise he would probably have died three or four years earlier, which, at least I think so, would have been a terrible pity.

The following example comes from an article entitled ‘Rock that burns’ (*New Inter- nationalist* NI 431, April 2010, p. 16). The article discusses the practices of oil companies that extract crude oil from tar sands by methods that involve deforesting and subjecting the land to extreme temperatures. The reference in this speciﬁ c extract is to the eastern desert of Jordan: Many Bedouin continue to live in the *badia*; the name itself means ‘the place the Bedouin came from’. Small villages slide past, with tents, concrete block houses and large ﬂ ocks of sheep and goats. Most Bedouin are ‘settled’ into these villages, but a signiﬁ cant number continue to live as nomads.

It is here that Shell plans to introduce its tar sands extraction practices – well known from the images of torn up Alberta.

The predicated theme in this case effects spatial rather than temporal contrast: it foregrounds *here*, as opposed to other places. The implication is that the choice of location for such environmentally destructive practices is particularly relevant – speciﬁ cally shocking from the writer’s perspective.

Another important function of predicated theme is to signal **information structure** by presenting the element following *It* + BE in the main clause as the new or important item to which the hearer’s or reader’s attention is drawn. For a detailed discussion of information structure, see section 5.1.2. below.

(C) IDENTIFYING THEME

Identifying themes are very similar to predicated themes. Instead of using *It* (a cleft structure), an identifying theme places an element in theme position by turning it into a nominalization using a ***wh-*structure** (called a **pseudo-cleft structure**), as in *What the book received in China was a great deal of publicity*,or *What was received by the book in China was a great deal of publicity*.The following example comes from the March 2010 issue of *Cosmopolitan* (p. 125); *Cosmopolitan* is a woman’s magazine that is regularly translated from English into a variety of languages, including Spanish, Hungarian, Russian and Thai: Whether you’re a single mother or not, being a parent can be one of the most challenging, but rewarding, experiences of your life. What you need to do before you go ahead with ﬁ nding a sperm donor is ensure that you’re completely clear about what you’re getting yourself into.

A second example comes from an article entitled ‘I’ll die doing this’ which appeared in *New Internationalist* (NI 431, April 2010, p. 12), about the effect of tar sands pollution on indigenous people:

Little is yet known about how the different toxic metals and petrochemicals interact, or how their effects could be magniﬁ ed given that the ﬂ ow of contam- inants into the rivershed during spring melt coincides with when ﬁ sh fry are growing.

What Fort Chipewyan needs, argues George, is a comprehensive, baseline health study that would do a thorough analysis of the entire community, and then track changes in the future based on that.

Both predicated and identifying themes are often associated with implicit contrast.

They tend to imply that the item in theme position (in the case of predicated themes) or the item in rheme position (in the case of identifying themes) is chosen from a set of possible items as the one worthy of the hearer’s or reader’s attention: *It was the book* (rather than something else) *which received a great deal of publicity in China*; *What the book received in China was a great deal of publicity* (rather than bad reviews, for instance). In the example from *Cosmopolitan* above, the implication is that being clear about the consequences of becoming a parent is more important than other things (such as ﬁ nding the sperm donor or the necessary cash to cover the relevant costs). In the example from *New Internationalist*, the implication is that the baseline health study is a priority: everything else is less important and less pressing than ensuring that this study is undertaken. Items in theme position are thus prominent in both structures – predicated and identifying. The difference is that in predicated themes, the thematic element is presented as new information; in identifying themes, the thematic element is presented as known information (see section 5.1.2 below for a discussion of known vs new information).

Predicated and identifying themes are marked but fairly common in English because they offer a thematization strategy that overcomes restrictions on word order. They also offer a way of signalling known vs new information independently of the use of intonation. Stress offers a reliable signal of information status in spoken English (see 5.1.2 below) but it is not available as a signalling device in written English. For this reason, predicated and identifying themes tend to be more common in written than in spoken English. By contrast, the two structures are of equal frequency in spoken and written Chinese because stress is not available as a device for signalling information structure in spoken Chinese (Tsao 1983).

Predicated and identifying themes must be handled carefully in translation because they are far more marked in languages with relatively free word order, such as German, than they are in English. Transferring all instances of predicated and identifying themes into a German translation would make it sound very un-German.

An experienced German translator will normally replace all or most predicated and identifying themes with less marked German structures. An example of this can be found in the Morgan Matroc ceramics company brochure.

English original (*Morgan Matroc*): And yet there are some customers who in their search for a suitable material prefer to study complex tables of technical data. It is for such customers that we have listed the properties of Matroc’s more widely used materials.

German translation:

… **Für solche Kunden** haben wir die Eigenschaften der gängigsten Matroc Werkstoffe aufgelistet.

Back-translation:

**… For such customers** have we the properties of the most popular Matroc materials listed.

Another example comes from an interview with the chairman of the Japanese Sony organization, Akio Morita, published in an edition of *Playboy* magazine and trans- lated into Brazilian Portuguese.8 Predicated themes are more marked in Brazilian Portuguese than they are in English:

English extract from the *Playboy* text: It was about thirty years ago that a young Japanese businessman visited the West and was deeply humiliated to learn that ‘Made in Japan’ was an international synonym for shoddiness – a phrase that produced jokes and laughter. Today, the laughter is heard mainly on the way to the bank as Akio Morita, 61, the cofounder and the chairman of the Sony Corporation, continues to make his ﬁ ve-billion dollar corporation a fount of ever newer and more dazzling inventions. It was Sony that gave the world mass-produced transistor radios, Trinitron television sets, Betamax video recorders and Walkman portable cassette players.

Back-translation:

**Thirty years ago**, a young man of Japanese business … **Was Sony that** gave to the world transistor radios …

In the Portuguese translation, the ﬁ rst cleft structure is rendered by an unmarked fronting of a time adjunct. The second cleft structure is rendered by a marked (but not highly marked) structure in which the verb is fronted.

Here is a further example, this time of identifying theme, from an article from the British newspaper the *Independent* (8 November 1988), attached to *A Hero from Zero*:

English extract from the *Independent* article: The report had meanwhile been referred to the Serious Fraud Ofﬁ ce.

A reference to that ofﬁ ce is made only where an inquiry concludes that an offence may have been committed. Lonrho has been informed that the report made no criticism of its conduct. What Mr Rowland wants is the early publication of this report.

**And seeks Mr Rowland** now to publish this report as soon as possible.

The Arabic predicator + subject structure is not marked at all, and it therefore fails to convey the emphasis signalled by the English identifying structure. It can be argued that ‘normalizing’ the marked English structure is not a good strategy in this instance and that a slightly different but similarly marked Arabic structure (using a particle such as *inna*) would have preserved the prominence given by the writer to the ﬁ rst part of the statement (*Mr Rowland wants*) and still sounded natural in Arabic:

*Inna* what seeks Mr Rowland now is … Generally speaking, languages with relatively free word order like German can thematize clause elements simply by fronting them. They therefore rarely use intricate structures that languages with relatively ﬁ xed word order resort to in order to thematize elements. Apart from being aware of the level of markedness of a given structure in the source and target languages, a translator should also learn to make use of the thematization devices available in each language. For instance, Wilkinson (1990:81) suggests that ‘information which has been highlighted by being fronted in the Dutch clause lends itself to a translation in English using an IT cleft’, but notes that trainee translators working from Dutch into English fail to make use of predi- cated and identifying themes in their English translations.

In addition to fronted, predicated and identifying themes, other types of marked theme exist in English, but they tend to be much more restricted and more likely to be used in informal language. These are **preposed theme** and **post- posed theme** (Young 1980). Both involve using a gloss tag. In preposed theme, the gloss tag occurs at the beginning of the clause, in postposed theme, it occurs at the end of the clause. The following examples of both types are from Young (1980:145):

Preposed theme: The ﬁ tter, he sent these documents to the ofﬁ ce. These documents, the ﬁ tter sent them to the ofﬁ ce.

Postposed theme: He sent these documents to the ofﬁ ce, the ﬁ tter. He sent these documents to the ofﬁ ce, the ﬁ tter did. The ﬁ tter sent them to the ofﬁ ce, these documents.

An authentic example of a preposed theme can be found in the extract from Le Carré’s *The Russia House* quoted on page 145 above: With the *glasnost* today, the Soviet Union, it’s the Mount Everest of the recording business.

The following two examples of postposed theme come from an interview with Sade, the well-known singer, published in *The Sunday Times Magazine* on 31 January 2010 (pp. 14, 17):

It can be very hostile, England.

He was a very strange man, my father, very boyish.

***4.1.1.4 A brief assessment of the Hallidayan position on theme***

Any approach to describing information ﬂ ow in natural language will generally recognize that clauses are organized in terms of theme and rheme. But, as already noted, different linguists offer different accounts of the way in which theme and rheme are realized in discourse. Each account is naturally biased towards the native language of the linguist in question as well as other languages with which he or she may be familiar. One of the main differences between the Hallidayan and other approaches is that Halliday has always insisted that, at least in English, the theme– rheme distinction is realized by the sequential ordering of clause elements. Theme is the element placed by the speaker in ﬁ rst position in the clause; rheme is whatever comes after the theme. A rheme–theme sequence therefore has no place in Halli- day’s system.9 This position contrasts sharply with that taken by Prague linguists, such as Firbas, who reject sentence position as the only criterion for identifying theme and rheme (see section 5.2 below).

The attraction of the Hallidayan view is that, unlike the rather complex expla- nations of the Prague School, it is very simple to follow and apply. To some extent, it is also intuitively satisfying to suggest that what one is talking about always comes before what one has to say about it. Its disadvantages, on the other hand, include (a) its partial circularity:10 theme is whatever comes in initial position and whatever comes in initial position is theme; and (b) its failure to relate descriptions of SVO languages,11 particularly those with relatively ﬁ xed word order such as

English, to descriptions of languages with relatively free word order in which, for instance, the verb often occurs in initial position. If theme is whatever occurs in initial position we would have to acknowledge that some languages prefer to thematize participants (expressed as subjects in SVO and SOV languages) on a regular basis while other languages prefer to thematize processes (expressed as verbs in VSO languages). But Halliday does not attempt to address these prefer- ences, nor does he discuss language features which restrict a speaker’s choice of thematic elements. For instance, in Harway (a Papuan language) where the verb is always ﬁ nal, a speaker or writer does not have the option of thematizing processes.12 It is possible to see Halliday’s view of theme – as whatever comes in initial position in the clause – as a reﬂ ection of (a) the nature of English as a language with relatively ﬁ xed word order,13 and (b) his study of Chinese, this being a language with a special category of **topic** which always occurs at the beginning of the clause.

It may be useful at this point to explore the possible link between Halliday’s notion of theme and the category of topic in Chinese and other topic-prominent languages. Apart from providing some insight into Halliday’s view of the way in which theme is realized in discourse, the discussion of topic is also of particular interest here because it highlights an area of considerable potential confusion for translators interested in the thematic analysis of topic-prominent languages.

THEME AND CHINESE-STYLE TOPIC

Chinese has been identiﬁ ed by Li (1976) as a **topic-prominent** language. Unlike **subject-prominent** languages such as English, French and German, topic- prominent languages appear to have double subjects. Li gives the following examples from a variety of topic-prominent languages. The topic of each sentence is underlined:

Animals, I advocate a conservation policy. (Mandarin) This ﬁ eld, the rice is very good. (Lahu) The present time, there are many schools. (Korean) Fish, red snapper is delicious. (Japanese) Several questions need to be raised here to explore the relationship between theme and topic, if any exists. For instance, how do topics relate to themes? Do they behave in the same way syntactically, or, to put it more accurately, do topics, like themes, have no syntax? Does topic mean the same thing as theme, that is, what the message is about? Can topics be translated into languages which are not topic-prominent?

The topic of a clause in topic-prominent languages always occurs in initial position (Li 1976). In this respect, it coincides with theme in Halliday’s model. If initial position is reserved for theme and if topic always occurs in initial position, then theme and topic are presumably the same thing.

In some languages such as Lisu, Japanese and Korean, topics are further marked by the addition of a morpheme: for example, the sufﬁ x *-nya* is always added to the topic of a sentence in Lisu. Japanese has two sufﬁ xes, *-wa* and *-ga*, the func- tions of which are explained in different ways by different linguists but which are said to mark, among other things, topic and non-topic respectively. Another syntactic feature of topic is that it controls anaphoric reference14 so that (a) once an element is announced as topic, this element may be omitted altogether in subsequent clauses, hence the proliferation of subjectless clauses in languages such as Chinese and Japanese (see Chapter 6, p. 195, for an example of Japanese subjectless clauses), and (b) an element announced as topic overrides possible co-referential links with other elements in the sentence. Li gives the following example from Mandarin Chinese (1976:469):

Nèike shù yèzi dà, suoˇ yi woˇ bu xˇıhuãn that tree leaves big so I not like ‘That tree (topic), the leaves are big, so I don’t like <*it*>.’ Topic–comment structures such as those given above are sometimes translated into English as, for instance, *Concerning animals …*, *About this ﬁ eld …*, *As for ﬁ sh* … and so on. There is, of course, a limit to how often this can be done in English. It is a marked structure in the sense of being relatively infrequent. Its overuse by Japanese and Chinese learners of English, for instance, is immediately noticeable.

King (1990) similarly suggests that topicalization, as evident in the use of expres- sions such as *os pros*, *oson afora* and *oso ya* (all of which mean something like ‘as for’ or ‘with regards to’), is more common in Greek than in English and that Greek learners of English tend to overuse this structure. Translators are in a position similar to that of advanced learners of a language in some respects, and pitfalls of this sort become more common when the direction of translation is into the non-native language rather than the translator’s mother tongue.

Li (1976:484) suggests more natural structures for achieving something similar to topicalization in English: Remember Tom?

Well, he fell off his bike yesterday.

You know Tom?

These structures may be natural in some situations, particularly in informal spoken exchanges, but they are undoubtedly inappropriate for many contexts. Like all the English structures suggested above for expressing Chinese-style topics, they remain far more restricted than the normal topic–comment structure in languages such as Chinese and Korean. In topic-prominent languages, these structures are the norm rather than the exception.

Chafe (1976) suggests that it is incorrect to translate a Chinese-style topic with an English expression such as *As for*.This is because the English expression suggests contrastiveness. A statement such as *As for animals, I advocate a conser- vation policy* implies that animals are being contrasted with something else for which the speaker perhaps does not advocate a conservation policy. The Chinese structure, on the other hand, need not imply any contrast, and Chafe therefore concludes that: Chinese seems to express the information in these cases in a way that does not coincide with anything available in English. In other words, there is no packaging device in English that corresponds to the Chinese topic device, and hence no fully adequate translation.

*(1976:50)*

Syntactic behaviour and contrastiveness aside, it is tempting to interpret a Chinese- style topic in the same way as theme, that is, as meaning something like ‘This is my starting point; this is what I am talking about’. But the scope of a topic is not restricted to the clause as the example on page 154 might suggest. Topic does not just control reference within clause boundaries, it controls reference outside clause boundaries as well. This is why once a topic is announced, the subject(s) of subse- quent clauses can be omitted. Also, unlike themes (and subjects) which may be deﬁ nite or indeﬁ nite, topics are always deﬁ nite (Li 1976). This indicates a possible difference in meaning or function between the two. Chafe (1976:51) suggests that the function of topic is to specify some kind of framework, for instance in terms of time, location or individual reference, within which the main statement applies and that ‘“real” topics (in topic-prominent languages) are not so much “what the sentence is about” as “the frame within which the sentence holds”’. Li agrees with Chafe’s interpretation of topic and links this to the observation that topics are always deﬁ nite.

A topic has to be deﬁ nite because of its function of setting the framework for inter- preting the sentence as a whole.

To my knowledge, no one has yet addressed the relationship between topic and theme in topic-prominent languages in a sustained fashion. These languages, presumably, have clause themes as well as sentence topics. Their organization into topic–comment structures must add to the complexity of their thematic analysis and to the difﬁ culty of identifying signals of thematic status. There are, for instance, several conﬂ icting claims concerning the function of the Japanese sufﬁ x *-wa*: some suggest that it is an obligatory marker of topic (this claim is implicit in Li 1976:465); others suggest that it marks given information (see 5.1.2. below for an explanation of given vs new information). Maynard (1981:124) seems to suggest that *-wa* marks topic, although she uses the term ‘theme’: *-WA* serves to create a theme by identifying NP’s [i.e. noun phrases] that are to be placed on what we may call the ‘thematic stage’. The thematic stage may be deﬁ ned as the conceptual framework within which the story is told,

presented and performed. The choice of using *-WA* …reﬂ ects the writer’s thematic choice.

This is clearly an area of some difﬁ culty for translators working from or into a topic- prominent language such as Korean, Japanese or Chinese.

The above discussion does not cover all aspects of thematic structure, but it is probably sufﬁ cient for our current purposes. We now turn our attention to the second aspect of the interactional organization of messages: information structure.

**4.1.2 Information structure: given and new**

The distinction between theme and rheme is speaker-oriented. It is based on what the speaker wants to announce as his or her starting point and what he or she goes on to say about it. A further distinction can be drawn between what is given and what is new in a message. This is a hearer-oriented distinction, based on what part of the message is known to the hearer and what part is new. Here again, a message is divided into two segments: one segment conveys information which the speaker regards as already known to the hearer. The other segment conveys the new infor- mation that the speaker wishes to convey to the hearer. Given information repre- sents the common ground between speaker and hearer and gives the latter a reference point to which he or she can relate new information.

Like thematic structure, information structure is a feature of the context rather than of the language system as such. One can only decide what part of a message is new and what part is given within a linguistic or situational context. For example, the same message may be segmented differently in response to different questions:

What’s happening tomorrow? We’re climbing Ben Nevis. NEW

What are we doing tomorrow? We’re climbing Ben Nevis. Given New What are we climbing tomorrow? We’re climbing Ben Nevis. Given New

*(examples from Morley 1985:75)*

The organization of the message into information units of given and new reﬂ ects the speaker’s sensitivity to the hearer’s state of knowledge in the process of communi- cation. At any point of the communication process, a certain linguistic and non- linguistic environment will have already been established. The speaker can draw on this in order to relate new information that he or she wants to convey to elements that are already established in the context. The normal, unmarked order is for the speaker to place the given element before the new one. This order has been found to contribute to ease of comprehension and recall, and some composition specialists therefore explicitly recommend it to writers (Vande Kopple 1986).

The given-before-new principle inﬂ uences other sequencing decisions in language. Greenbaum and Quirk posit a principle of **end-focus** to account for the tendency to process information ‘so as to achieve a linear presentation from low to high information value’ (1990:395). Moreover, they suggest that: Since the new information often needs to be stated more fully than the given (that is, with a longer, ‘heavier’ structure), it is not unexpected that an organ- ization principle which may be called END-WEIGHT comes into operation along with the principle of end-focus.

*(*ibid.*:398)*

In other words, the same principle which motivates speakers to place given before new information also motivates them to place longer and heavier structures towards the end of the clause, as in the following examples (*ibid.*): She visited him that day.

She visited her best friend that day.

She visited that day an elderly and much beloved friend.

A similar principle seems to operate in German where, Herbst *et al.* suggest, ‘there is a stylistic tendency to place the more complex element (*ie* the one containing rela- tively more words) after the less complex’ (1979:165).15 At least one genre of Brazilian Portuguese, that of academic abstracts, also seems to follow the principle of **end-weight**. The results of a study carried out by Johns (1991) suggest that in this genre simple verbs without modals or closely linked prepositional phrases are regularly fronted while long and syntactically complex subjects are not. Problems arise in translation when a principle such as end-weight or end-focus seems to clash with more basic grammatical principles in the target language. For instance, one of the basic grammatical principles in English involves placing the subject before the predicate. In translating from Brazilian Portuguese, which allows the fronting of simple verbs, into English, a translator may be tempted to ignore the principle of end-weight in order to preserve the subject-before-predicate arrangement.

***4.1.2.1 How are given and new signalled in discourse?***

As far as Halliday and Hasan are concerned, information structure is a feature of spoken rather than written English:

The information systems are those concerned with the organization of the text into units of information. This is expressed in English by the intonation patterns, and it is therefore a feature only of spoken English.

