**Injibara University**

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**Unit 1**

**Introduction to Translation and Interpretation**

The activity of translation has a long-standing tradition and has been widely practiced throughout history, but in our rapidly changing world its role has become of paramount importance. In the new millennium, in which cultural exchanges have been widening, knowledge has been increasingly expanding and international communication has been intensifying, the phenomenon of translation has become fundamental. Be it for scientific, medical, technological, commercial, legal, cultural or literary purposes, today human communication depends heavily on translation and, consequently, interest in the field is also growing.

**What is Translation?**

In everyday language, translation is thought of as a text which is a “representation” or “reproduction” of an original one produced in another language (see House 2001: 247).

Let us now go into defining the phenomenon of ‘translation’ from different angles, starting from the general and moving to the more specialized.

If we look for a definition of translation in a general dictionary, we can find it described as:

* The process of translating words or text from one language into another;
* The written or spoken rendering of the meaning of a word, speech, book or other text, in another language [...] (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English* 1998).

As Hatim and Munday point out in examining a similar definition (2004: 3), we can immediately infer that we can analyze translation from two different perspectives: that of a ‘**process**’,2 which refers to the activity of turning a ST into a TT in another language, and that of a ‘**product**’, i.e. the translated text.

If we consider the definition offered by a specialist source like the *Dictionary of Translation Studies* by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997), we can find the phenomenon of translation explained as follows:

*An incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways. For example, one may talk of translation as a* ***process*** *or a* ***product****, and identify such sub-types as* ***literary*** *translation,* ***technical*** *translation,* ***subtitling*** *and* ***machine translation****; moreover, while more typically it just refer to the transfer of* ***written texts****, the term sometimes also includes interpreting. [...] Furthermore, many writers also extend its reference to take in* ***related activities*** *which most would not recognize as translation as such (ibid. 181).*

This more detailed definition of translation raises at least four separate issues:

1. Translation as a Process and/or Product;
2. Sub-types of translation;
3. Concern with written texts;
4. Translation *vs* Non-translation.

First of all, we can explicitly divide up the distinction seen above into two main perspectives, those that consider translation either as a ‘process’ or a ‘product’. To this twofold categorization, Bell (1991: 13) adds a further variable, since he suggests making a distinction between ***translating*** (the process), ***a translation*** (the product) and ***translation*** (i.e., “the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process”).

Secondly, it is postulated that translation entails different kinds of texts, from literary to technical. Of course this can seem quite obvious now, but it was not so for, literally, ages: for two thousand years, at least since Cicero in the first century B.C., until the second half of the twentieth century, even though the real practice of translation regarded many kinds of texts, any discussion on translation focused mainly on distinguished ‘works of art’.

From Shuttleworth and Cowie’s definition it is also clear that nowadays translation includes other forms of communication, like audiovisual translation, through subtitles – and, we may add, also dubbing. Nevertheless, and also due to space considerations, we will not take these into consideration in our two volumes.

The reference to machine translation in the quotation above makes clear that today translation is not seen as exclusively a human process and that, at least in certain professional areas, input from information technology has also had an impact, through, for instance, automatic or machine-assisted translation. Moreover, thanks to advances in new technologies, today we can also incorporate into TS the contribution of corpus linguistics, which allows both theorists and translators analysis of large amounts of electronic texts, be they STs, TTs or so-called ‘parallel texts’ (the concept of ‘parallel texts’ will be tackled in the second volume, when dealing with the translation of specialized texts).

What Shuttleworth and Cowie indicate as being the most typical kind of translation – of the written text – is the focus of *Translating Text and* *Context*, which will concentrate on conventional translation between written languages, and only on ‘**interlingual** translation’, considered by Jakobson, as said in the Introduction, to be the only kind of ‘proper translation’ (Jakobson 1959/2000). Thus, following the main tendency (see, e.g., Hatim & Munday 2004; Munday 2001, to cite but two), interpreting is excluded as being more properly ‘oral translation of a spoken message or text’ (Shuttleworth & Cowie: 83).

Indeed, the famous Russian-born American linguist, Jakobson, in his seminal paper, “On linguistics aspects of translation”, distinguishes between three different kinds of translation:

1. “Intralingual”, or *rewording*;
2. “Interlingual”, or *translation proper*;
3. “Intersemiotic”, or *transmutation*

The first of these refers to “[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the **same** language” (*ibid.*: 139, *emphasis added*). In other words, the process of translation occurs within the same language, for instance between varieties or through paraphrase, etc.

The second kind concerns “[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some **other** language” (*ibid.*, *emphasis added*). In this case – Throughout the volumes, we will avoid the common term ‘original’ to refer to the text that is being turned into another language and will rather use the more technical and precise term “Source Text” (ST). We will restrict the term ‘original’ to a text *not* involved in a translation process. case of *translation proper* – the act of translation is carried out from one language to another.

The third and final kind regards “[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of **nonverbal** sign systems” (*ibid.*, *emphasis* *added*), such as for example through music or images.

We will thus exclude from our investigation both subtitling and dubbing, which function within a multimodal semiotic, and so would seem to belong more properly to the third category of Jakobson’s typology. In limiting ourselves to the examination of the ‘traditional’ kind of translation, between an exclusively written text translated from one language into another, from a systemic-functional perspective, we will be concentrating on ‘verbal’ language, i.e. “as opposed to music, dance and other languages of art”4 (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 20).

Finally, we will not include in our study those “[…] related activities which most would not recognize as translation as such” (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 181), such as translation from a metaphorical point of view or other forms of ‘transfer’ such as ‘paraphrase’, ‘pseudotranslation’, etc.

Let us go on now with our exploration of definitions of translation at different levels of systematicity. Bell