*(Halliday and Hasan 1976:325)*

Strictly speaking (for them), the domain of information structure is not the clause as a grammatical unit but the tone group as a phonological unit. Each information unit consists of either a combination of given-plus-new elements or of just a new element. This is realized phonologically as a tone group, with the peak of promi- nence or tonic accent falling on the new element. The new element on which the tonic accent falls carries the **information focus**. This is the device used by English speakers to highlight the core of a message. The tonic accent is what we normally perceive as stress. In the following examples (from Halliday 1985), the element which receives the tonic accent is underlined. The symbol // marks the boundary of a tone unit.

// now silver needs to have love // // I haven’t seen you for ages // While clearly relevant to interpreting activities, this approach may seem of limited applicability in translation since it appears to rely heavily on phonological evidence.

This, however, is not the case, for there is undoubtedly more to the distinction between given and new than the assignment of phonological stress.

Halliday (1985) explains that the boundaries of given and new elements are undecidable on phonological evidence alone. The tonic accent normally falls on the last item, but this does not tell us where the given element ends and the new one begins. To establish this, we have to look at other evidence in the surrounding context. For instance, by expanding the context of the ﬁ rst example above, we can establish which element is given: *In this job, Anne, we’re working with silver. Now silver needs to have love*.The context, rather than phonological evidence, tells us that *silver* is given in the above example and that the new element therefore starts at *needs*.The analysis of the tone group is now as follows: // now silver needs to have love // This is an example of a normal, unmarked structure (see sections 5.1.2.3 and 5.1.2.4 below for a discussion of marked information structure). Here, the tone unit coincides with the clause as a grammatical unit, theme coincides with given, and rheme coincides with new.

The importance of context in establishing the boundaries of given and new elements is worth noting because it suggests that analysing written language in terms of given and new is feasible. In written language, as in spoken language, one can refer to the context to establish whether a piece of information has or has not been introduced earlier. Moreover, many of the devices used to signal information status are common to both spoken and written language. For instance, in both spoken and written English deﬁ niteness is generally associated with given infor- mation and indeﬁ niteness with new information. *The girl walked into the room* suggests, in most contexts, that the identity of *the girl* has already been established.

This contrasts with *A girl walked into the room*, which suggests that a new entity is being introduced into the discourse. Similarly, in both spoken and written English given information tends to be grammatically subordinate to other information. In *Heseltine’s appointment as Minister of the Environment came as no surprise*,the event of Heseltine’s appointment is presented as given; the reader is assumed to know about it. Had it been new information, it would have been presented independ- ently in the predicate, because this is where new information normally occurs in English: *Heseltine has been appointed as Minister of the Environment. This comes as no surprise*.The use of subordination as a syntactic device for marking given information may be a common feature of information structure in many languages: for instance, Maynard (1981) suggests that given information in Japanese also tends to be subordinate.

Some items are inherently given because of their meaning, and this generally applies not only to spoken and written English but also to most languages. Pronouns present the most obvious case, with ﬁ rst- and second-person pronouns being the prime example of items whose givenness is determined contextually.

Because stress is not available in written language, intricate syntactic devices have to be used to perform a similar function. For example, one of the most important functions of cleft and pseudo-cleft structures in English (discussed under predicated and identifying theme, section 5.1.1.3) is to signal information status. In cleft structures, the item in theme position is presented as new and the item in rheme position is presented as given. In the following extract from Morgan Matroc’s brochure, the new item is underlined:

And yet there are some customers who in their search for a suitable material prefer to study complex tables of technical data. It is for such customers that we have listed the properties of Matroc’s more widely used materials.

A shorthand representation of the above structure would be ‘It is for X that we have listed the properties …’, where the element presented as given is ‘we have listed the properties … for X’ and the element presented as new is ‘X = such customers’.

Compare this with the following pseudo-cleft structure from the *Independent*: Lonrho has been informed that the report made no criticism of its conduct.

What Mr Rowland wants is the early publication of this report.

Here, the information presented as given is that Mr Rowland wants something, and the information presented as new is that this something is the early publication of the report.

Failure to appreciate the functions of speciﬁ c syntactic structures in signalling given and new information can result in unnecessary shifts in translation. The following example is from *Arab Political Humour* (Kishtainy 1985:x). The source text is English.

The kind of joke related by any man is a good indicator of his character, mood and circumstance – a fact which is as valid when applied to the nation as a whole. It is a general picture this book tries to depict rather than the detailed idiosyncrasies of any political leader.

Apart from syntactic structure, punctuation can also be used as a device for signalling information structure in written language.17 It is used, for example, to distinguish between a deﬁ ning relative clause such as *He was waving to the girl who was running along the platform* and a non-deﬁ ning relative clause such as *He was waving to the girl, who was running along the platform*.In the ﬁ rst example, *who was running along the platform* identiﬁ es *the girl* and therefore does not add new information (if it did, it would be useless as a way of identifying the girl). In the second example, the comma is used to signal that the same clause represents new information.

The above discussion suggests that, when needed, clear signals of information status can be employed in written language. Different languages use different

devices for signalling information structure, and translators must develop a sensi- tivity to the various signalling systems available in the languages they work with. This is, of course, easier said than done because, unfortunately, not much has been achieved so far in the way of identifying signals of information status in various languages. As is the case with most areas of textlinguistics, linguists tend to concen- trate on the analysis of signalling devices in English and extrapolate from that to other languages. For example, Chafe sums up the expression of givenness as follows:

The principal linguistic effects of the given-new distinction, in English *and perhaps all languages*,reduce to the fact that given information is conveyed in a weaker and more attenuated manner than new information. This attenu- ation is likely to be reﬂ ected in two principal ways: given information is pronounced with lower pitch and weaker stress than new and it is subject to pronominalization.

*(1976:31; my emphasis)*

Brown and Yule reiterate Chafe’s views in suggesting that ‘speakers usually refer to current given entities with attenuated syntactic and phonological forms’ (1983:189).

These comments may well apply to English, and perhaps even a large number of languages, but they certainly do not apply to all. It is well known, for instance, that pronominalization is rare in Japanese, and it is therefore unlikely to play a signiﬁ cant role in signalling givenness. On the other hand, some languages (Japanese included) use special afﬁ xes to mark given and new information or thematic and non-thematic elements. This kind of feature is difﬁ cult to describe in terms of attenuation. In some languages, stress and intonation are not available as devices for signalling new infor- mation. They are not available, or not as readily available, in Chinese (Tsao 1983) or in French (Paula Chicken, personal communication). These languages rely on lexical and syntactic devices to signal information status. For instance, in Chinese deﬁ - niteness and indeﬁ niteness (which reﬂ ect given and new information respectively) are typically signalled by means of word order: The most usual way of showing deﬁ niteness [in Chinese] is by means of word-order arrangement. And the most general principle is: nominals occurring before the main verb of a sentence tend to be deﬁ nite while those occurring after the main verb can be either deﬁ nite or indeﬁ nite.

*(Tsao 1983:104)*

Finnish is another language that does not have an article system. It uses case endings and word order to signal deﬁ niteness and indeﬁ niteness (Sunnari 1990).

This type of signalling does not seem to support the attenuation theory. Similarly, one could argue that the attenuation theory does not apply to languages such as Arabic, which have a deﬁ nite article but no explicit marker of indeﬁ niteness. Like

English, these languages tend to use deﬁ niteness as a signal of givenness and indeﬁ niteness as a signal of newness. However, if anything, it is the new rather than the given entity which is regularly referred to by an attenuated syntactic structure.

***4.1.2.2 How is givenness determined?***

Identifying signals of information status is one area of information structure that is clearly relevant in translation. Another area which can pose problems in translation relates to the ability to determine when a certain item of information can and cannot be treated as given.

Most commonly, a given element is an element which is recoverable because it has been mentioned before. This is the basis on which the various elements in the answers to the questions given on page 156 have been labelled as given or new.

But information may be treated by the speaker as given for a variety of other reasons. It may be predictable, or it may be contextually salient, as in the case of ﬁ rst-person pronouns. Rather than use a variety of notions such as recoverability, predictability and saliency to explain givenness, Chafe suggests that the key to givenness lies in the notion of consciousness: Given (or old) information is that knowledge which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of the utterance. So called new information is what the speaker assumes he is introducing into the addressee’s consciousness by what he says.

*(1976:30)*

The fact that the speaker and addressee themselves are regularly treated as given (and pronominalized as *I* and *you* respectively) stems from the same consideration. The speaker is conscious of the addressee, and the addressee is conscious of the speaker.

*(*ibid.*:31–32)*

An important question with implications for some translation-related activities such as abridging, expanding or any form of rewriting that introduces or deletes gaps between a certain item and its subsequent mention in a text is this: how long can an element be assumed to remain in the addressee’s consciousness? In other words, under what circumstances would a previously mentioned item have to be re- introduced as new? Chafe suggests two variables which can be used to determine whether an item may or may not have left the addressee’s consciousness: The number of intervening sentences in which the item was not mentioned is one obvious variable, but more interesting would be the effect of such discourse boundaries as a change of scene, where a whole set of items can be assumed to enter the consciousness of the addressee, presumably pushing out old ones.

*(*ibid.:*32–33)*

The following example from *Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat* (Heikal

1983) illustrates the effect of both variables: number of intervening sentences and change of scene. This book was originally written in English and then later translated into Arabic (with considerable additions) by the author himself. Possible explanations for these additions are discussed in Chapter 7. The extract forms part of the description of events that followed the shooting of Anwar Sadat, former President of Egypt who was assassinated in 1981 (English version: p. 271; Arabic version: pp. 527–531). Items relevant to the present discussion of givenness are underlined.

According to Heikal, Sadat was put into a helicopter, accompanied by his wife Jihan. But instead of ﬂ ying straight to the hospital, the helicopter ﬁ rst stopped by Sadat’s residence:

Jihan is known to have rushed into the house and put through two telephone calls to the United States. One was to her elder son Gamal, who was then in Florida. She learnt that Gamal had gone with some friends to an island off the coast of Florida, so she told the person who answered the telephone to get hold of him immediately at any cost and tell him to call his mother on a matter of the greatest urgency. Who the other call was to Jihan has never revealed, but it is certain that it must have been someone of the highest importance, and that her purpose was to obtain from the most authoritative source possible some outside indication of what was happening in Egypt. After these two telephone calls had been made Jihan rejoined the helicopter which continued its course up the Nile to the Maadi hospital.

The ofﬁ cial report from the hospital stated that when the President arrived he was in a state of complete coma, with no recordable blood pressure or pulse, ‘the eyes wide open, with no response to light’, and no reﬂ exes anywhere. The report went on to list his injuries, which included two bullet entrances under the left nipple, one entering below the knee and exiting at the top of the left thigh, as well as several wounds in the right arm, chest, neck and round the left eye.

There was ‘a foreign substance which can be felt by touch under the skin of the neck’, which was presumably the ﬁ rst and fatal bullet ﬁ red by Abbas Mohamed.

The doctors detailed the attempts made at resuscitation, but by 2.40 it was concluded that there was no activity in either heart or brain and that the Pres- ident must be declared dead. The cause of death was given as shock, internal haemorrhage in the chest cage, lesions in the left lung and all main arteries.

The report was signed by twenty-one doctors.

From the outset Jihan had realized that there was no hope of her husband’s survival. As she waited outside the room where the doctors were operating the call came through from Gamal in Florida.

The middle paragraph, which summarizes Sadat’s condition on arriving at the hospital and the doctors’ report, is expanded into three pages in the Arabic version.

Furthermore, the whole list of injuries is set aside as a sort of subs ection, marked by three asterisks at the top and three at the bottom, so that the change of topic or scene is explicitly signalled to the reader. The following condensed extract (pp. 527–531 in the Arabic version, followed by a back-translation) illustrates the main differences:

… Some reliable sources report that the President’s wife, Mrs Jihan, rushed to the telephone to make **some telephone calls** to the United States.

Among these was deﬁ nitely **a call to her only son Gamal**, who was then in Florida. During **the call** she discovered that Gamal had gone with some of his friends to an island on the coast of Florida. She asked the person who answered her to try and ﬁ nd him as soon as possible and to **ask him to contact her** in Cairo immediately as there is an extremely urgent matter she needs to talk to him about. There were other telephone calls that Mrs Jihan made to the United States …

The ofﬁ cial report of the Maadi Hospital states that when Sadat arrived at the hospital and was examined he was in a state of complete coma. The ofﬁ cial report issued by the Maadi Hospital was as follows: [complete report quoted – three pages, ending with signatures of members of the medical team]

Mrs Jihan was waiting outside the examination room, knowing in her heart of hearts that her husband has departed. **A telephone call** came from the United States. It was her son Gamal on the line calling from Florida … Unlike the English version, the last paragraph in the Arabic version re introduces Gamal’s telephone call to his mother as new information. This is signalled in Arabic through the use of an indeﬁ nite noun group: ‘a telephone call’ rather than ‘the call’.

It would have been unreasonable of the author/translator to expect this item of infor- mation to remain in the reader’s consciousness after three intervening pages and an explicitly marked change of scene or topic.

A ﬁ nal point to bear in mind is that givenness is assigned by the speaker, and as such does not necessarily correlate with the reality of the linguistic or extra-linguistic situation. A speaker may decide to present an element as given even when there is no sufﬁ cient reason to assume that it is in the addressee’s consciousness. This may be done for rhetorical purposes and is a common ploy in politics. Presenting a piece of information as given suggests that it is already established and agreed and is therefore non-negotiable. Similarly, an element which has been mentioned before may be presented as new because it is unexpected or because the speaker wishes to present it in a contrastive light.

***4.1.2.3 Marked vs unmarked information structure***

Unlike thematic structure (at least in English), information structure is not realized by the sequencing of elements. It is realized chieﬂ y by tonicity. In unmarked information structure, the information focus falls on something other than the theme. It falls on the whole rheme or part of it; for example, in *John was appointed Chairman*, the tonic accent will normally fall on *Chairman*: // John was appointed Chairman // This information structure would give the message the meaning of a statement of what happened or what John was appointed as.

Other options are available to the speaker, depending on where he or she feels the burden of the message lies. For instance, the information focus may be placed on *John*,and in this case the message will be understood as a statement of *who* was appointed Chairman and may imply surprise or contrast: // John was appointed Chairman // Similarly, the focus may be placed on *was* to stress the truth of the utterance: // John was appointed Chairman // In written language, marked information structure is often signalled by means of typography or punctuation devices. In the following example from Agatha Christie’s *Crooked House* (1949/1989:61), italics are used to highlight the elements on which the information focus falls: ‘The family! Beasts! I hate them all.’ She looked at me, her mouth working. She looked sullen and frightened and angry. ‘They’ve been beastly to me always – always. From the very ﬁ rst. Why shouldn’t I marry their precious father? What did it matter to *them*? They’d all got loads of money. *He* gave it to them. They wouldn’t have had the brains to make any for themselves!’ She went on: ‘Why shouldn’t a man marry again – even if he is a bit old? And he wasn’t really old at all – not in himself. I was very fond of him. I *was* fond of him.’ She looked at me deﬁ antly.

Here, the elements which are selected as focal (*them*, *he* and *was*) are not new in the sense of not having been mentioned before, but they are new in the sense of being in some way contrastive. For instance, the last item, *was*,contrasts with what the speaker thinks the hearer believes about her feelings. In the French translation of this extract, the italics are left out. As mentioned earlier, French does not generally use phonological stress to highlight a clause element; instead, lexical means are employed to signal what would normally be conveyed by means of intonation in English. Thus

The English have changed can be rendered as

Les Anglais, eux aussi, ont évolué where the lexical item *eux aussi* (‘as well’) replaces stress in highlighting the previous item *Les Anglais*.Instead of italics, the French translator of the above extract opts for repeating the last statement to achieve similar emphasis: … D’ailleurs, il n’était pas vieux du tout! Il y a vieux et vieux. Je l’aimais bien.

Comme me déﬁ ant des yeux, elle répéta: – Oui, je l’aimais bien. …

The emphasis in the French version does not just come from the repetition of *je l’aimais bien*,which also occurs in the original, but rather from the fact that the repe- tition is labelled as repetition: *elle répéta*.

***4.1.2.4 Marked information structure and marked rheme***

To my knowledge, Hallidayan linguists have always concentrated on marked theme and do not seem to have considered that a rheme can also be marked. But the notion of marked rheme may prove helpful in accounting for the communicative force of some utterances. For instance, there are times when a speaker or writer seems to be deliberately highlighting a rheme by stripping the message of its initial element, that is, the theme. The following example illustrates the point.

English extract from *A Hero from Zero* (p. v) House of Fraser shares were highly sensitive to any rumours of a bid, and we waited with caution and anxiety for the green light from the ministry. And waited.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the natural theme *we* is omitted in the second sentence in order to foreground the rheme. The rheme is all there is in the clause and thus receives the reader’s undivided attention. To distinguish between the function of marked theme and that of marked rheme, we could say that marked theme gives prominence to an element as linking information, whereas marked rheme gives prominence to an element as the core of the message.

Another reason for the prominence of *And waited* in the above example is that it repeats verbatim information that has already been established in the previous sentence. It therefore has a surprise effect on the reader, who expects each new clause to move the discourse forward. In cases of this sort, the pure repetition of information and the reader’s expectation that the discourse should be moving forward are reconciled by ﬁ nding an indirect interpretation of the message. In this particular instance, we interpret *And waited* as meaning something like ‘we went on waiting and nothing happened’ or ‘we waited in vain’. In French, it is impossible to reproduce the above themeless clause. A French verb has to be accompanied by an immediate subject. This is, of course, also true of English grammar (taken as an abstract system), but unlike French, English employs themeless sentences as a fairly common stylistic device which is both acceptable and effective in many contexts. The French translation overcomes the problem by spelling out the inter- pretation: *Nous attendîmes en vain* (literally: ‘we waited in vain’), but loses the surprise element because it conforms to the given-plus-new pattern. The Arabic translation preserves the surprise element by employing a mixture of repetition and temporal signalling: literally ‘and waited-we then waited-we’, that is, ‘we waited and then we waited some more’, meaning ‘we waited in vain’.

Apart from deleting the theme in order to highlight the rhematic element, it is also possible to use punctuation in written language to signal an unusual arrangement of clause elements into tone groups. Consider the following example from Le Carré’s *The Little Drummer Girl* (1983:8): As a further precaution, the addresses of Israeli staff were not printed in ofﬁ cial diplomatic lists for fear of encouraging the impulsive gesture at a time when Israel was being a little hard to take. Politically.

The full stop before *Politically* does a number of things simultaneously. First, it forces an end of a tone group on the previous stretch of language, thus presenting what follows as a separate unit of information. A unit of information must include a new element (the given element being optional). The new element, a complete unit of information in this case, is a simple adverb: *Politically*.This in itself is unusual and therefore marked in English. Second, in order to interpret *Politically* as a unit of information, we have to assume that it is meant as a foregrounded rheme – fore- grounded by omitting the thematic element *Israel was being a little hard to take*.

Third, in forcing an end of a tone group at this point, the full stop also foregrounds the previous rheme. It gives greater rhematic emphasis to the previous chunk of information: *was being a little hard to take*.

The strategy used to foreground rhematic elements and to create highly marked information structures in the above extract is the same as that used by Le Carré in *The Little Drummer Girl* example. Thematic elements are omitted to foreground a rheme, for example *Make resistance impossible* (*They/These colors*?). Full stops are inserted in unexpected places to force the reader to treat certain elements as complete units of information. This is particularly effective in the case of *Consider them. Yours*,where one automatically gets the two interpretations: ‘consider them’ (i.e. think about them), ‘they are yours’ and ‘Consider them yours’. Only the ﬁ rst

interpretation is successfully conveyed in the French version of the leaﬂ et (*Regardez- les. Elles sont à vous*).

Since information focus normally falls on the rheme or part of it, and since unmarked information structure involves placing the given element before the new one and unmarked thematic structure involves placing theme before rheme, it is not surprising that theme often coincides with given, and rheme often coincides with new. This is probably why, for most Prague linguists, part of the deﬁ nition of theme is that it is given and part of the deﬁ nition of rheme is that it is new. We will now look at this alternative view to explore its relevance to translation activities.

**4.2 THE PRAGUE SCHOOL POSITION ON**

**INFORMATION FLOW: FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE**

**PERSPECTIVE**

The Prague School position on theme/rheme and given/new is quite distinct from Halliday’s and results in a signiﬁ cantly different explanation of how these categories are realized in discourse. This approach is generally referred to as **functional sentence perspective (FSP)**.18 The theory of functional sentence perspective was developed by a group of Czech linguists who pioneered most studies investigating the interaction between syntax and communicative function. The details of FSP theory are rather complex, and there are several distinct approaches within the Prague tradition itself. Never- theless, it is important for translators to become familiar with at least one of the major models proposed within this alternative tradition. For one thing, a functional sentence perspective approach may prove more helpful in explaining the interac- tional organization of languages other than English, particularly languages with free or relatively free word order. For another, FSP theory often forms the basis for highly relevant discussions of translation problems and strategies (see, for example, Hatim 1984, 1987, 1988, 1989, Hatim and Mason 1990, Rogers 2006), and basic famil- iarity with this approach tends to be taken for granted by those exploring its rele- vance to translation studies. A simpliﬁ ed general outline of one FSP model is therefore given below in the hope that it will prove useful to translators interested in resolving, or at least identifying, translation problems relating to information ﬂ ow.19 The main premise in FSP theory is that the communicative goals of an inter- action cause the structure of a clause or sentence to function in different kinds of perspective. Jan Firbas,20 one of the main proponents of this approach, gives the following example (1986). A sentence such as *John has been taken ill* has a certain syntactic structure which remains unchanged in different communicative settings. In context, it will function in a certain kind of perspective, depending on the purpose of communication; for instance, it may function as a statement of a person’s state of health (*John has been taken* ***ill***), as an identiﬁ cation of the person affected (***John*** *has been taken ill*), or as an afﬁ rmation that the information conveyed is really valid (*John* ***has*** *been taken ill*). Note that what Firbas describes as functional sentence perspective in this example would be analysed purely in terms of information structure in Halliday’s model.

The concepts of theme/rheme and given/new are supplemented in Firbas’ model with a non-binary notion that determines which elements are thematic and which are not thematic in a clause. This is the notion of **communicative dynamism (CD)**. Firbas (1972:78) explains it as follows: communicative dynamism … is based on the fact that linguistic communi- cation is not a static, but a dynamic phenomenon. By CD I understand a property of communication, displayed in the course of the development of the information to be conveyed and consisting in advancing this development. By the degree of CD carried by a linguistic element, I understand the extent to which the element contributes to the development of the communication, to which, as it were, it ‘pushes the communication forward’.

In order to relate the notion of CD to the question of identifying theme/rheme and given/new in discourse, Firbas suggests the following. A clause consists of different types of element. Some elements lay the foundation on which other elements may convey a message. These foundation-laying elements are context-dependent and constitute the theme. They carry a low degree of CD because, being context- dependent, they do not play a major role in pushing the communication forward. If we take the example of *John has been taken* ***ill***(as a statement of John’s state of health), the foundation-laying element would be *John*.The remaining elements complete the information and fulﬁ l the communicative purpose of the utterance.

These core-constituting elements form the non-theme, are context-independent and carry a higher degree of CD.

What Firbas seems to be suggesting so far is that theme consists of context- dependent and rheme of context-independent items. He does, however, modify this position slightly in his later writings as we shall see shortly. It is also important to point out at this stage that Firbas’ notions of context-dependence/independence are much more restricted than Halliday’s notions of given/new: context dependence/independence is judged by a very narrow criterion. Any kind or aspect of information that is not present in the immediately relevant verbal or situational context is to be regarded as irretrievable and hence context-independent.

*(Firbas 1987:30–31)*

Firbas’ notions of context-dependence/independence are therefore purely linguistic and do not extend to the psychological aspect of communication as Halliday’s notions do.

Firbas goes on to explain that the non-theme consists of two elements: the **transition** and the rheme. The transition consists of elements which perform the function of linking the foundation-laying and the core-constituting parts of the clause. It generally consists of the temporal and modal exponents of the verb, which are ‘the transitional element par excellence: They carry the lowest degree of CD within the non-theme and are the *transition proper*’ (Firbas 1986:54). In the example given above, *John has been taken* ***ill***,the transition would be *has been + -en*.The transition may also consist of a link verb such as *be* or *seem*, or any verb whose main function is simply to link the foundation-laying and core-constituting elements of a clause. In *The weather is ﬁ ne*,for example, *is* would normally constitute the transition (assuming the communicative purpose of the utterance is to state what the weather is like). The rheme represents the core of the message and carries the highest degree of CD. It consists of the notional component of the ﬁ nite verb and the rest of the message. In *John has been taken* ***ill***,the rheme is *take + ill.* In *The weather is* ***fine***,the rheme is *ﬁ ne*.

Apart from the notion of transition outlined above, and unlike the Hallidayan approach, where the verb is generally considered part of the rheme, FSP theory assigns thematic or rhematic status to the verb depending on the context and the semantics of the verb itself. Semantically, the less of a notional component the verb has, the more naturally it goes with the theme as a foundation-laying element. Link verbs are a clear case of verbs with a very limited notional component whose function seems to be simply linking the theme to the rest of the message. In fact, in many languages (for instance, Arabic and Russian) equative sentences such as *The weather is ﬁ ne* are verbless. It is also possible to omit a link verb in English in some contexts, as in the following example from Le Carré’s *The Russia House* (1989:18): And in the corner of his eye – an anxious blue blur was all that she amounted to – this Soviet woman he was deliberately ignoring.

This seems to support the view that link verbs play little or no role in pushing the communication forward and therefore have no rhematic status.

Contextually, the notional component of the verb is assigned thematic status if it has already been mentioned. Scinto (1983:80) gives the following example: Consider the following utterance: Leander bought a new book.

To this sentence we can pose the wh-question: What did Leander buy? or, What did Leander do? In the case of the ﬁ rst question the response is ‘a new book’. In the case of the second, ‘bought a new book’. What these answers demonstrate is that the verb may be part of either Theme or Rheme proper.

In the case of the ﬁ rst question the verb is thematicized; in the second it is rhematic and is substituted for by a categorical verb, i.e. to do.

Which question to ask will, of course, depend on whether the context already tells us that Leander bought something. Note that this approach tends, by and large, to equate theme with given (context-dependent) and rheme with new (context-independent) elements. However, Firbas does modify this position when he insists that, as far as he is concerned, this is not necessarily the case: I consider rhematic information to be always new, but thematic information old and/or new. On the other hand, old information is always thematic, but new information thematic or rhematic.

*(1987:46)*

In other words, Firbas, like Halliday, acknowledges that a unit of information may consist of a given plus new element, or of just a new element. In the ﬁ rst case, the given element would be considered thematic and the new element would be considered rhematic. In the second case, a theme still has to be identiﬁ ed and, for Firbas, this would be the least context-independent element (i.e. the element with the lowest degree of CD).

So far, Firbas’ approach to information ﬂ ow can be summed up as follows. A clause consists of two types of element: foundation-laying/context-dependent elements and core-constituting/context-independent elements. The former have a lower degree of CD and are always thematic. The latter, however, may be thematic or rhematic. A clause may totally consist of context-independent elements and, in this case, the theme will be the element with the lowest degree of CD and the rheme will be the element with the highest degree of CD.

**4.2.1 Linear arrangement and thematic status in FSP**

It should be clear by now that, unlike Hallidayan linguists, FSP theorists do not see theme and rheme as being realized chieﬂ y by their relative positions in the clause.

This is not to say that they do not acknowledge the role played by sequential ordering in signalling the communicative function of an utterance. Firbas, for instance, suggests that ‘the basic distribution of CD is implemented by a series of elements opening with the element carrying the very lowest and gradually passing on to the element carrying the very highest degree of CD’ (1974:22). This is more or less the same as saying that theme normally precedes rheme. However, as can be seen from the above brief discussion of the verb as a thematic or rhematic element, FSP theorists also acknowledge semantic structure and context as factors which further determine the distribution of CD. Communicative dynamism is therefore assumed to be achieved by the interplay of these three factors: linear modiﬁ cation (i.e. gradation of position, syntax), semantic structure and context. Semantic structure and context ‘operate either in the same direction as or counter to’ linear modiﬁ cation (Firbas 1974:22), but both are hierarchically superior to it. For example, with the exception of contexts in which they are presented contrastively, pronouns, being context- dependent, always carry a low degree of CD irrespective of where they occur in the clause. In *I gave the book to him* or *I gave him the book*, *him* would normally be considered thematic in FSP theory. Similarly, deﬁ nite expressions would be

considered thematic and indeﬁ nite expressions rhematic in most contexts. The following examples, adapted from Firbas (1986:58) illustrate the priority given to context over linear arrangement. Rhematic elements are italicized. (1) *A heavy dew* (Rh) had (TME) fallen (Th; TME). (2) The grass (Th) was (TME) *blue* (Rh). (3) *Big drops* (Rh) hung (TME) on the bushes (Th). (Rh = rheme; TME = temporal modal exponent/transition; Th = theme) The analysis of clause elements in terms of FSP is clearly a complex business. It is not as easy to apply or follow as Halliday’s system. However, as explained earlier, a basic understanding of this approach may well prove helpful in some contexts.

**4.2.2 Linear arrangement and marked structures in FSP**

Since FSP theorists do not take sentence position as the only criterion for assigning thematic status to clause elements, it follows that two alternative formulations of the same message can have the same thematic analysis. For example, *In China the book received a great deal of publicity* and *The book received a great deal of publicity in China* would be analysed in the same way. *In China* would be considered rhematic in both formulations (unless stress is used to signal a difference in its thematic/rhematic status). Compare this with the Hallidayan approach, where *In China* would be considered rheme in the second and marked theme in the ﬁ rst example. It also follows that one cannot talk speciﬁ cally about ‘marked theme’ in FSP theory, since the question of producing a marked theme by putting an element in initial position in the clause assumes that initial position is reserved for theme. FSP theorists do, however, acknowledge that there are marked and unmarked structures in every language. They also attempt to explain the difference in terms of theme/ rheme, though their explanation is somewhat different from Halliday’s.

Very brieﬂ y, according to Prague linguists such as Mathesius and Firbas, the nature of interaction suggests that the usual, unmarked order of message segments is that of theme followed by rheme. It is clearly easier to follow a message that announces its subject and then says something about it than the other way round. Weil (1844, discussed in Firbas 1974), one of the pioneers of this area of study, suggested that the movement from the initial notion of subject of utterance (theme) to the goal of utterance (rheme) represents the movement of the mind itself.21 The organization of a message into a theme *+* rheme sequence therefore represents the unmarked, normal order. He further suggested that sequences which deviate from this normal order do occur, and he called a rheme– theme organization of a message the ‘pathetic order’ (Firbas 1974). The pathetic order is marked; its function is to convey emotion of some sort: it may be contrastive or contradictory, for example. Instead of conveying a message in a straightforward way, the pathetic order allows the speaker to add an emotional layer to it. An

English clause such as *Well-publicized the book was* would therefore be considered marked in both Hallidayan and Prague linguistics. However, a Hallidayan linguist would analyse it as a fronted theme + rheme sequence, whereas a Prague linguist would analyse it as a rheme–theme sequence.

What we have here, then, are two different explanations of the feature of marked organization of the clause as a message. The Hallidayan approach explains it in terms of the fronting of an element to make it thematic. The Prague linguists’ approach explains it in terms of reversing the theme–rheme sequence. For the purposes of translation, what matters is that both types of analysis recognize the sequence as marked.

**4.2.3 The tension between word order and communicative function: a problem in translation?**

According to FSP scholars, restrictions on word order in various languages result in a linear arrangement that may or may not coincide with the interpretative arrangement of an utterance. Firbas (1986:47) gives the following examples (always assuming a neutral context for each utterance): Interpretative arrangement Linear arrangement I him used to know. I used to know him.

Ich ihn habe gekannt. Ich habe ihn gekannt.

Je l’ai connu. Je l’ai connu.

Irrespective of the speciﬁ c examples used by Firbas, this view implies that, generally speaking, in languages with relatively free word order there will be less tension between the requirements of syntax and those of communicative function.

Conversely, in languages with relatively ﬁ xed word order there will be greater instances of tension between syntax and communicative function.

Word-order patterns fulﬁ l a number of functions in all languages: syntactically, they indicate the roles of subject, object and so on; semantically, they indicate roles such as actor, patient, beneﬁ ciary; communicatively, they indicate the ﬂ ow of infor- mation (however we may wish to represent this: in terms of theme/rheme, given/ new or communicative dynamism). Several linguists have suggested that different languages give different priorities to each of these functions, depending on the extent to which their system of word-order is ﬁ xed. Mathesius (quoted in Firbas 1974:17) compares English and Czech in this respect and concludes that in English, the grammatical principle (i.e. syntax) plays the leading role in the hierarchy of word order principles and that ‘English differs from Czech in being so little susceptible to the requirements of FSP as to frequently disregard them altogether’. De Beau- grande and Dressler (1981:75) make the same assertion:22 In English, the lack of a differentiated morphemic system in many areas places heavy constraints on word-order patterns. In Czech, with its richer

morphemic systems, word order can follow the functional sentence perspective much more faithfully.

Johns (1991:10–11) makes similar claims with respect to topic-prominent vs subject-prominent languages: ‘in a topic-prominent language linear arrangement follows the scale of CD far more closely than it does in a subject-prominent language’. This is an interesting view of word order vs communicative function. It suggests that translating between languages with different priorities and different types of syntactic restriction necessarily involves a great deal of skewing of patterns of information ﬂ ow. The question is: can translators do anything to minimize this skewing?

**4.2.4 Suggested strategies for minimizing linear dislocation**

A number of linguists have suggested a variety of strategies for resolving the tension between syntactic and communicative functions in translation and language learning.

In this section, I will attempt to explore some of these strategies, with examples from translated texts where possible. The strategies discussed are drawn from two main sources: Johns (1991) and Papegaaij and Schubert (1988).

***Strategy no. 1: voice change***

This strategy involves changing the syntactic form of the verb to achieve a different sequence of elements. A good example of this is voice change in languages with a category of voice. The following examples, from Johns (1991), involve the substi- tution of active for passive. The reverse, the substitution of passive for active, is of course also possible.

Johns notes that the strategy of substituting active for passive raises the problem of providing a subject for the active clause. He rightly points out that the subject of the active clause must preserve the impersonality we normally associate with passive structures in many European languages. In the above examples, the choice of *This paper* as subject satisﬁ es this condition of impersonality.

**Ergative** structures may provide a strategy similar to that of voice change in some languages. **Ergativity** involves using the object of a transitive verb as the subject of an intransitive verb: compare *An explosion shook the room* and *The room shook* (*with the explosion*). This type of structure is very common in some languages, such as Finnish.

***Strategy no. 2: change of verb***

This involves changing the verb altogether and replacing it with one that has a similar meaning but can be used in a different syntactic conﬁ guration. Examples of pairs of verbs that describe an event from different perspectives in English include *give/get* and *like/please*.These often allow reordering the sequence of elements in a clause without a signiﬁ cant change of meaning (cf. *I like it* and *It pleases me*).

I have not been able to ﬁ nd any examples of this strategy in my data or in Johns’ data. The reluctance of translators to use it is understandable to some extent.

Expressions such as *I* *like it* and *It pleases me* are ‘equivalent’ only in theory. In real life, one of the options – in this case, *It pleases me –* tends to be very unnatural.

Each language has its own phraseology, its own idiom which rules out many options that are potentially available as grammatical sequences.

Reciprocal pairs that offer more natural alternatives than *like/please* do exist, however. For instance, *I bought it from John* and *John sold it to me*,or *I received/ got a letter from John* and *John sent me a letter* are equally ‘natural’ as far as the phraseology of English is concerned; their ‘acceptability’ is, of course, determined by the context in which they occur.

***Strategy no. 3: nominalization***

Some languages allow the order verb + subject. If the translator wishes to maintain this thematic organization and, at the same time, adhere to an obligatory order of subject + verb in the target language, nominalization could probably provide a good strategy in many contexts. Nominalization involves replacing a verbal form with a nominal one (e.g. *describe* ’ *description*). This can then be followed by a semantically ‘empty’ verb such as *give* or *take* in the passive. For example, the Portuguese sequence:

Estudou-se o comportamento de *Drosophila sturtevanti* were-studied the behaviour of *Drosophila sturtevanti*

can be turned into

A study was carried out of the behaviour of …

Alternatively, the nominalization can follow a ‘weak’ subject such as *This* in the following example (from Johns 1991):

This is a study of the behaviour of …

I have not found any examples of the use of this strategy in actual translations.

Johns similarly conﬁ rms that, in his own data, this ‘sophisticated strategy of nomi- nalisation is under-represented’ (1991:7). The fact that it is underrepresented high- lights the need to draw translators’ attention to it. If sophisticated strategies such as nominalization have not so far been recognized as viable options in resolving the tension between syntax and communicative function, this does not imply that they are not viable – just that they have been largely overlooked.

With the exception of the use of nominalizations and a change from the past to the present tense, my suggested version is identical to the existing translation (the present tense is the correct one to use here because it signals that the abstract reports the contents of the paper, not the procedures undertaken in the research – see discussion of tense as a signalling device in academic abstracts, Chapter 4, section 4.2.4). The nominalizations offer a way of presenting the information from a perspective similar to that of the Portuguese text. This is not a question of adhering to the structure of the source text for the sake of preserving form. The placement of verbs in initial position in the Portuguese text has a communicative function: it thematizes processes as the writer’s point of departure, an arrangement particularly suited to the reporting of academic research and scientiﬁ c methods.23

***Strategy no. 4: extraposition***

Extraposition involves changing the position of the entire clause in the sentence, for instance by embedding a simple clause in a complex sentence. **Cleft** and **pseudo-cleft** structures, discussed under predicated and identifying themes in 5.1.1.3 above, provide good examples. Papegaaij and Schubert (1988:182) explain that the main advantage of extraposition is that it ‘provides an escape to a higher and, in this particular respect, freer level’ when word order is relatively ﬁ xed at clause level. For various examples of cleft and pseudo-cleft structures.

The above strategies are potentially available for resolving the tension between word order and communicative function. In practice, syntactic and semantic considera- tions often override or interact with communicative considerations to produce struc- tures that do not follow the arrangement of the source text.

I have to admit that it is very difﬁ cult indeed to ﬁ nd clear examples of any of the above strategies in authentic translations. If anything, the most common strategy by far seems to be to abandon the thematic organization of the source text in favour of adhering to whatever word-order principles may be operating in the target language.

In other words, most translators seem to give priority to the syntactic principles of the target language rather than to the communicative structure of the source text.

Generally speaking, this strategy does not, in itself, seem to interfere with the natural ﬂ ow of information in the target text. In his study of Portuguese and English versions of Brazilian academic abstracts, Johns (1991:6) found that abandoning the thematic organization of the source language, in this case Portuguese, ‘often gives a perfectly acceptable English text’. In outlining the strategies potentially available to a translator, I am therefore not suggesting that translators should necessarily follow the thematic organization of every clause in the source text. Nor am I suggesting that these strategies are in fact used by professional translators in any signiﬁ cant way; one has to acknowledge that, in spite of being available in theory, they are in fact rarely used in practice. What I am suggesting, however, is that an awareness of aspects of information ﬂ ow and potential ways of resolving tension between syntactic and communicative functions is important in translation. The fact that certain strat- egies which can be shown to be useful in translation tend not to be made use of suggests that translators are simply not aware of them, rather than that they are familiar with them but consciously or subconsciously choose not to use them.

To sum up, a translator cannot always follow the thematic organization of the original. If at all possible, and unless the translation is designed to achieve a different effect, he or she should make an effort to present the target text from a perspective similar to that of the source text. But certain features of syntactic structure such as restrictions on word order, the principle of end-weight and the natural phraseology of the target language often mean that the thematic organization of the source text has to be abandoned. What matters at the end of the day is that the target text has some thematic organization of its own, that it reads naturally and smoothly, does not distort the information structure of the original (see 5.1.2 above) and that it preserves, where possible, any special emphasis signalled by marked structures in the original and maintains a coherent point of view as a text in its own right.

**Лекція № 5**

**Тема: Textual equivalence: cohesion**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 5

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. Reference
2. Substitution and ellipsis
3. Conjunction
4. Lexical cohesion

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana (1986/2004) ‘Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation’, in Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka (eds) *Interlingual and Intercultural Commu- nication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 17–35; reprinted in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Trans- lation Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 290–305.

Brown, Gillian and George Yule (1983) *Discourse Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6 : ‘The Nature of Reference in Text and Discourse’.

Callow, Kathleen (1974) *Discourse Considerations in Translating the Word of God*, Michigan: Zondervan. Chapter 3: ‘Cohesion’.

Cook, Guy (1992) *The Discourse of Advertising*, London: Routledge. Chapter 7: ‘Connected Text’. de Beaugrande, Robert and Wolfgang Dressler (1981) *Introduction to Text Linguistics*,London: Longman. Chapter 6: ‘Cohesion’.

Fawcett, Peter (1997) *Translation and Language*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Giora, Rachel (1983) ‘Segmentation and Segment Cohesion: On the Thematic Organization of the Text’, *Text* 3(2): 155–181.

Halliday, Michael A. K. and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976) *Cohesion in English*, London: Longman.

Hasan, Ruqaiya (1984) ‘Coherence and Cohesive Harmony’, in James Flood (ed.) *Under- standing Reading Comprehension: Cognition, Language and Structure of Prose*, Newark: International Reading Association, 181–219.

Hoey, Michael (1991) *Patterns of Lexis in Text*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shlesinger, Miriam (1995) ‘Shifts in Cohesion in Simultaneous Interpreting’, *The Translator* 1(2): 193–214.

**Текст лекції:**

**Cohesion** is the network1 of lexical, grammatical and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text. These relations or ties organize and, to some extent, create a text, for instance by requiring the reader to interpret words and expressions by reference to other words and expressions in the surrounding sentences and paragraphs.2 Cohesion is a surface relation; it connects together the actual words and expressions that we can see or hear.

This chapter draws heavily on the best known and most detailed model of cohesion available: the model outlined by Halliday and Hasan in *Cohesion in English* (1976).

It is worth noting, however, that other models have been proposed by various linguists (see, for instance, Callow 1974, Gutwinski 1976, de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, Hoey 1988, 1991).

Halliday and Hasan identify ﬁ ve main cohesive devices in English: **reference**, **substitution**, **ellipsis**, **conjunction** and **lexical cohesion**. Each device is explained below in some detail, followed by an attempt to explore its relevance to translation.

**5.1 REFERENCE**

The term **reference** is traditionally used in semantics for the relationship which holds between a word and what it points to in the real world. The reference of *chair* would therefore be a particular chair that is being identiﬁ ed on a particular occasion.

In Halliday and Hasan’s model of cohesion, reference is used in a similar but more

restricted way. Instead of denoting a direct relationship between words and extra- linguistic objects, reference is limited here to the relationship of identity which holds between two linguistic expressions. For example, in Mrs Thatcher has resigned. She announced her decision this morning the pronoun *she* points to Mrs Thatcher within the textual world itself. Reference, in the textual rather than the semantic sense, occurs when the reader has to retrieve the identity of what is being talked about by referring to another expression in the imme- diate context. The resulting cohesion ‘lies in the continuity of reference, whereby the same thing enters into the discourse a second time’ (Halliday and Hasan 1976:31).

Every language has certain items which have the property of reference in the textual sense. These reference items have the potential for directing readers to look elsewhere for their interpretation. The most common reference items in English and a large number of other languages are pronouns. Third-person pronouns are frequently used to refer back (and occasionally forward) to an entity which has already been introduced (or is about to be introduced) into the discourse. Apart from personal reference, English also uses items such as *the*, *this* and *those* to establish similar links between expressions in a text. In Mrs Thatcher has resigned. This delighted her opponents the reader has to go back to the previous stretch of discourse to establish what *This* refers to.

Reference, then, is a device that allows the reader or hearer to trace partici- pants, entities, events and so on in a text. One of the most common patterns of establishing chains of reference in English and a number of other languages is to mention a participant explicitly in the ﬁ rst instance, for example by name or title, and then use a pronoun to refer back to the same participant in the immediate context.

Languages that have number and gender distinctions in their pronoun system are less constrained in using this cohesive device, since different pronouns can be used to refer to different entities within a text with less possibility of confusion.

lthough Halliday and Hasan use a restricted notion of reference based on textual rather than extralinguistic relations, they still acknowledge that the relationship of reference may be established situationally. For example, a given pronoun may refer to an entity which is present in the context of situation rather than in the surrounding text. First- and second-person pronouns (*I*, *you*, *we* in English) are typical examples in that they do not refer back to a nominal expression in the text but to the speaker and hearer (or writer and reader) respectively. Third-person pronouns typically refer back (or forward) to a nominal expression in the text but may also be used to refer to an entity which is present in the immediate physical or mental context of situation.

An utterance such as *He’s not back yet* is perfectly feasible provided the speaker and hearer are clear about the identity of ‘he’, for example in the case of a couple referring to their son.

Another type of reference relation which is not strictly textual is that of **co-reference**. An example of a chain of co-referential items is *Mrs Thatcher* ’ *The Prime Minister* ’ *The Iron Lady* ’ *Maggie*.Halliday and Hasan do not discuss this type of referential linkage, and Hoey (1988:162) points out that co-reference ‘is not strictly a linguistic feature at all but a matter of real-world knowledge’. It is of course true that recognizing a link between *Mrs Thatcher* and *The Iron Lady*,for instance, depends on knowledge of the world rather than on textual competence. However, it is generally difﬁ cult and, for the purposes of translation not particularly helpful, to attempt to draw a line between what is linguistic or textual and what is extralinguistic or situational. For example, in the following extract from an article entitled ‘Cultural Revolutionary’ (*The Economist*, 6–12 February 2010, p. 66), recognizing the co-referential link between *Google* and *the Silicon Valley ﬁ rm* is based on both linguistic and situational knowledge:

Now Mr Lu faces a new challenge. His job at Microsoft, where he moved a year ago, is to take on Google in the online search and advertising business, where the Silicon Valley ﬁ rm rules supreme.

Here, we recognize *Google* as a *ﬁ rm* partly because we know from real world expe- rience that it is, and partly because the fact that it is capitalized makes it a good candidate for what is signalled, through the use of the deﬁ nite article preceding *ﬁ rm*, as an entity already identiﬁ ed in the text. The reference to *Silicon Valley*, on the other hand, relies heavily on our knowledge of the world.

It may be useful at this point to suggest, following Halliday and Hasan, that there is a continuum of cohesive elements that may be used for referring back to an entity already mentioned in the discourse. This continuum stretches from full repe- tition at one end of the scale to pronominal reference at the other. The following example is adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976: 283) to illustrate the point: There’s a boy climbing that tree. a. *The boy*’s going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (**repetition**) b. *The lad*’s going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (**synonym**)

c. *The child*’s going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (**superordinate**) d. *The idiot*’s going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (**general word**) e. *He*’s going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (**pronominal reference**) Co-reference can be incorporated somewhere around the repetition/synonym level of the continuum if we decide to adopt a more ﬂ exible notion of reference for our current purposes.

Patterns of reference (also known as **anaphora**) can vary considerably both within and across languages. Within the same language, text type seems to be an important factor in determining the choice of pattern. Fox (1986) examined patterns of reference in three genres of American English: spontaneous conversation, written expository prose and written fast-paced popular narratives. She found that ‘the distribution of pronoun versus full noun phrase differed dramatically from one discourse type to the next’ (*ibid.*:27). Based on an extensive study of the language of advertising in English, Cook (1992:154) explains the preference in advertising for repeating the name of the product instead of using a pronominal reference such as *it* as follows:

One obvious function of repetition is to ﬁ x the name of the product in the mind, so that it will come to the lips of the purchaser lost for a name. But nominal repetition is also an index of rank, esteem, intimacy or self- conﬁ dence: consider the repetition of names in ceremonies, prayers, by lovers, or by arrogant individuals who just ‘like the sound of their own name’.

Each language thus has what we might call general preferences for certain patterns of reference as well as speciﬁ c preferences that are sensitive to text type.

In terms of broad, language-speciﬁ c preferences, Callow (1974) explains that Hebrew, unlike English, prefers to use proper names to trace participants through a discourse. So, where English would normally use a pronoun to refer to a part icipant who has already been introduced, provided there is no possibility of confusing reference, Hebrew is more likely to repeat the participant’s name. Simi- larly, she explains, for the Bororos of Brazil the normal pattern is to refer to a participant by using a noun several times in succession before eventually shifting into a pronominal form.

Unlike English, which tends to rely heavily on pronominal reference in tracing participants, Brazilian Portuguese generally seems to favour more lexical repetition.

In addition, Portuguese inﬂ ects verbs for person and number. This grammatical feature provides additional means of relating processes and actions to speciﬁ c participants without the use of independent pronouns. The following example is from an article on Akio Morita, Chairman of the Sony Corporation. The article was published in the English and Portuguese editions of *Playboy* magazine. References to Akio Morita are highlighted in both extracts (and the back-translation), with the exception of verb inﬂ ections in Portuguese. Items in angle brackets are not in the Portuguese text – they are inserted to make the back-translation readable.

**5.2 SUBSTITUTION AND ELLIPSIS**

Unlike reference, substitution and ellipsis are grammatical rather than semantic rela- tionships. In **substitution**, an item (or items) is replaced by another item (or items):

I like movies.

And I do.

In the above example, *do* is a substitute for *like movies*.Items commonly used in substitution in English include *do*, *one* and *the same*,as in the following examples from Halliday and Hasan (1976:89, 105): You think Joan already knows? – I think everybody *does*.(*Does* replaces *knows*) My axe is too blunt. I must get a sharper *one*.(*One* replaces *axe*).

A: I’ll have two poached eggs on toast, please.

B: I’ll have *the same*.(*The same* replaces *two poached eggs on toast*).

**Ellipsis** involves the omission of an item. In other words, in ellipsis, an item is replaced by nothing. This is a case of leaving something unsaid which is never- theless understood. It does not include every instance in which the hearer or reader has to provide missing information, but only those cases where the grammatical structure itself points to an item or items that can ﬁ ll the slot in question. Here are some examples of ellipsis:

Joan brought some carnations, and Catherine some sweet peas. (ellipted item: *brought* in second clause) Here are thirteen cards. Take any. Now give me any three. (ellipted items: *card* after *any* in second clause and *cards* after *any three* in third clause) Have you been swimming? – Yes, I have. (ellipted items: *been swimming* in second clause)

*(Halliday and Hasan 1976:143, 158, 167)*

The following example of ellipsis comes from an article entitled ‘Wolf Wars’, by Douglas H. Chadwick, which appeared in the March 2010 issue of *National Geographic* (p. 38):

In 1995 and 1996, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service captured wolves in Canada and released them into 2.2-million-acre Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho’s wilderness areas. The unprecedented federal action trig- gered such an eruption of hope, fear, resentment, lawsuits, and headline news that most people assume the whole return of the wolf to the West began that way. It didn’t, but those reintroductions worked like a rocket booster. Populations grew, and the war escalated.

Halliday and Hasan give a detailed description of several types of substitution and ellipsis in English. Since substitution and ellipsis are purely grammatical relations which hold between linguistic forms rather than between linguistic forms and their meanings, the details are highly language-speciﬁ c and are therefore not worth going into here.

Note that the boundary lines between the three types of cohesive device (reference, substitution and ellipsis) are not clear cut. Hoey (1991) gives the following example. A question such as *Does Agatha sing in the bath?* may elicit three answers, of which answer (a) is an example of substitution, answer (b) of ellipsis and answer (c) of reference: (a) No, but I do. (b) Yes, she does. (c) Yes, she does it to annoy us, I think.

Answer (b) is an example of ellipsis because *does* cannot be said to be a substitute for *sing* in the above question. The ellipted items in *Yes, she does* are *sing in the bath*.The fuzziness of the boundaries and the technical differences between the three types of cohesive device need not concern us here; after all, they may not even operate in the same way in other languages. At this stage, the translator need only be aware that there are different devices in different languages for creating ‘texture’, and that a text hangs together by virtue of the semantic and structural rela- tionships that hold between its elements. This has clear implications in practice.

Every language has its own battery of devices for creating links between textual elements. Unless the translator is carrying out some kind of linguistic exercise, for instance for research purposes, transferring the devices used in the source text into the target text will not do. Under normal circumstances, what is required is a reworking of the methods of establishing links to suit the textual norms of the target language. The grammatical system of each language will itself encourage the use of certain devices in preference to others. The textual norms of each genre will further suggest certain options and rule out others that are grammatically acceptable and may, in other genres, be textually acceptable as well.

English, like most languages, will generally use whatever means are necessary to reduce ambiguity in tracing participants. Unlike the Arabic grammatical system, the English system makes very few distinctions in terms of number, gender and verb agreement. Lexical repetition is therefore a much safer option in cases where ambi- guity of reference may arise and in contexts which do not tolerate ambiguity in general and ambiguity of reference in particular. In legal and semi-legal texts, it has become the norm to use lexical repetition even in instances where no ambiguity might result from using pronominal reference. Although the Arabic text makes considerable use of pronominal reference, there are no instances of pronominal reference at all in the English text. It would be possible, but textually odd, to replace several of the lexical repetitions in the English text with the appropriate pronouns.

In addition to lexical repetition, the English version also uses substitution to establish cohesive links (*if the nominated authority declines to appoint an* ***arbi- trator*** *or is unable to nominate* ***one***). There are also several instances of ellipsis. In the example just quoted to illustrate substitution, the subject of the second clause (‘the nominated authority/it’) is ellipted.

To reiterate: every language has its own devices for establishing cohesive links.

Language and text-type preferences must both be taken into consideration in the process of translation. With this in mind, let us now move on to examine other types of cohesive device that often require careful handling in translation.

**5.3 CONJUNCTION**

**Conjunction** involves the use of formal markers to relate sentences, clauses and paragraphs to each other. Unlike reference, substitution and ellipsis, the use of conjunction does not instruct the reader to supply missing information either by looking for it elsewhere in the text or by ﬁ lling structural slots. Instead, conjunction signals the way the writer or speaker wants the reader or hearer to relate what is about to be said to what has been said before.

Conjunction expresses one of a small number of general relations. The main relations are summarized below, with examples of conjunctions which can or typi- cally realize each relation.

(a) additive: and, or, also, in addition, furthermore, besides, similarly, likewise, by contrast, for instance; (b) adversative: but, yet, however, instead, on the other hand, nevertheless, at any rate, as a matter of fact; (c) causal: so, consequently, it follows, for, because, under the circumstances, for this reason; (d) temporal: then, next, after that, on another occasion, in conclusion, an hour later, ﬁ nally, at last;

(e) continuatives (miscellaneous): now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all.

A number of points need to be borne in mind here. First, the same conjunction may be used to signal different relations, depending on the context. Second, these rela- tions can be expressed by a variety of means; the use of a conjunction is not the only device for expressing a temporal or causal relation, for instance. In English, a temporal relation may be expressed by means of a verb such as *follow* or *precede*,and a causal relation is inherent in the meanings of verbs such as *cause* and *lead to*.

In fact, a language user will often recognize a semantic relation such as time sequence even when no explicit signal of such a relationship exists in the text. Third, conjunctive relations do not just reﬂ ect relations between external phenomena, but may also be set up to reﬂ ect relations which are internal to the text or communicative situation. For instance, temporal relations are not restricted to sequence in real time; they may reﬂ ect stages in the unfolding text. A good example is the use of *ﬁ rst*, *second* and *third* in this paragraph.

There is some uncertainty in the literature as to whether conjunctions which occur within sentences can be considered cohesive, since cohesion is considered by some linguists to be a relation between sentences rather than within sentences (see Halliday and Hasan 1976:232; see also note 2 of this chapter). This means that subordinators are not, strictly speaking, considered a type of conjunction. For example, Halliday and Hasan (*ibid.*:228) do not consider *after* a conjunction in

After they had fought the battle, it snowed. because it subordinates one part of the sentence to another but does not directly establish a link with another sentence. In the following example, by contrast, *after- wards* is considered a conjunction because it establishes a link between two sentences:

They fought a battle. Afterwards, it snowed.

In this book, and for the purposes of translation, it makes more sense to take a broader view of cohesion and to consider any element cohesive as long as it signals a conjunctive-type relation between parts of a text, whether these parts are sentences, clauses (dependent or independent) or paragraphs. To reiterate, subtleties of technical deﬁ nition are not the main issue here and are not likely to prove directly relevant in translation.

The following example from *A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* (Blacker 1975:315) illustrates the use of conjunctions: The shamanic practices we have investigated are rightly seen as an archaic mysticism. On the basis of the world view uncovered by the shaman’s faculties, with its vision of another and miraculous plane which could interact causally with our own, the more advanced mystical intuitions of esoteric Buddhism were able to develop. **Today, however**, this world view is fast disappearing. The vision of another plane utterly different from our own, ambivalent, perilous and beyond our control, has faded. **Instead** the universe has become one-dimensional; there is no barrier to be crossed, no mysteriously other kind of being to be met and placated.

Languages vary tremendously in the type of conjunctions they prefer to use as well as the frequency with which they use such items. Also, since conjunction is a device for signalling relations between chunks of information, it is naturally bound up with both the chunking of information, how much to say in one go, and with how the rela- tions between such chunks of information are perceived and signalled. In fact, the use of conjunction provides an insight into the whole logic of discourse (Smith and Frawley 1983).

Some languages, such as German, tend to express relations through subordi- nation and complex structures. Others, such as Chinese and Japanese, prefer to use simpler and shorter structures and to mark the relations between these struc- tures explicitly where necessary. One noticeable difference in the use of conjunc- tions which is well documented in the literature is that between English and Arabic.

Compared to Arabic, English generally prefers to present information in relatively small chunks and to signal the relationship between these chunks in unambiguous ways, using a wide variety of conjunctions to mark semantic relations between clauses, sentences and paragraphs. In addition to the types of conjunction discussed by Halliday and Hasan, English also relies on a highly developed punctuation system to signal breaks and relations between chunks of information. Unlike English, Arabic prefers to group information into very large grammatical chunks. It is not unusual for Arabic paragraphs to consist of one sentence. This is partly because punctuation and paragraphing are a relatively recent development in Arabic (Holes 1984).

Moreover, Arabic tends to use a relatively small number of conjunctions, each of which has a wide range of meanings which depend for their interpretation on the context, thus relying heavily on the reader’s ability to infer relationships which are only vaguely alluded to by the writer. The most frequently used conjunctions in Arabic are *wa* and *fa* (Al-Jubouri and Knowles 1988). According to Holes, ‘/wa/ can mark temporal sequence, simultaneous action, semantic contrast and semantic equivalence, amongst other things; /fa/ can be a marker of temporal sequence, logical consequence, purpose, result or concession’ (1984:234). Short sentences, a varied array of conjunctions, and absence of the typical conjunctions (mainly *wa*, *fa* and a few other particles) are associated with translated Arabic texts – original Arabic texts do not normally display these features.

Arabic but sacriﬁ ces some of the precision of the English conjunction. On the other hand, the direct translation of *After all* (Fourth sentence in the English text) into ‘after all considerations’, which is a paraphrase of the meaning of *After all* rather than an established conjunction in Arabic, represents a sacriﬁ ce of naturalness for the sake of accuracy.

You will have noted from the Brintons extract on page 202 that some English texts make little or no use of conjunctions. There are often pragmatic reasons for the preference for certain types of conjunction and the frequency with which conjunc- tions are used in general. Smith and Frawley’s (1983) study of the use of conjunction in different genres of English suggests that some genres are generally ‘more conjunctive’ than others and that each genre has its own preferences for certain types of conjunction. Religion and ﬁ ction use more conjunctions than science and journalism. Religion displays a particular preference for negative additive conjunc- tions such as *nor*.Smith and Frawley explain this feature by suggesting that ‘the high percentage of negative additive conjunctions … indicates a tendency toward *falsiﬁ cation*,the most consistent method of proof’ (1983:358). Religious texts also make heavy use of causal conjunctions such as *because*, *since* and *for*.In science and journalism, by contrast, conjunctions in general and causal conjunctions in particular are relatively infrequent. This is partly explained by the high level of assumed shared knowledge in science and by the need to give an impression of objectivity in both genres. Restrictions on space and the need to avoid giving an overt explanation of reported events which risks the danger of legal suits and liability further restrict the use of conjunctions, particularly causal conjunctions, in journalism.

Adjusting patterns of conjunction in line with target-language general and speciﬁ c text-type preferences is less straightforward than adjusting patterns of reference. The problem with conjunction is that it reﬂ ects the rhetoric of a text and controls its interpretation. This suggests that adjustments in translation will often affect both the content and the line of argumentation. Let us look at an example of a German translation of an English text, the ﬁ rst page of Morgan Matroc’s company brochure: *Technical Ceramics*. The German version conforms to German style to such an extent that it is generally taken by German speakers to be a very well written ‘original’. Conjunctions are highlighted in both texts.

The English source text consists of six paragraphs; the German translation, on the other hand, consists of eleven paragraphs. This rechunking of the text may be an idiosyncratic adjustment on the part of the German translator, as it appears that German does not generally favour more breaks than English. Generally speaking, rechunking is done for two main reasons: (a) the source text is divided into chunks (whether sections, paragraphs, sentences or clauses) that are either too long or too short in terms of target-language average chunking of similar material; or (b) the nature of the target audience is different in terms of level of specialization, age and so on. A text addressing an audience of specialists will tend to group information into larger chunks than one addressing laymen or children, for instance. It may be that the target reader of the German translation is not envisaged to have the same familiarity with or interest in the ceramics industry as the prospective readers of the English version.

Moving on to the use of conjunctions, here is an initial breakdown of the ones used in each text:

**English**: *Today* (temporal); *so* (causal); *because* (causal), *but* (adversative); *and yet* (additive + adversative), *however* (adversative); *and ﬁ nally* (additive + temporal); *however* (adversative) **German:** *Today* (temporal); *so* (causal); *on the one hand* (additive, comparison), *but on the other hand* (adversative + additive, comparison); *ﬁ nally* (temporal); *now* (continuative, with additional force of adversative); *yet* (adversative), *because* (causal); *and then* (adversative), *for this purpose* (causal); *lastly* (temporal); *now*6 (continuative or concession – see below); *however/in any event* (adversative).

**5.4 LEXICAL COHESION**

**Lexical cohesion** refers to the role played by the selection of vocabulary in organ- izing relations within a text. A given lexical item cannot be said to have a cohesive function *per se* (cf. reference, conjunction), but any lexical item can enter into a cohesive relation with other items in a text. Whereas on encountering a pronoun such as *he* or *they* the reader will automatically look to the surrounding text for its referent, he or she will not automatically look for a link between an item such as *socialism* and other items in the following example (from the book jacket of *Arab Political Humour*,Kishtainy 1985):

Ready suppliers of fun throughout the thirties and forties were the decadent pseudo-sovereign regimes of the West. More recently people have turned East for their targets, reﬂ ecting the new contact with communist countries and also the growing disenchantment with socialism.

And yet, one intuitively recognizes a sort of lexical chain which links *socialism* with *communist* and *East*.Moreover, this chain stands in some kind of opposition to *the West* and, for some people, to *decadent* as well. We could say then that lexical cohesion covers any instance in which the use of a lexical item recalls the sense of an earlier one.

Halliday and Hasan divide lexical cohesion into two main categories: **reiteration** and **collocation**. **Reiteration**, as the name suggests, involves repetition of lexical items. A reiterated item may be a repetition of an earlier item, a synonym or near- synonym, a superordinate, or a general word. In this sense, reiteration can be placed along the same continuum presented on pages 192–3 (with the exception of pronominal reference). This is repeated below for convenience: There’s a boy climbing that tree. (a) *The boy* is going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (repetition) (b) *The lad’s* going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (synonym) (c) *The child’s* going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (superordinate) (d) *The idiot’s* going to fall if he doesn’t take care. (general word) Reiteration is not the same as reference, however, because it does not necessarily involve the same identity. If the above sentence is followed by a statement such as ‘*Boys* can be so silly’, the repetition of *boy* ’ *boys* would still be an instance of reit- eration, even though the two items would not be referring to the same individual(s).

**Collocation**, as a sub-class of lexical cohesion in Halliday and Hasan’s model, covers any instance which involves a pair of lexical items that are associated with each other in the language in some way. Halliday and Hasan (*ibid.*:285–286) offer the following types of association as examples, but admit that there are other instances where the association between lexical items cannot readily be given a name but is nevertheless felt to exist. In the ﬁ nal analysis, they suggest, it does not matter what the relation is as long as we are aware of it and react to it as a cohesive device.

Various kinds of oppositeness of meaning: e.g. *boy/girl*; *love/hate*; *order/ obey*.

Associations between pairs of words from the same ordered series: e.g.

*Tuesday/Thursday*; *August/December*; *dollar/cent*.

Associations between pairs of words from unordered lexical sets: e.g. part–whole relations: *car/brake*; *body/arm*; *bicycle/wheel*;part–part relations: *mouth/chin*; *verse/chorus*;co-hyponymy: *red/green* (colour); *chair/table* (furniture).

Associations based on a history of co-occurrence (collocation proper – see Chapter 3): e.g. *rain*, *pouring*, *torrential*, *wet*; *hair*, *comb*, *curl*, *wave*;etc.

Lexical cohesion is not a relation between pairs of words as the above discussion might suggest. On the contrary, lexical cohesion typically operates through lexical chains (such as *socialism*, *communist*, *East*) that run through a text and are linked to each other in various ways. The following example shows how patterns of lexical cohesion might be traced in a relatively straightforward piece of text. Sentences are numbered for ease of reference in the following discussion. (1) I ﬁ rst met Hugh Fraser in 1977. (2) Charming, rather hesitant, a heavy smoker and heavy gambler, he had made such headway through his fortune that he had decided to sell his last major asset, the controlling shares in the business which his father had built up and named Scottish and Universal Investments. (3) Scottish and Universal had, among its assets, 10% of the British stores group, House of Fraser. (4) Lonrho bought 26% of Scottish and Universal. (5) It was part of Lonrho’s understanding with Hugh that he would stay on as Chairman of House of Fraser, but it gradually became clear that Sir Hugh was not on terms of mutual respect with most of his Board, and that the loyalty of his colleagues had been to his formidable father rather than to him. (6) They did not welcome the sale of Hugh’s shares to Lonrho – and it was only natural, as a change was obviously in the air. (7) Lonrho was an expanding and acquisitive company, and House of Fraser was a quiet and pedestrian one.

*(from* A Hero from Zero*, Lonrho:i)*

Instances of lexical cohesion in the above text include the repetition of items such as *Scottish and Universal* (sentences 2, 3 and 4), *Lonrho* (4, 5, 6 and 7) and *assets* (2 and 3). There is a superordinate–hyponym relation between *assets/shares*,oppo- siteness of meaning between *sell/bought*,reiteration by general word: *Lonrho/ company*,and a relation of synonymy or near-synonymy between *expanding/ acquisitive*. *Smoker/ gambler* are co-h yponyms of something like ‘behavioural vice’ and *respect/loyalty* are co- hyponyms of ‘institutional virtue’. Most important of all, of course, is the main collocational chain which helps to establish and maintain the subject of the text: *fortune*, *shares*, *assets*, *business*, *Chairman*, *Board*, *sale*, *expanding*, *acquisitive*, *company* and so on. Many more cohesive relations can be traced in the above text, which illustrates the typical density of networks of lexical cohesion in any stretch of language.

Another example from a different genre will serve to demonstrate the sort of manipulation of lexical associations available to speakers and writers. The following extract is from John Le Carré’s *The Russia House* (1989:40):

The whole of Whitehall was agreed that no story should ever begin that way again. Indoctrinated ministers were furious about it. They set up a frightfully secret committee of enquiry to ﬁ nd out what went wrong, hear witnesses, name names, spare no blushes, point ﬁ ngers, close gaps, prevent a recur- rence, appoint me chairman and draft a report. What conclusions our committee reached, if any, remains the loftiest secret of them all, particu- larly from those of us who sat on it. For the function of such committees, as we all well knew, is to talk earnestly until the dust has settled, and then ourselves return to dust. Which, like a disgruntled Cheshire cat, our committee duly did, leaving nothing behind us but our frightfully secret frown, a meaningless interim working paper, and a bunch of secret annexes in the Treasury archives.

Two main collocational chains are cleverly interwoven in the above passage. One has to do with high-powered ofﬁ cial institutions and practices: *committees*, *enquiries*, *chairman*, *witnesses*, *Whitehall*, *ministers*, *Treasury*, *report*, *interim working paper* and so on. The other evokes the theme of intrigue: the word *secret* is repeated several times and expressions such as *name names* and *point ﬁ ngers* are used. But this is not genuine intrigue, because the two collocational chains are overlaid with ironic descriptive expressions which ridicule the institutions and practices in question and give an impression of ‘mock suspense’: *frightfully secret committee*, *indoctri- nated ministers*, *the loftiest secret of them all*, *like a disgruntled Cheshire cat*, *frightfully secret frown*, *meaningless interim working paper*, *a bunch of secret annexes* and so on.

The notion of lexical cohesion as being dependent on the presence of networks of lexical items rather than the presence of any speciﬁ c class or type of item is important. It provides the basis for what Halliday and Hasan call **instantial meaning**, or text meaning (1976:289):

Without our being aware of it, each occurrence of a lexical item carries with it its own textual history, a particular collocational environment that has been built up in the course of the creation of the text and that will provide the context within which the item will be incarnated on this particular occasion.

This environment determines the ‘instantial meaning’, or text meaning, of the item, a meaning which is unique to each speciﬁ c instance.

The importance for translators of the notion of instantial meaning is obvious. Lexical networks do not only provide cohesion, they also determine collectively the sense in which each individual item is used in a given context. As Hoey (1991:8) points out, ‘the text provides the context for the creation and interpretation of lexical relations, just as the lexical relations help create the texture of the text’.

The idea that the meanings of individual lexical items depend on the networks of relations in which they enter with other items in a text is now taken as axiomatic in language studies in general and in translation studies in particular. Snell-Hornby stresses the importance of this approach in translation, arguing that in analysing a text a translator ‘is not concerned with isolating phenomena or items to study them in depth, but with tracing a *web of relationships*,the importance of individual items being determined by their relevance and function in the text’ (1988:69).

It is certainly true that individual lexical items have little more than a ‘potential’ for meaning outside text and that their meanings are realized and can be considerably modiﬁ ed through association with other lexical items in a particular textual envi- ronment. And yet, the potential for meaning which a given lexical item has is not totally unrestricted. You simply cannot make any word mean whatever you want it to mean. What this suggests, in effect, is that as hard as one might try, it is impossible to reproduce networks of lexical cohesion in a target text which are identical to those of the source text. If you cannot make a word mean what you want it to mean, you might have to settle for one with a slightly different meaning or different associa- tions. Every time this happens it introduces a subtle (or major) shift away from the lexical chains and associations of the source text. Signiﬁ cant shifts do occur, even in non-literary text. They include, for instance, cases where the source text uses a play on idiom to create a lexical chain or a number of separate chains that are linked together by virtue of relating to the literal or non-literal interpretation of the idiom. An example of this was given in Chapter 3 (p. 73). A similar example comes from an advertisement promoting a woman’s magazine (*Woman’s Realm*) which shows a woman wearing a large hat, accompanied by the following caption: ‘If you think Woman’s Realm is old hat … think again’ (*Cosmopolitan*,October 1989). *Old hat* means ‘boringly familiar/uninteresting’, but the literal meaning of *hat* is used here to create a lexical/visual chain by tying in with the actual hat in the photograph. This type of chain often has to be sacriﬁ ced in translation because interweaving idiom- based chains can only be reproduced if the target language has an idiom which is identical to the source idiom in both form and meaning.

As the *Cosmopolitan* example demonstrates, cohesive links are often estab- lished between textual and other types of element,8 including visual elements such as photographs and drawings, layout elements such as position on the page, and, in the case of multimodal environments such as web sites, elements of navigation such as hypertext links and widgets. The example in Figure 15, from *National Geographic* *Magazine*, features a clever play on an idiom/ﬁ xed expression, a visual play based on image and colour, and a layout format that foregrounds and strengthens the textual-visual network of cohesive links.

In the original, full-colour image, the lefthand column above the image of the orange is printed in the same colour as the apple (red), and the righthand column is printed in the same colour as the orange; the column in the middle is printed in regular black. The dense network of cohesive links further features a visual/ textual play on the idiom ‘like comparing apples and oranges’ (used to indicate a false analogy, an attempt to compare two things that are quite different in nature) and the actual images of an apple and an orange, repetition of items such as *compare*, and the synonymy between *dissimilar* and *different*, among other cohesive relations.

Apart from the challenge posed by the manipulation of idioms and visual elements in a source text, the lack of ready equivalents will sometimes require the translator to resort to strategies such as the use of a superordinate, paraphrase or loan word (see Chapter 2). These naturally result in producing different lexical chains in the target text. Likewise, the grammatical structure of the target language may require the translator to add or delete information and to reword parts of the source text in a variety of ways. Admittedly, in non-literary translation new networks of lexical rela- tions created in the target text during the course of translation will often be very close overall to those of the source text. But they will still be different, and the difference, subtle though it may be, may affect the cohesiveness and coherence (see Chapter 7) of the target text in varying degrees, depending on the skill and experience of the translator. Whatever lexical and grammatical problems are encoun- tered in translating a text and whatever strategies are used to resolve them, a good translator will make sure that, at the end of the day, the target text displays a sufﬁ - cient level of lexical and other types of cohesion in its own right. Subtle changes – and sometimes major changes – are often unavoidable. But what the translator must always avoid is the extreme case of producing what appears to be a random collection of items which do not add up to recognizable lexical chains that make sense in a given context.

The Brintons press release is an example of the sort of subtle changes that typically take place on the level of lexical cohesion in non-literary translation. A quick look at the two versions presented below reveals considerable differences in patterns of reiteration and collocation. We do not have to analyse the two texts in detail to see that there is far more repetition in the Arabic version than there is in the English text. For instance, *company* occurs only once in the English text; its Arabic equivalent, *sharika*, is repeated eight times. Similarly, *colour*(*s*) occurs three times in the English text; its Arabic equivalent occurs seven times. Some of the subtle associations created by a careful selection of lexical items in the English text are inevitably lost in the translation. The choice of items such as *plant* (rather than *factory*), *qualities* (rather than *kinds* or *types*), *complementary* (rather than *matching colours*) and *select* (rather than *choose*) plays a role in creating a certain image of Brintons and their products in the perception of the reader. These items, plus others such as *discerning* in the ﬁ nal sentence, collectively enhance the image of Brintons as a sophisticated company producing a select range of products. These subtle associations are lost in the Arabic version because the lexical structure of Arabic does not offer the translator the same range of choices; for instance, the distinction between *plant/factory* or *choose/select* does not exist in Arabic. Moreover, Arabic has no ready equivalents for *complementary* and *discerning*.The ﬁ rst item, *complementary*,is paraphrased in the Arabic version as ‘the colours of which match the rest of the colours of the collection’. A paraphrase of course cannot create the same kinds of association as a lexical item. The second item, *discerning*,is omitted altogether.

Reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion are the devices identiﬁ ed by Halliday and Hasan for establishing cohesive links in English. These devices are probably common to a large number of languages. However, different languages have different preferences for using speciﬁ c devices more frequently than others or in speciﬁ c combinations which may not correspond to English patterns of cohesion. For instance, pronominalization is very frequent in English but is rarely used in Japanese and Chinese. Lexical repetition is far more frequent in Hebrew than it is in English (Berman 1978, in Blum-Kulka 1986:19).

Cohesion is also achieved by a variety of devices other than those mentioned by Halliday and Hasan and discussed above. These include continuity of tense, consistency of style, and punctuation devices such as colons and semi-colons, which, like conjunctions, indicate how different parts of the text relate to each other.

It is worth noting here that unmotivated shifts in style, a common pitfall in translation, can seriously disrupt the cohesion and coherence of a text.

Some languages have different or additional devices: for example, some languages such as Aguaruna use ‘chaining’, where part of the preceding infor- mation, for instance the predicate of the preceding sentence, is repeated in the following sentence (Larson 1984), as demonstrated earlier in this chapter. Cohesion can also be established between textual and non-textual elements, including visual material, layout, and search and retrieval elements such as hypertext links on the internet.

Finally, the overall level of cohesion may vary from one language to another; even within the same language, different texts will vary in the density of their cohesive ties. Vieira (1984, quoted in Blum-Kulka 1986), suggests that Portuguese prefers a higher level of explicit cohesiveness than English. Cohesion contributes to patterns of redundancy, and these vary both across languages and across text types. Explicit markers of cohesion raise the level of redundancy in text; their absence lowers it. Blum-Kulka notes that there is a general tendency in translation to raise the level of explicitness, that is, increase the level of redundancy in the target text, and suggests that ‘it might be the case that explicitation is a universal strategy inherent in the process of language mediation, as practiced by language learners, non-professional translators and professional translators alike’ (1986:21). This claim has been subjected to close scrutiny in several studies since the mid-1990s, with varying results. See, in particular, Olohan and Baker (2000), Kenny (2004), Englund Dimitrova (2005) and Mauranen (2008).

**Лекція № 6**

**Тема: Pragmatic equivalence**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 5

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. Coherence and processes of interpretation: implicature
2. Coherence, implicature and translation strategies

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

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**Текст лекції:**

Here, we will be concerned with the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context. This is a highly complex but fascinating area of language study, known as **pragmatics**. Pragmatics is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation. Of the variety of notions that are central to this particular area of language study, I have chosen two which I believe to be particularly helpful in exploring the question of ‘making sense’ and in highlighting areas of difﬁ culty in cross-cultural communication. These are **coherence** and **implicature**. Those interested in exploring this area further will ﬁ nd references to other relevant notions in the notes at the end of this chapter.

**6.1 COHERENCE**

**6.1.1 Coherence vs cohesion**

Like cohesion, **coherence** is a network of relations which organize and create a text: cohesion is the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text, and coherence is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text. Both concern the way stretches of language are connected to each other. In the case of cohesion, stretches of language are connected to each other by virtue of lexical and grammatical dependencies. In the case of coherence, they are connected by virtue of conceptual or meaning depend- encies as perceived by language users. Hoey (1991:12) sums up the difference between cohesion and coherence as follows: We will assume that cohesion is a property of the text and that coherence is a facet of the reader’s evaluation of a text. In other words, cohesion is objective, capable in principle of automatic recognition, while coherence is subjective and judgements concerning it may vary from reader to reader.

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

I bought a Ford. The car in which President Wilson rode down the Champs Elysees was black. Black English has been widely discussed. The discus- sions between the presidents ended last week. A week has seven days.

Every day I feed my cat. Cats have four legs. The cat is on the mat. Mat has three letters.

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

**6.1.2 Is coherence a feature of text or situation?**

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

*(Charolles 1983:95)*

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

The coherence of a text is a result of the interaction between knowledge presented in the text and the reader’s own knowledge and experience of the world, the latter being inﬂ uenced by a variety of factors such as age, sex, race, nationality, education, occupation, and political and religious afﬁ liations. Even a simple cohesive relation of co-reference cannot be recognized, and therefore cannot be said to contribute to the coherence of a text, if it does not ﬁ t in with a reader’s prior knowledge of the world.

We could perhaps say that texts are neither coherent nor incoherent by themselves, that whether a text coheres or not depends on the ability of the reader to make sense of it by relating it to what he or she already knows or to a familiar world, whether this world is real or ﬁ ctional. A text which coheres for one reader may therefore not cohere for another. Different linguists have different views as to whether this phenomenon implies that meaning is a property of a text or a property of a communicative situation involving participants and settings in addition to a text.

Blum-Kulka’s deﬁ nition of coherence as ‘a covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text, made overt by the reader or listener through processes of interpretation’ (1986:17) implies that she sees meaning, or coherence, as a property of a text, even though it is only accessible through processes of interpretation.

Sinclair (personal communication) similarly states that processes such as ‘the recall of past experience and knowledge of the world … are not part of the meaning of a text, but part of the human apparatus for working out the meaning of a text’, which again suggests that meaning exists in texts but can only be accessed through various processes of interpretation on the part of the reader. By contrast, Firth (1964:111) asserts that ‘“meaning” is a property of the mutually relevant people, things, events in the situation’, and Kirsten Malmkjær (personal communication) does not accept the view that meaning is *in* text and suggests instead that ‘meanings arise in situations involving language’.

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

**6.2 COHERENCE AND PROCESSES OF INTERPRETATION: IMPLICATURE**

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

This is a perfectly coherent, if decontextualized, piece of language. Charolles explains that anyone who hears or reads it will reach the following interpretation: the speaker says that he or she went to the cinema, that he or she drank beer at the cinema and that the beer in question was good. Note that we naturally provide the necessary links to render the discourse coherent. There is nothing in the above utterance which tells us explicitly that the speaker drank the beer or that he or she did so at the cinema. Charolles calls this type of minimal coherence **supplemental coherence**. He suggests that there is another type of coherence, which he calls **explanatory coherence**, which not only establishes continuity of senses but, unlike supplemental coherence, also *justiﬁ es* it. The difference between supple- mental interpretations and explanatory interpretations, Charolles suggests (1983:93), is that:

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

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

One of the most important notions to have emerged in text studies in relatively recent years is that of **implicature** – the question of how it is that we come to understand more than is actually said. Grice (1975) uses the term **implicature** to refer to what the speaker means or implies rather than what he or she literally says.

Implicature is not to be confused with non-literal meaning, for instance with idiomatic meaning. Idiomatic meaning is conventional, and its interpretation depends on a good mastery of the linguistic system in question rather than on a successful inter- pretation of a particular speaker’s intended or implied meaning in a given context.

For instance, in the following exchange A: Shall we go for a walk?

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

B: It’s raining.

How does A, or anyone observing the scene, know how to relate the utterance ‘It’s raining’ – a mere comment on the weather – to the question of going for a walk?

Why do we assume that ‘It’s raining’ is meant as an answer to the above question?

One answer which has already been suggested is that we do it in order to maintain the assumption of coherence. If we do accept it as an answer, how do we know how to interpret it? Does it mean ‘No, we’d better not because it’s raining’, ‘OK, but we’d better take an umbrella’, or perhaps ‘Yes – we both like walking in the rain’?

Note also that the same utterance *It’s raining* can mean something totally different in a different context:

A: What is Jane up to these days?

B: It’s raining!

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

Grice suggests that a speaker can signal an implied meaning conventionally or non-conventionally. To signal an implied meaning conventionally, a speaker uses the textual resources which are conventionally understood to signal certain relationships between propositions. Conjunctions such as *therefore*, *because* and *in spite of* are one such textual resource. Grammatical structure is another. For instance, in ‘It’s money that they want’ the grammatical structure itself conventionally presupposes what is expressed in the subordinate clause, in this case ‘they want something’ (see discussion of information structure in Chapter 5, section 5.1.2).1 But how does a speaker signal (or a hearer interpret) meaning which is not conventionally coded in the language? Before I proceed to give an account of Grice’s answer to this question, I have to point out that Grice is not primarily concerned with written text. In fact, not only does he restrict his comments to spoken exchanges, he restricts them to a very small sub-set of these – namely question/answer sequences. There is no doubt that Grice’s preoccupation with speech means that his views are sometimes difﬁ cult to relate to written communi- cation. Although speech and writing share many features, they are not the same thing. Having said that, I believe that Grice’s views do have important applications in translation. I therefore propose to play down the inadequacy of Grice’s theory of implicature in terms of its application to written discourse in order to explore its general relevance to translation.

Grice suggests that discourse has certain important features: for instance, it is connected (i.e. it does not consist of unrelated sequences); it has a purpose; and it is a co-operative effort. These features give rise to a general principle of communi- cation, the **Co-operative Principle**, which participants are expected to observe: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

*(Grice 1975:45)*

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

1. Quantity (a) M ake your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). (b) D o not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2.Quality ‘Try to make your contribution one that is true’, speciﬁ cally: (a) D o not say what you believe to be false. (b) D o not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relevance Make your contributions relevant to the current exchange.

4. Manner Be perspicuous, speciﬁ cally: (a) A void obscurity of expression. (b) A void ambiguity. (c) B e brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). (d) B e orderly.

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

Now, if as language users we recognize and generally abide by something like Grice’s Co-operative Principle, then the reason we assume that an utterance which follows a question provides an answer to that question becomes obvious: we assume that both addresser and addressee are operating the Co-operative Principle, and in particular the maxim of Relevance. We will therefore go out of our way to ﬁ nd an interpretation that will connect it to the previous utterance. We attribute relevance to what we hear and read even when it appears, on the surface, to be unrelated to the preceding discourse, and regardless of whether a relation is explicitly signalled. For example, on hearing or seeing the statement Elizabeth is putting on a lot of weight. She smokes very heavily. we will naturally strive to relate the two propositions somehow. We may infer that the speaker implies that Elizabeth is putting on a lot of weight *because* she is smoking too heavily, or the other way round: that she is smoking too heavily because she is putting on a lot of weight, perhaps as a way of controlling her appetite. A less likely, but nevertheless feasible, inference is that Elizabeth is putting on a lot of weight *in spite of* the fact that she is smoking too heavily. Yet another possible inference would be that Elizabeth is letting herself go, her health is on the decline, she is not looking after herself as she should do. Pragmatic inferences of this type are essential to maintaining the coherence of discourse. Levinson (1983) overstates the case a little when he suggests that such inferences arise to preserve the assumption of co-operation and that without them many adjacent utterances would appear to be unrelated to each other or to the discourse in hand. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of truth in what he says. Which inferences we do draw will naturally depend on a variety of factors such as our knowledge of the world, of such things as the rela- tionship between smoking, appetite and weight; our knowledge of participants in the discourse, of the speaker, and of Elizabeth; our knowledge of and ﬂ uency in the speciﬁ c language being used, and so on.

Implicatures, then, are pragmatic inferences which allow us to achieve something like Charolles’ explanatory coherence. They are aspects of meaning which are over and above the literal and conventional meaning of an utterance and they depend for their interpretation on a recognition of the Co-operative Principle and its maxims. Apart from observing the maxims, a language user can deliberately ﬂ out a maxim and in doing so produce what Grice calls a **conversational implicature**. For instance, if used as a genuine question the utterance *Do you know what time it is?* conveys the meaning ‘I do not know the time; I wish to know the time’. Levinson (1983) calls this type of meaning a **standard implicature**. If the same utterance is used as a rhetorical question, in the right context and with the appropriate intonation, it could convey a meaning such as ‘You are very late’. This is what Grice would call a **conversational implicature**. It is achieved by ﬂ outing the maxim of Quality which demands sincerity.

Conversational implicature can be conveyed by ﬂ outing any or several of the maxims.

To use one of Grice’s examples: imagine that a professor of philosophy is asked to supply a testimonial for a candidate for a position in the ﬁ eld of philosophy. He or she replies that the candidate’s manners are impeccable and his or her handwriting is extremely legible. How does the addressee interpret this testimonial? Knowing that the professor in question is in a position to comment directly on the candidate’s strengths and weaknesses in the area of philosophy but apparently refuses to do so, he or she must still assume that the professor is observing the maxims, particularly the maxim of Relevance. According to Grice, what is implicated by the speaker ‘would be what he might expect the hearer to suppose him to think in order to preserve the idea that the maxims are, after all, not being violated’ (1981:185). The addressee therefore infers that the professor is implying something by his or her reply, in this case that the candidate is no good at philosophy.

The Co-operative Principle and its maxims can account for the fact that we do not abandon contributions such as those described above as irrelevant, but they do not directly explain how we arrive at a particular inference or, in Grice’s terms, a conversational implicature.2 This is a difﬁ cult topic which remains largely unresolved.

For one thing, conversational implicatures are often indeterminate. For another, an utterance may be open to several possible interpretations. This may or may not be intentional on the part of the speaker. In either case, it complicates the task of the translator who may knowingly or unknowingly eliminate certain possible interpreta- tions of the original from the target text. The translator may even inadvertently give rise to other interpretations which are not derivable from the original text. Both situations can arise because of constraints imposed on the translator by the structure of the target language, the nature of the target audience and the conventions of the target culture.

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

1. the conventional meaning of the words and structures used (i.e. a mastery of the language system), together with the identity of any references that may be involved;

2. the Co-operative Principle and its maxims;

3. the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance;

4. other items of background knowledge; and

5. the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

**6.3 COHERENCE, IMPLICATURE AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES**

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

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

**6.3.1 The conventional meanings of words and structures and the identity of references**

***6.3.1.1 The conventional meanings of words and structures***

This is an obvious point. If we do not understand the meanings of the words and structures used in a text, we cannot work out its implied meanings. Knowledge of the language system may not be sufﬁ cient, but it is essential if one is to understand what is going on in any kind of verbal communication. This means that any mistrans- lation of words and structures in the source text may well affect the calculability of implicatures in the target text. An example of this was given in Chapter 3, repeated here for convenience. The example is from *A Hero from Zero* (p. 59): All this represents only a part of all that Forbes Magazine reported on Fayed in the March issue mentioned before. In 1983, he had approached the indus- trialist Robert O. Anderson under the cover of a commission agent. The industrialist had been struck by his appearance as someone with modest means.Mr. Anderson was therefore astonished by his sudden acquisition of a considerable fortune.

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

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

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

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

I knew something terrible would happen.

Accidents can happen in spite of rules and regulations.

What I had feared might happen was happening.

I was worried about what would happen when the public realized this.

I’m always expecting something calamitous to happen.

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

In painting, as in music and literature, what is often termed abstract strikes me as being simply representative of a more delicate and elusive reality which is barely visible to the naked eye. (Source: *Discovering the World*, by Clarice Lispetor; translated from Brazilian Portuguese by Giovanni Pontiero) Her eyesight was so strong that she was able to extract a tiny piece of glass, hardly visible to the naked eye, from Aziza’s ﬁ ngertip using a pair of eyebrow tweezers. (Source: *The Golden Chariot*, by Salwa Bakr; translated from Arabic by Dinah Manisty)

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

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

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

Translators need to be alert to the subtle implicatures conveyed by semantic prosody as well as those communicated when a prosody is exploited for rhetorical effect.

Kenny (1998:520) explains why:

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

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

***6.3.1.2 The identity and import of any references mentioned in the text***

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

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

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

**6.3.2 The Co-operative Principle and its maxims**

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

behaviour and that all human beings are rational. Levinson (1983) seems to support this suggestion. However, not all linguists would accept it quite so readily, and there is, in fact, some evidence to the contrary. Bible translators who regularly work with languages and cultures considerably different from those at the centre of linguistic and academic enquiry are quicker to voice their suspicion and to consider the possi- bility that the Co-operative Principle and its maxims are not universal. Thomson (1982:11) considers the possibility that: a certain type of implicature, say quality implicature, is never used by the speakers of a particular language, or that the contexts in which a type of implicature will be used will differ from one language community to the next.

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

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

Different cultures have different norms of ‘polite’ behaviour. They also have different ideas about what is and what is not a ‘taboo’ area. Sex, religion and defe- cation are taboo subjects in many societies, but not necessarily to the same degree within similar situations. Whatever the norms of polite behaviour in the target culture, it is important to note that in some translation contexts being polite can be far more important than being accurate. A translator may decide to omit or replace whole stretches of text which violate the reader’s expectations of how a taboo subject should be handled – if at all – in order to avoid giving offence. For example, if trans- lated ‘accurately’ into Arabic, the following extract from *Arab Political Humour* by Kishtainy would no doubt be very offensive to the average Arab reader, for whom God is not a subject of ridicule and sexual organs are strictly taboo: The intricate and delicate conﬁ guration of the characters of the Arabic alphabet together with the customary omission of the vowels helped to create endless jibes and jokes which are completely conﬁ ned to the Arabic reader. You only need a tiny dot, for example, to turn the letter R into Z. With the playful or acci- dental addition of such a dot the word *rabbi* (my God) can be turned into *zubbi* (my penis)! The door was thus opened for one satirical wit to make his dutiful comment and correct an otherwise unwarranted statement. Some humble person married a rich widow with whose money he built himself an imposing mansion which he piously adorned with the legend, carefully engraved over the door, ‘Such are the blessings of my God’ (*Hada min fadl rabbi*). The local wit hastened under cover of darkness to put matters right by adding the missing dot to change the hallowed phrase into ‘Such are the blessings of my penis’.

*(1985:12–13)*

In the published Arabic translation, all reference to *rabbi* and *zubbi* is omitted*.* The above example is replaced by a much ‘tamer’ one8 where, by adding and omitting dots on various letters, the local wit turns a poem which is originally written in praise of Arabs into one that ridicules them. A similarly offensive extract (p. 14 in the English text), does not appear in the Arabic translation at all: The sarcastic misuse of names has not been always as polite or free from resort to the equivalent of the English four-letter words. In the ﬁ erce and often bloody strife between the Ba’th Party and the Nasserists and Commu- nists, the opponents of the Ba’th played on the strange name of the founder and leader of the Ba’th Party, Michel Aﬂ aq. One of the latest exercises in this respect was the discovery in Al-Muhit lexicon that Aﬂ aq meant in archaic Arabic ‘wide and loose vagina and stupid, sluttish woman’.

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

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

A Koine Greek and a Dumagat would both describe the shooting of a duck, but in different ways. The Greek would say, in describing the event, ‘A few minutes after dawn, a large and beautifully plumed white female duck ﬂ ew overhead just south of my hiding place. I quickly ﬁ red two shells with number sixteen lead shot, and the duck dropped nicely in front of me just ﬁ ve yards away, at the edge of the lake.’ A Dumagat who had had the same experience would say, ‘Yesterday I shot a duck.’ If Headland’s comments are accurate, then how does the phenomenon of ‘infor- mation overload’ relate to Grice’s maxim of Quantity? For one thing, it seems to suggest that the instruction ‘do not make your contribution more informative than is required’ can be interpreted quite differently by different cultures. Hatim and Mason’s comment on this particular maxim is that ‘What is “required” for any given communicative purpose within a TL cultural environment is … a matter for the trans- lator’s judgement’ (1990:94).

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

Arabic is well known to use repetition as a major rhetorical device. This includes repetition of both form and substance, so that the same information is repeated again and again in a variety of ways in an effort to convince by assertion. This style of argumentative prose is seen by non-Arabs as too verbose and certainly anything but brief. The Japanese favourite ‘dot-type’ pattern in which anecdotes are strung together without an explicit link or conclusion can infuriate western readers who demand relevance of a type familiar to them. Loveday notes that ‘westerners often react to this with “so what!!”, considering the presentation shallow’ (1982b:364).

Different rhetorical conventions are therefore seen to apply in different cultures, and they can override a maxim such as ‘Be brief’ or ‘Be relevant’. In fact, these conven- tions provide a context for interpreting the maxims.

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

A well-known Egyptian journalist, Mohammed Heikal, published a book in 1983 about the assassination of the former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. He wrote the book, *Autumn of Fury*,originally in English and later translated it himself into Arabic.

Being in the rather special position of author/translator, Heikal clearly felt free to make whatever changes seemed necessary to appeal to the Arab reader in the translated version. The Arabic version is signiﬁ cantly longer and more detailed than the English original. For instance, the description of Sadat’s wounds and his state on arrival at the hospital is done in one paragraph in the English version (see Chapter 5, p.164) but is expanded into four pages in the Arabic version. A chapter entitled ‘Organized loot’ in the English version describes the systematic looting of Egypt’s resources by Sadat’s relatives and favourites. The description is far more detailed in the expanded Arabic version (twenty-nine pages compared with seventeen pages in the English version). How do writers/translators such as Heikal balance the two maxims of Relevance and Quantity in renegotiating a text for a different readership?

Weaknesses of deﬁ nition aside, it is interesting that Grice’s maxims seem to reﬂ ect notions which are known to be valued in the English-speaking world, for instance sincerity, brevity and relevance. Robinson suggests that they are even more restricted in their applicability, describing them as ‘redolent of the white masculine professional middle-class culture of the past hundred-odd years in England and the U.S.’ (2003:128). The values they encode do not necessarily have the same resonance or relevance in other cultures, nor should they be expected to represent any ideal basis for communication. Loveday (1982b:363) asserts that ‘the highly cherished norm of linguistic precision in Western culture cannot be taken for granted and is not universally sanctioned by every society’, and Clyne (1981:65) rightly suggests that the emphasis on relevance ‘may impede cross-reference, one of the most important aspects of discourse’, and wonders whether it might lead to the suppression of associations. ‘Just as there are Anglo-Saxon readers who dismiss some German academic writings as “chaotic”’, he suggests in another article, ‘there are German readers who ﬁ nd English-language publications too “narrow” or conclude that they are not saying very much’ (1983:43).

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

**6.3.3 The context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance**

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

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

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

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

The inability to relate a piece of information to his or her own context can lead the reader to draw the wrong inferences from a text. Rommel (1987) explains that whereas the size of a house or ﬂ at is indicated in Britain by the number of bedrooms, it is normally indicated in Switzerland by the total number of rooms. A German version of Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* which was shown in Zurich some time ago drew what Rommel refers to as a ‘vulgar snigger’ from the audience when Lady Bracknell asked *Wieviel Schlafzimmer* (literally ‘How many bedrooms?’) instead of adjusting the question to the realities of the Swiss context. The sexual connotations inferred by the Swiss audience were not intended by Oscar Wilde.

In addition to the actual ‘realities’ of a situation, the context also includes certain strategies that people regularly employ in order to impose some kind of structure on the world around them. When a person describes something, recounts an event or lists a number of items, he or she will normally follow a preferred sequence rather than a random one. For instance, in recounting a series of events, one would normally follow a temporal order, listing events in the order in which they occurred.

This temporal order can, of course, be modiﬁ ed or even reversed provided appro- priate signals such as tense markers or time adjuncts are used to clarify the alter- native ordering. It nevertheless represents a ‘preferred’ or ‘normal’ ordering strategy which is regularly employed by most people.

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

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

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

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

An interesting area in which a translator needs to be particularly sensitive to the reader’s expectations in a given context concerns modes of address. It includes the use of appropriate personal and occupational titles, various combinations of ﬁ rst names and surnames, title and surname, or title and ﬁ rst name, the use of nicknames, and even the use of terms of affection such as *dear* or *darling*.Certain linguistic items may be used to address certain types of participant in order to convey implicatures which are highly language- and culture-speciﬁ c.

Blum-Kulka rightly suggests that the meaning conveyed by deliberately misusing a socio-cultural rule would be difﬁ cult to transfer into another language.

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

**6.3.4 Other items of background knowledge**

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

There is a great deal of overlap between identi- fying reference and accessing relevant background information. Whether a trans- lator decides to explain a reference or not depends on whether the target reader is assumed to be familiar with it and the extent to which the translator feels inclined to intervene.

**6.3.5 The availability of all relevant items falling under the previous headings**

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

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

what is not available to target readers to ensure that implicatures can be worked out.

Apart from ﬁ lling gaps in the reader’s knowledge (which would cover the availability of relevant items of background knowledge, non-linguistic context, identity of reference, etc.), there is also the question of the reader’s expectations. In translation, anything that is likely to violate the target reader’s expectations must be carefully examined and, if necessary, adjusted in order to avoid conveying the wrong implicatures or even failing to make sense altogether.

Among the strongest expectations we bring to bear on any communicative event involving verbal behaviour are expectations concerning the organization of language.

Unless motivated,11 a deviant conﬁ guration at any linguistic level (phonological, lexical, syntactic, textual) may block a participant’s access to ‘the conventional meaning of the words and structures can directly affect the coherence of a text. The main function of linguistic elements and patterning is to organize the content of a message so that it is easily accessible to a reader or hearer. Any disturbance to the normal organizational patterns of language must therefore be motivated, otherwise the reader will not be able to make sense of it. To repeat an example which was discussed in Chapter 3, collocations such as ‘harmed hair’, ‘damaged hair’ and ‘breakable hair’ which appear in the Arabic translation of the Kolestral text are so deviant that the Arab reader is unlikely to be able to make any sense of that part of the text. Being both deviant and unmotivated, such unex- pected organization of the language tends to render a text incoherent to its readers.

Most professional translators appreciate the need to fulﬁ l a reader’s expecta- tions about the organization of the target language in order to maintain the coherence of a text and avoid giving rise to unwanted implicatures. Some of the adjustments that a translator may need to make in order to conform to readers’ expectations in this area have been discussed and exempliﬁ ed in previous chapters. However, there are instances in which deviation from normal patterning is a feature of the source text itself. If deviation is motivated, and especially if it is necessary for working out an intended meaning, the translator may well decide to transfer it to the target text. As discussed above, readers’ expectations do not necessarily have to be fulﬁ lled.

Writers, and translators, often appeal to their readers to modify their expectations if such modiﬁ cations are required in a given context. We are normally prepared to accept a great deal of unusual and even bizarre linguistic behaviour provided it can be justiﬁ ed, for instance on the basis of poetic creativity or humour.

The suggestion that deviations from normal patterning have to be motivated implies that they have to occur in a context that is ‘interpretable’ by the hearer or reader. Blakemore suggests that a speaker or writer who wants his or her utterance to be interpreted in a certain way ‘must expect it to be interpreted in a context that yields that interpretation’ (1987:27).

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

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

The second factor is the translator’s own view of his or her role and of the whole question of where his or her loyalties ought to lie – whether they ought to lie with the source text or with the target reader.

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

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

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

**Лекція № 7**

**Тема: Beyond equivalence: ethics and morality**

**Навчальна мета:** Мета дисципліни полягає у засвоєнні студентами фундаментальних аспектів теорії перекладу, орієнтованої на переклад як комунікативний процес.

Завдання / Feladatok:

- дати уявлення про основні теорії та школи перекладу, що відображають процес розвитку культури перекладу;

- познайомити з різноманітними методами перекладу;

- показати боротьбу різних перекладацьких принципів;

- ознайомити студентів зі суспільною значимістю перекладацької діяльності, роллю перекладу в сучасному житті, розкрити взаємозв’язок теорії перекладу з іншими філологічними дисциплінами і з іншими видами діяльності людини;

- допомогти студентам ширше усвідомити специфіку перекладу з іноземної мови.

**Виховна мета:** сприяти формуванню наукового світогляду, підвищення рівня культури мовлення, моральних, естетичних та інших якостей особистості.

**Розвиваюча мета:** розвивати інтелектуальні здібності, логічне мислення, мовлення, пам'ять, увагу, уяву, мислення, спостережливість, активність, творчість, самостійність здобувачів вищої освіти, прищеплювати їм раціональні способи пізнавальної діяльності з зазначеної теми.

**Кількість аудиторних годин:** 4

**Навчальне обладнання, ТЗН:** підручники, дошка, словники, роздатковий матеріал, відеопроектор, екран, комп’ютерна техніка та відповідне програмне забезпечення.

**Наочні засоби:** наочність викладення матеріалу забезпечується використанням схем, таблиць та мультимедійним супроводженням окремих питань теми.

**План лекції:**

1. Ethics and morality
2. Professionalism, codes of ethics and the law
3. The ethical implications of linguistic choices
4. Concluding remarks

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

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**Текст лекції:**

Various associations that represent translators and interpreters have long developed codes of practice, often referred to as codes of ethics, in order to ensure the accountability of their members to other parties involved in the interaction, particu- larly clients who pay their wages. In this chapter, we attempt to move beyond such codes in order to think critically about some of the concrete ethical choices and dilemmas that translators and interpreters often encounter and for which they are rarely prepared.

Of central concern in this chapter is the need to develop critical skills that can enable translators and interpreters to make ethical decisions for themselves, rather than have to fall back uncritically on abstract codes drawn up by their employers or the associations that represent them. This is important for at least three reasons.

The ﬁ rst is that no code can ever predict the full range of concrete ethical issues that may arise in the course of professional practice, and hence translators – like other professionals – are often faced with situations in which it is difﬁ cult to interpret or apply the relevant code. Second, codes, like laws, are elaborated by people like us, and are therefore never infallible, ethically or otherwise. You might ﬁ nd yourself dis agreeing with the code, perhaps because you believe it could result in tolerating certain types of injustice in some contexts. If so, it is your responsibility to question the code in order to avoid causing harm to others or perpetuating potential forms of injustice. And ﬁ nally, it is in the interest of society as a whole for individuals to be accountable for their decisions, in professional life as elsewhere. Adopting the default position of applying a professional code unquestioningly undermines this accountability.1 We start, as elsewhere in this book, by deﬁ ning the main concepts that will inform the discussion, including ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’.

**7.1 ETHICS AND MORALITY**

Ethics and morality are generally understood to concern our ability to make decisions on the basis of what we believe to be morally right or wrong in a speciﬁ c context.

Those who follow what is known as **virtue ethics**, however, would argue that ethics is not just about knowing what to do on a given occasion. For them, rather than focusing on the question ‘What should I do?’, we must each be concerned with the question ‘What kind of person should I be?’ – or, more speciﬁ cally, ‘What kind of parent should I be?’, ‘What kind of politician should I be?’, ‘What kind of translator should I be?’ and so on. As Cheney *et al.* explain, ‘virtue ethics takes a long view of ethical issues, framing them not as merely momentary or episodic concerns but rather as issues relevant across all domains of life and one’s entire lifespan’ (2010:238). Ethics is thus understood as a lifelong process of learning and improvement, of nurturing the right virtues in ourselves and those in our care. But the two issues are clearly inseparable, since in striving to be a better person an indi- vidual must reﬂ ect on the same principles and ideals that inform his or her decision about what is ethical to do in a speciﬁ c context.

The decision we take on any given occasion is generally judged as ethical or unethical to the extent that it affects others, for example in terms of their survival, freedom, well-being, comfort, happiness or success. Unethical behaviour thus causes harm *to others.* A person who behaves in a way that affects only him- or herself negatively is imprudent, not unethical (Driver 2007). It is unethical to torture, rape or deal in drugs. It is imprudent not to brush one’s teeth regularly, or study for an exam, or save towards one’s retirement. However, as is evident even from these examples, the distinction between the self and others is never straightforward; if it were, committing suicide would not be the subject of ethical debate. Because it is difﬁ cult to extract oneself from others, to act in a way that has no impact on the lives of at least those in our immediate vicinity, ‘prudent’ and ‘ethical’ are best thought of as points on a continuum rather than absolute values.

Cheney *et al.* (2010:3–4) reiterate a commonly held lay view, namely, that discussions of ethics revolve around ‘dry, abstract’ principles that are negatively formulated in the form of ‘don’ts’ rather than ‘dos’, while morality concerns everyday decisions, features prominently in public debates about the rights and wrongs of speciﬁ c events, and therefore seems more relevant to our lives. Prado (2006) draws a similar distinction, adding that ethics has now come to be associated with the right conduct in professional life (hence our use of labels such as ‘business ethics’ and ‘medical ethics’), whereas morality refers to the right conduct for everyone. Focusing on ethics in the context of translation, Koskinen (2000:11) makes the same distinction in slightly different terms:

I see morality as a characteristic not of communities but of individuals, and ethics as ‘collectivised’ morality, as a collective effort of a community to formulate a set of rules or recommendations of accepted moral behaviour.

The common threads here are that ethics is collective, involves conscious elabo- ration of codes and principles that constrain the behaviour of those obliged to abide by them, and is increasingly associated with professional and institutional contexts, all of which explains why various institutions and associations have *codes of ethics*, rather than *codes of morality*. Despite its popularity, this distinction will not be main- tained here: I will be using ethics, morality and their derivatives interchangeably, as they are often used in lay discussions. On the whole, I will also assume, with Cheney *et al.* (2010:237), that ‘ethics is about the stream of life rather than just its turbulent moments’, and that many default choices that do not necessarily give rise to conscious decision-making can have important ethical implications.

*How do we decide what is ethical?*

We might begin to address this question by drawing a broad distinction between teleological and deontological approaches to the issue of ethical decision-making.

**Deontological** models deﬁ ne what is ethical by reference to what is right in and of itself, irrespective of consequences, and are rule-based.2 Kantian ethics (discussed below) is a good example. A deontological approach would justify an action on the basis of principles such as duty, loyalty or respect for human dignity; hence: ‘I refrain from intervening because it is my duty as a translator to remain impartial’, or ‘I intervene where necessary because it is the duty of a responsible interpreter to empower the deaf participant’. **Teleological** approaches, on the other hand, deﬁ ne what is ethical by reference to what produces the best results. Utilitarianism (also discussed below) is a teleological theory that is more concerned with consequences than with what is morally right *per se*. A teleological approach would justify an action on the basis of the envisaged end results; hence: ‘Making a conscious effort [in community interpreting] to remain impartial can help avoid emotional involvement and possible burn-out’ (Hale 2007:121–122), or ‘I translate as idiomatically as possible because ﬂ uent translations receive good reviews’. The distinction between deontological and teleological approaches cuts across the various models of ethics discussed here, and others not dealt with in this chapter.

In the following discussion of speciﬁ c approaches to ethics, you will note that different approaches can sometimes lead to the same decision, based on quite different arguments. As you reﬂ ect on each approach, it is important to bear in mind that the issue of *why* we opt for one decision rather than another is just as important as *what* decision we opt for. This is because the arguments we use to justify our actions to ourselves and others contribute to shaping the moral outlook of our communities. For example, whether we argue that torture is wrong because it produces what is referred to sometimes as ‘low grade information’3 or because it is a gross violation of human rights, whatever the quality of information it produces, is

in itself a moral statement that reﬂ ects our attitude to others. The cumulative weight and balance of such arguments in any society will gradually incline its members to be more or less compassionate, more or less tolerant and so on. The arguments we use, like the speciﬁ c linguistic choices we make (whether we call someone *disabled* or *a cripple*, for instance), are not without their own consequences.

The attempt to separate morality from ethics and to restrict it to the individual might suggest that what is moral is a matter of opinion, like an aesthetic judgement of beauty or elegance. This type of **relativism** can take various forms. Some rela- tivists suggest that what is moral varies from one society to another and at different points in history, and that we must therefore refrain from judging others on the basis of our own, current values. This is like saying that different communities have different cultural beliefs, and that tolerance requires us to accept their way of life and expect them to accept ours. By this argument, societies that deny women access to education, for instance, would simply be abiding by a different moral code that we must not judge as wrong by our own values. Extending the same argument further, some relativists insist that each individual has his or her own set of moral values, and that no individual is in a position to judge the moral claims of another. Both of these positions are at the opposite extreme from any deontological model, since they offer no scope for deﬁ ning an action as right in and of itself. But they are not teleological either, since they refrain from deﬁ ning what is ethical for anyone other than the agent, with his or her own unique set of values. And it is precisely because they undermine the possibility of any moral judgement that both forms of relativism are intuitively unsatisfying for many people. If we follow them we would have to accept that slavery and apartheid practices should be tolerated, and that a paedophile who believes it is morally acceptable to rape children should not be punished. Moreover, belief in absolute relativism, whether at individual or collective level, would ultimately encourage conformity to the status quo and hence stiﬂ e critical thinking and action, to the detriment of society as a whole. As Driver argues, ‘moral progress is often achieved through the efforts of rebellious individuals with beliefs that do not conform to popular cultural beliefs’ (2007:18). Such individuals do not just hold different beliefs – they have the moral courage to act on them, to question the dominant beliefs of their societies and to resist practices that they consider ethically unac- ceptable. Martin Luther King in the United States, Mahatma Ghandi in India, Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma and Nelson Mandela in South Africa are good examples of individuals whose legacies challenge extreme relativism. At any rate, in practice rela- tivism is a comfortable doctrine to hold on to only when the issue in question does not touch an aspect of our lives that really matters to us. As Blackburn explains, ‘[those] who say, “Well, it’s just an opinion,” one moment, will demonstrate the most intense attachment to a particular opinion the next, when the issue is stopping hunting, or preventing vivisection, or permitting abortion – something they care about’ (2001:28).

Nevertheless, cultural relativism has many followers, and its main argument has a certain appeal in the context of translation and interpreting in particular, since it supports tolerance and cultural diversity. Relativism also alerts us to the fact that what is deemed controversial, and hence requires more sensitivity from a translator or interpreter to communicate, varies from one social environment to another. The right to wear the hijab is not a controversial issue in Saudi Arabia – if anything, it is the right not to wear the hijab that is controversial. A text about banning the hijab in, say, Belgium or France will therefore be more challenging to a mainstream Saudi audience than to the average Korean or Chinese reader. The extent to which one can challenge the values and expectations of readers and still maintain their involvement and treat them with dignity is an issue that occupies the minds of many translators and inﬂ uences their choice of wording as well as what to include and what to omit, often with the involvement of their commissioner or other parties in the interaction.

Some aspects of relativism are thus helpful in thinking about certain issues in translation and interpreting. At the same time, we must remember that morality is not the same as good manners or socially approved habits, which do vary consid- erably from one cultural environment to another (Driver 2007:16). If translators are to behave in an ethically responsible manner, their decisions must be informed by principles that take account of the impact of their actions on others, principles such as ‘do no harm’ or ‘do not acquiesce in injustice’, irrespective of the prevailing moral code and social norms of the source or target culture. **Universalists** believe that such basic moral principles do exist and that they apply universally, but the way we interpret them can vary from one context to another. This context-sensitive version of universalism seems to strike a reasonable balance between pure, unbridled relativism and rigid, intolerant forms of moralizing, or as Blackburn puts it, ‘between the saggy sands of relativism and the cold rocks of dogmatism’ (2001:29). But this deontological approach does not solve all problems, partly because there is no general agreement about the set of relevant principles and partly because the principles often clash in real life. Causing no harm to one person can result in causing harm to another, and there are of course different types and degrees of harm.

**Consequentialist theories**, the best known among which is **utilitarianism**, bypass the issue of principles and their variation across cultures by assessing moral conduct purely on the basis of a cost-beneﬁ t analysis of the consequences of an action or behaviour. At one extreme, egoists maintain that an action is moral or ethical if its consequences are favourable for its agent. At the other extreme, altruists maintain that an action is moral if its consequences are favourable for everyone except the agent. Striking a middle course between the two, utilitarianism considers an action moral to the extent that its consequences are favourable for everyone, including the agent. Utilitarianism comes in two versions: act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism.

**Act-utilitarianists** argue that an ethical decision is one that results in the most favourable consequences for the largest number of people *in a given context*.

Torture would thus be acceptable if those authorizing it believed it could lead to infor- mation that would prevent death and injury to many innocent civilians. It is unac- ceptable by the same logic if, as Brigadier General David R. Irvine argued in 2005,4 it is found to produce unreliable information, because those being tortured will say anything to put an end to their ordeal. The argument here is not concerned with the rights of those being tortured, but merely with the efﬁ cacy of the practice. In one of many such incidents reported in the media since 2001, the decision taken by the cabin crew and Spanish airport police on a ﬂ ight from Malaga to Manchester in 2006 could be thought of as ethical in the same terms. In this case, several passengers who had ‘overheard two men of Asian appearance apparently talking Arabic’, according to the British newspaper the *Daily Mail*,5 decided that they may be terrorists and refused to allow the ﬂ ight to take off. The men were then removed, and the ﬂ ight proceeded on its course. The decision to comply with the passengers’ demands produced the ‘best’ consequences in the sense of avoiding major disruption to the plans of a large number of people and dealing effectively with their anxieties.

However, many would consider it unethical, both because of its violation of the rights of two passengers who had committed no crime, and for its larger implications in terms of sustaining racism and vigilante practices.

In translation, act-utilitarian logic would support a decision that results in the largest number of participants, including the translator, achieving their objectives on a given occasion, even if the rights of one participant, perhaps an immigrant or the foreign author, are undermined. Like almost all ethical arguments, this statement is not straightforward and can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Someone could argue, for instance, that the ‘participants’ include not only those involved in the immediate interaction, but also the profession represented by the translator, the society in which translation takes place, the community to which the immigrant belongs and indeed the whole of humanity. This would ﬁ t in with the second version of utilitarianism, namely **rule-utilitarianism**, which considers that ‘the right action is that action which is performed in accordance with a rule, or set of rules, the following of which maximizes utility’ (Driver 2007:64).6 Act-utilitarianism and rule- utilitarianism can thus yield quite different decisions based on utilitarian principles.

The classic case here would be the typical hostage crisis: an act-utilitarian would probably opt for yielding to the hostage-takers’ demands, while a rule-utilitarian would not, because doing so would not maximize utility overall. However deﬁ ned, any form of utilitarianism can lead to some very questionable decisions. Following the rule ‘don’t steal’ because it maximizes utility overall when one’s family is starving and their lives can be saved by taking food from someone who has more than enough does not seem fair or realistic. Act-utilitarianism is similarly problematic and can lead to gross injustices, although it does reﬂ ect the decision-making processes that many people seem to adopt in real life.7 The ethical dilemmas that can lead many to adopt utilitarian decisions are brought to life vividly in Khaled Hosseini’s bestselling novel, *The Kite Runner*. In the following scene, the main character returns to war-torn, Taliban-controlled Kabul to ﬁ nd his nephew and take him to safety. He is led by a taxi driver named Farid to the orphanage where his nephew was last seen. In talking to the director, Zaman, he discovers that like a number of other children his nephew had been handed over to the local war lords. The following exchange captures the ethical dilemma of the director, which he chooses to resolve on the basis of utilitarian principles (Hosseini 2003:235–236, 237):

‘There is a Talib ofﬁ cial,’ he muttered. ‘He visits once every month or two. He brings cash with him, not a lot, but better than nothing at all.’ His shifty eyes fell on me, rolled away. ‘Usually he’ll take a girl. But not always.’ ‘And you allow this?’ Farid said behind me. He was going around the table, closing in on Zaman. ‘What choice do I have?’ Zaman shot back. He pushed himself away from the desk. ‘You’re the director here,’ Farid said. ‘Your job is watch over these children.’ ‘There’s nothing I can do to stop it.’ ‘You’re selling children!’ Farid barked. …

Zaman dropped his hands. ‘I haven’t been paid in over six months. I’m broke because I’ve spent my life’s savings on this orphanage. Everything I ever owned or inherited I sold to run this godforsaken place. You think I don’t have family in Pakistan and Iran? I could have run like everyone else. But I didn’t. I stayed. I stayed because of *them* [the children in the orphanage].’ … ‘If I deny him one child, he takes ten. So I let him take one and leave the judging to Allah. I swallow my pride and take his goddam ﬁ lthy … dirty money.

Then I go to the bazaar and buy food for the children.’ This is clearly an extreme case, but it captures the nature of ethical dilemmas and the appeal of utilitarianism in some contexts.

Particularly taxing ethical dilemmas, then, arise when the consequences of any decision we make are morally reprehensible, however small the number of people affected by them; in this rather exceptional case, the director cannot avoid doing serious harm to others, whatever his choice. It is worth noting here that one of the weaknesses of utilitarianism is that it does not take account of emotional factors, which come into play strongly when one or more of those who may be negatively affected by a difﬁ cult decision are very close to the agent: few people would in practice be able to sacriﬁ ce their son or daughter to save others, whatever the outcome of an abstract cost-beneﬁ t analysis.8 But ethical dilemmas also arise if we follow universalist ethics, speciﬁ cally when two or more of what we might think of as universal principles come into conﬂ ict, as when following the principle of truth or honesty would result in doing harm to someone.

Because of the difﬁ culty of reconciling principles on the basis of consequences or universal values, some argue that **Kantian ethics** is a better option than both util- itarianism and universalism. Broadly speaking, Kantian ethics maintains that actions are right or wrong in and of themselves, irrespective of their consequences and of contextual considerations. A similar logic, or sentiment, is often expressed in the blogs and writings of professional translators. In an article which appeared in the journal of the Medical Division of the American Translators’ Association, Michael McCann (2006), former Chairman of the Irish Translators’ Association, insists: The principles of ethics governing a translator’s work are applications of the great moral principles, based not on the quicksand of relativism, but solidly founded on the absolute foundation of what is good in itself, to the avoidance of what is wrong, for the pure, simple and unadulterated reason, that good is right, and that bad is wrong.

More speciﬁ cally, however, Kantian ethics maintains that our actions must ulti- mately be motivated by a sense of duty. Some duties are so important that they admit of no exceptions: such is our duty to tell the truth at all times, because it is a necessary part of our duty to treat others with respect and dignity. Treating others with dignity means respecting their autonomy by allowing them access to all the information they need to make decisions that affect their lives and well-being. It requires us to acknowledge the right of all human beings ‘to act for reasons they have formulated for themselves’ (Benn 1998:208). Kantian ethics has had consid- erable inﬂ uence on formulating ethical policy in several ﬁ elds (Driver 2007), including medicine, where misleading patients about the nature of their treatment or their chances of recovery is no longer permissible in many parts of the world, irrespective of the negative psychological impact this can have on them or their loved ones.

Like all theories of ethics, taken individually, Kantian ethics falls short of offering us satisfying solutions in some situations which we might experience as morally taxing. It also does not reﬂ ect the way people often behave intuitively. In one of many such examples cited in the literature, the bilingual daughter of an Italian immigrant in Canada interprets between her father and an English-speaking Canadian in a business negotiation. When her father loses his temper and calls the Canadian busi- nessman a fool (Digli che è un imbecile!), she renders this as ‘My father won’t accept your offer’ (Mason 1999:156). Following Kantian principles, this must be considered unethical behaviour, because it violates the requirements of truth and autonomy. But we get different assessments if we draw on alternative models of ethical behaviour. Kantian ethics aside, whether we think the interpreter’s behaviour is ethical or not will depend on at least two considerations. First, what we believe is likely to be the best outcome for all participants (both short term and long term), if we follow utilitarian logic. Second, whether we think the father’s behaviour is guided by different norms and expectations operative in his own cultural setting, where perhaps calling someone a fool to express dissatisfaction does not carry the same weight as it does in the Canadian context – a partially relativist position. If so, there is no point in causing unintended offence (unnecessary harm), we might argue, and the young interpreter will have made an ethically responsible decision. An egoist, on the other hand, would consider the interpreter’s behaviour ethical on the basis that she is protecting herself from being caught up in a stressful confrontation or being blamed for it. No doubt this kind of egoist logic motivates many decisions in translation and interpreting. As Donovan (2011) argues, conference interpreters’ (and translators’) insistence on ‘professional neutrality and conﬁ dentiality as the pillars of their professional codes of practice’ is at least partly motivated by the fact that ‘this position protects them from awkward and even threatening criticism and deﬂ ects potential pressure from powerful clients’. Assuming we are not egoists, however, how ethical or unethical we think the resulting behaviour is will depend primarily on the extent to which we believe it impacts negatively on other partici- pants, rather than merely on ourselves.

Other situations present different types of ethical challenge, for both Kantian and other approaches. What should a sign language interpreter do, for instance, when asked to make a phone call to a sex service on behalf of a deaf client?9 On the one hand, the interpreter may feel that the sex industry is demeaning and exploit- ative, and that by supporting it he or she would be doing harm to others. On the other hand, it is possible to argue, in Kantian terms, that the interpreter has a duty to empower the deaf person, who should be able to make his or her own ethical deci- sions. Similarly, in a focus group study undertaken in several US hospitals in order to explore the difﬁ culties encountered by interpreters in implementing standards drawn up by healthcare organizations in California, Angelelli (2006:182, 183–184) quotes two participants expressing quite different views, with different implications for the autonomy of the patient in a medical encounter: Let’s say you are a good interpreter, right? And you are interpreting every- thing that is going on. All of a sudden, I am a nurse, I come in the room and I tell the doctor, ‘you are giving the patient erythromycin and he is allergic to it.

Do you still want to give him that or change it?’ Now there is no need for you to interpret that. It has nothing to do with the patient.

Sometimes when there is an English-speaking patient, the doctor and the nurse do not discuss certain things in front of the patient. They go outside.

But when the patient is non-English-speaking, I have been in that situation. I had someone, an older person, come in and he was dying and the two doctors were standing in front of the patient saying ‘he is going to keep coming here until he dies, until he gets pneumonia and ﬁ nally …’ I can’t translate that for the patient. And I ask the doctors, ‘Would you like me to translate that?’ And they say, ‘Oh, no. This is among ourselves.’ ‘Then please step outside.’ That is what I said.

The ﬁ rst interpreter is clearly not aware of any ethical questions relating to the patient’s right to have access to the full interaction in which he or she is not only involved but is also the subject of conversation and decision-making. The second interpreter ﬁ nds it unethical to exclude a participant from an ongoing conversation in which he or she is physically present, and acts accordingly. A utilitarian approach would minimize the ethical implications here: there is no physical or psychological harm done to patients, as long as they do not ﬁ nd out that something was said about them to which they were not privy (‘what you don’t know can’t hurt you’ is a common, utilitarian saying in English that probably has its counterpart in many other languages). But a Kantian would point out that by allowing one participant to be excluded from the interaction and failing to inform him or her about an exchange that impacts his or her well-being, the interpreter has effectively failed to treat that par ticipant with the dignity he or she deserves. A similar argument could be advanced with respect to signiﬁ cant shifts introduced in some forms of translation, such as literary translation, without the knowledge and consent of the author10 and/or without alerting the target reader. A good example is the 1969 English translation of Milan Kundera’s *The Joke*, in which the chapters of the book are reordered to reﬂ ect the chronological development of the plot, even though Kundera had speciﬁ cally opted for a different order in the original (Kuhiwczak 1990). Kundera’s subsequent outrage, expressed in a letter published in *The* *Times Literary Supplement* in the same year, is understandable in ethical terms on the basis that he remains a key participant in any interaction that involves a text which still bears his name, and as such is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect: his consent should have been sought for such a major form of intervention.

Whatever theory of ethics informs our thinking, when principles clash or our choices are severely restricted there will be no easy answer, no ready-made solution that can be extracted from any code. Ethical dilemmas are just that: dilemmas. As Goodwin explains in his discussion of the choice of subtitles in a politically charged documentary, ‘like the technical question,11 the ethical question does not admit of an easy answer’ (2010:25). And yet, we have to be able to anticipate ethical difﬁ culties in our professional life and to think of the various options available to us critically, because however difﬁ cult the decisions we have to make we are still accountable for them, to ourselves as well as others.

**7.2 PROFESSIONALISM, CODES OF ETHICS AND THE LAW**

Most professions have codes of ethics that regulate the behaviour of their members and demonstrate to those who depend on their services that they have mechanisms for ensuring accountability. In principle, professional codes can – and should – have a positive impact on the community to which they apply, and cannot be dismissed as irrelevant unless they prove to be out of touch with the realities of practice and with the moral outlook of practitioners. But they must always be approached critically, assessed on their own merits, and not used to ‘deﬂ ect the necessity of ongoing personal and systemic reﬂ ection and adaptation’ (Cheney *et al.* 2010:181).

Cheney *et al.* (*ibid.*:15) argue that the term ‘professional’ can have negative ethical implications, and may be used simply to constrain behaviour, to the detriment of moral standards in society. The phrase ‘acting like a professional’, they suggest, ‘can be … code for not “rocking the boat” or not being fully human’. Moreover, in elaborating their codes of ethics, institutions sometimes negotiate the rules sensi- tively with their members and take account of their experience and values, but more often they impose these codes from the top down, as a response to some legal or public relations concerns. The resulting codes then tend to be ‘oriented toward encouraging compliance with regulations far more than they are with elevating behavior’ (*ibid.*).

Similarly, as Driver explains (2007:5), ‘ethics and the law are distinct’, and while one hopes that ‘ethical norms will inform the content and enforcement of the law’, we know that many laws have been used in the past and continue to be used today to discriminate against certain minorities, including women in some societies and blacks in many countries in the past, and to assist in various forms of colonial violence. This is perhaps why the World Medical Association’s International Code of Ethics stipulates that ‘a doctor’s or investigator’s conscience and duty of care must transcend national laws’ (Godlee 2009). Consequently, where most professional codes of ethics understandably discourage members from breaking the law, some people will occasionally decide that it is unethical to do otherwise. In our speciﬁ c context, some scholars have recently warned against ‘restricting the notion of ethics in translation to questions … [of] contractual or legal obligations related to terms of employment’ (Tymoczko 2007:219) because it turns translators into unthinking cogs in the wheel of an established social system rather than reﬂ ective and ethically responsible citizens.

Nevertheless, for many scholars and practitioners, professional codes of trans- lation and interpreting are and must remain the reference point for ethical behaviour in the ﬁ eld. To resolve a range of ethical dilemmas for which the code offers no satisfying answers, some have argued that ‘the code applies to the interpreted encounter, and not to any interactions before or after the professional encounter’ (Hale 2007:130–131). Thus, the principle of conﬁ dentiality, which is central to all professional codes of interpreting and translation, does not necessarily have to apply when a patient tells an interpreter in the waiting room of a clinic that he or she intends to commit suicide but does not wish this to be revealed to the doctor. In deciding how to act ethically in this instance, the interpreter has to use his or her own judgement or appeal to some other code, perhaps the medical code, to resolve this dilemma. But this separation of pre/post-encounter and the encounter itself is arguably artiﬁ cial and difﬁ cult to maintain in practice. At any rate, similar dilemmas often emerge during the professional encounter itself, and are no less ethically taxing for the translator or interpreter than those that arise outside the encounter proper.

When translators and interpreters are faced with serious ethical dilemmas, within or around the encounter proper, one way in which they might attempt to negotiate the need to abide by professional and legal codes on the one hand, and to act ethically on the other, is to reinterpret the key terms of the code. Almost all codes drawn up by associations that represent translators and interpreters consider impartiality to be a prerequisite for professional behaviour. Erik Camayd-Freixas was one of twenty-six interpreters called in to provide interpreting between US Immi- gration and Customs Enforcement ofﬁ cials and illegal immigrants arrested during a major raid on a slaughterhouse in Iowa in May 2008. In a long statement he published afterwards, he describes some of the harrowing scenes he witnessed when he and his fellow interpreters unexpectedly found themselves party to major abuses of the rights of these vulnerable immigrants. He quotes one of his fellow interpreters saying ‘I feel a tremendous solidarity with these people’, then comments: ‘Had we lost our impartiality? Not at all: that was our impartial and probably unanimous judgment’ (Camayd-Freixas 2008a). Rather than question the principle of impartiality, Camayd-Freixas thus chooses to interpret it as compatible with feelings of compassion and solidarity with the oppressed. His acceptance note when he was offered the Inttranews Linguist of the Year Award in 2008 further reveals his awareness of the potential conﬂ ict between various key principles that feature in almost all professional codes in the ﬁ eld:12 We live in changing times where the canons of ethics are being redeﬁ ned in many professions. For translators and interpreters, the prime imperative is Accuracy, followed by Impartiality and Conﬁ dentiality. In cases of conﬂ ict, Accuracy governs. And today there are cases in which Accuracy must be regarded as something more than mere literal correctness. If we are to be more than translation machines, more than automatons, if we strive to have a conscience and a heart, we must go beyond the words, to the deeper struc- tures of meaning. For long, linguists have taken refuge in the comfort of formal correctness, but our world has closed that loophole. That ethical shelter is no more. Our Oath of Accuracy – we now realize – means a commitment to Truth.

Hale (2007:117–124) similarly accepts that impartiality does not mean lack of feelings on the part of the interpreter, but argues that interpreters must not allow their personal opinions or feelings to interfere with their work; if necessary, they can always declare a conﬂ ict of interest and decline the job. In Camayd-Freixas’ case, however, things did not prove quite so straightforward, not least because he did not realize what was going on until he arrived on the scene and began interpreting.13 He also had to weigh the ethical implications of ignoring injustice by simply walking away from it, as opposed to intervening to change the situation in the longer term. In an article about his experience that appeared in *The New York Times* (Preston 2008), he is reported to have ‘considered withdrawing from the assignment, but decided instead that he could play a valuable role by witnessing the proceedings and making them known’. He then took ‘the unusual step of breaking the code of conﬁ dentiality among legal interpreters about their work’ (*ibid.*) by publishing a fourteen-page essay describing what he witnessed and giving interviews about his experience.14 While maintaining his ‘impartiality’ during the assignment, to the best of his ability, he nevertheless arguably violated another professional and legal principle that could have had serious consequences for him personally, namely the principle of conﬁ dentiality.15 Donovan (in press) describes another situation that made adhering to the prin- ciple of impartiality ethically problematic, and that she chose to resolve by distancing herself from the utterance linguistically and justifying her intervention from a different perspective this time – not with reference to what occurs within or outside the encounter proper, but with reference to what might be considered standard practice within a speciﬁ c type of event involving a conference interpreter. The ‘interpreter’ she refers to in the third person here is herself: During a lunch discussion, a Brazilian participant began to justify the assassi- nation of street children by paramilitaries. The interpreter, taken aback, intro- duced her rendition with ‘the speaker seems to be saying that …’, thus distancing herself doubly from the content. This is a clear and deliberate break with standard practice. Thus, by using the third person the interpreter indicates disapproval and in effect comments on the speaker’s remarks. … This would generally be perceived as an unethical rendition by the standards of professional practice. The distancing was possible because the interpreter felt her obligation of complete, impartial rendition was weakened by the non- representational (i.e. personal) nature of the statement and its occurrence outside the ofﬁ cial proceedings.

Commenting on the ethical implications of following the same principle in a very different context, Inghilleri (2010b) explains that impartiality for Sadi Othman, a trusted interpreter who worked with the US forces and local ofﬁ cials in Iraq following the invasion of the country in 2003, simply means that he does not side with one party or the other, whatever the nature of the interaction he mediates. As Inghilleri points out, what adherence to the principle of impartiality does in this case is ‘to shield Othman, an avowed paciﬁ st, from any moral responsibility for his direct par ticipation in a war which has caused the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians’ (*ibid.*: 191). Ultimately, then, impartiality, like almost any principle you will encounter in a legal or professional code, can be interpreted in different ways – by translators/ interpreters and by other parties involved in the encounter or those who are in a position to comment on their behaviour.

**7.3 THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LINGUISTIC CHOICES**

Accuracy, as already pointed out, is one of the principles included in most codes of ethics, and like impartiality and conﬁ dentiality can be difﬁ cult to adhere to for ethical reasons. But accuracy focuses speciﬁ cally on the relationship between the source and target text, or source and target utterance in the case of interpreting.

The following extracts are from an article that appeared in the June 2010 issue of the KLM inﬂ ight magazine *Holland Herald* (Lapiere 2010:45–48). Translating this article would raise difﬁ cult ethical issues for many people, especially those who believe that some linguistic choices are demeaning for women and strengthen perceptions of them as objects to be possessed rather than equal members of society.

Tour of beauty

She was the loveliest baby any man could dream of marrying. The pale green, eight-cylinder Corniche I was contemplating in the window of London’s Conduit Street Rolls-Royce showroom was the ultimate symbol of beauty and motor perfection.

... Driving throughout India aboard a Rolls-Royce and coming back home through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and the whole Middle East at the wheel of such a mythical car was the ultimate dream I could think of. Though I did not possess a bowler hat and an umbrella to establish my credibility, I entered the showroom absolutely determined to make that Corniche my bride. …

I had her spend her ﬁ rst Indian night in one of the majestic garages of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club that had formerly housed the Silver Phantoms and Silver Ghosts of the empire’s high dignatories. …

In a few months, I covered almost 20,000 kilometres throughout the former British Empire, often on terrible roads, under the pouring rains of the monsoon as well as in the blazing heat of summer. In spite of the ﬁ lthy petrol with which I quenched her thirst, my Rolls-Royce never complained. She proudly sailed everywhere like her ancestors had in the times of the viceroys and the maharajas. …

Since then, the beautiful car bought with the blessings of Lord Mountbatten has continued to be part of my life. Like an old couple that love has united for eternity, together we have covered many more thousands of kilometres across France and Europe. It is now 51 years old, and I am 78. She is parked under the red tiles of a garage just opposite the room where I have my work table. I have only to look up and glance out of the window to see the symbol of the greatest joys of my life, and draw from it the inspiration for further dreams.

This article, which is worth reading in full,16 is problematic at more than one level – among other things, it paints a rather romantic and rosy picture of a colonial world that in reality was far from romantic for those at the receiving end of colonial violence. The car is explicitly associated with the ‘grandeur’ of that imperial past and referred to as ‘she’, ‘loveliest baby’ and ‘bride’. Such gendered references and the idea of driving this obedient ‘bride’ who never complains through the lands of the former maharajas and viceroys are likely to trouble translators who are alert to the gender issue and to the violence of colonialism. For those who believe that such language and imagery can have negative ethical implications for society as a whole, and that it is therefore unethical to perpetuate this type of discourse through trans- lation, the answer is still not easy. They still have to address the implications of eliminating or even reducing the gendered references, downplaying the sexualized tenor of the original, or omitting some of the implicit praise of Britain’s imperial past.

Although it would be easy to achieve in many languages, without departing signiﬁ - cantly from the content of the article, altering the tenor of the source text entails a certain disrespect for the autonomy of others involved in the encounter. In Kantian terms, we would have to acknowledge that the author has a right to express his own world view, and the reader has a right to access and judge that world view for him- or herself. Unfortunately, many contexts of translation do not afford translators the opportunity to include footnotes or even prefaces in which they might comment on unsavoury aspects of a source text that they wish to dissociate themselves from,17 thus forcing them to make a decision that involves doing harm to one or more parties in the encounter: the author, the reader, their own values, a social or ethnic group, or even society as a whole. Some translators might attempt to resolve the dilemma by declining the assignment altogether. This option is available in principle to free- lance translators, but a staff translator (someone employed by the *Holland Herald* in this case) cannot normally refuse to translate texts that raise ethical issues for him or her. In one real-life instance, a staff translator working for an agency was asked by her employer to translate a glossary of slaughterhouse terms. As a vegetarian and animal lover, she found this ethically taxing and asked to be relieved of the task. As she puts it, her employers:

were quite happy to humour me in that instance (it was not a terribly long text) but … the conﬂ ict between my ethical position and professional requirements would have been much more of an issue had my employers gained a substantial contract with the meat industry.

*(Myriam Salama-Carr, personal communication)*

These examples bring us to the broader issue of our ethical responsibility as producers of language and discourse, irrespective of – or in addition to – the question of whether the wording we use in a translation is semantically ‘accurate’ in relation to the source text. Our wording will always, inevitably, be different from the wording of the source text, since it will be realized in a different language. Ultimately, however, ‘[w]hat is at stake’ when we render a stretch of text or utterance from one language into another ‘is not so much linguistic difference, as the social and cultural representations of the Other that linguistic difference invariably presupposes’ (Lane- Mercier 1997:46). Like the decision to replicate or tone down the gendered language of the ‘Tour of beauty’ article above, the choice of a particular dialect, idiolect or register with which to render the speech of a character in the source text or the defendant in a courtroom is potentially an ethical choice, one that has an impact on the way our readers or hearers will perceive the character in question (and consequently the community he or she represents), the veracity of a defendant’s testimony, the reliability of a witness’s statement, the credibility of an asylum seeker’s account of his or her persecution.

In 2001, BBC News published extracts from a purported English translation of secret Chinese ofﬁ cial documents on the 1989 events in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.18 The article which featured these extracts began as follows (bold in original):

**Meeting between Premier Li Peng and paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, 25 April, 1989:**

**Li Peng:** ‘The spear is now pointed directly at you and the others of the elder generation of proletarian revolutionaries ...’ **Deng Xiaoping:** ‘This is no ordinary student movement. A tiny minority is exploiting the students – they want to confuse the people and throw the country into chaos. This is a well-planned plot whose real aim is to reject the Communist Party ...’.

Li Peng, Premier of the People’s Republic of China at the time, comes across in this translation as at best quaint and at worst incoherent, perhaps even eccentric. In deciding how to represent the speech of a character in another language, whether this character is ﬁ ctional or real, we have to consider not only the semantics and aesthetics of the source and target utterances but also the values and attitudes we attribute to these characters and their communities through the choices we make.

Do our choices make the character appear more or less intelligent than we might reasonably assume they are or than they appear to their own communities? Do they make the character and their community seem ordinary, human (like us), or radically different, and hence incomprehensible or even threatening? How far should we go to mediate the distance between the source and target cultures, to ensure that members of the former are understood and respected by members of the latter?

These are not easy or straightforward questions, and different translators will want to draw the line at different points of the continuum between rigid adherence to the semantics of an utterance and active intervention in reformulating a character’s speech to enhance their chances of being taken seriously or treated with empathy in the target context. Ultimately, however, as Lane-Mercier argues in the context of literary translation (1997:46):

Far from constituting a neutral operation, both the stylization process to which literary sociolects are exposed and the comic, picturesque or realistic effects they generate involve the authorial manipulation of real-world class determi- nations, ethnic and gender images, power structures, relations of hierarchy and exclusion, cultural stereotypes and institutional roles.

These observations are as pertinent to the translation (and interpreting) of political ﬁ gures in the news and defendants and witnesses in the court as they are to literary characters in a novel.

**xercises**

**7.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In an article about the importance of translators that appeared in the *Observer* news- paper in April 2010, Tim Parks, a well-known novelist and literary translator, writes: Occasionally, a translator is invited to the festival of individual genius as the guest of a great man whose career he has furthered; made, even. He is Mr Eco in New York, Mr Rushdie in Germany. He is not recognised for the millions of decisions he made, but because he had the fortune to translate Rushdie or Eco. If he did wonderful work for less fortunate authors, we would never have heard of him.

Leaving aside the fact that Parks assumes great novelists and their translators to be male by default, there is much truth in this statement. Nevertheless, I hope that our brief excursion into the creativity and ethics of translation in this book will encourage readers to think of translation and interpreting as diverse, challenging, exciting and highly consequential activities, whether undertaken for great literary writers or destitute immigrants, whether awarded with glamorous literary prizes or treated as run-of-the-mill, everyday jobs. Indeed, it is the largely invisible and the least glam- orous aspects of translators’ and interpreters’ work that can often have the greatest impact on the lives of those around them, and hence require them to approach every assignment not just as a technical but as a primarily ethical challenge, one that calls on us to recognize the humanity of others and treat them accordingly. As you expe- rience the highs and lows of your career as a translator or interpreter, it is important not to lose sight of this simple truth.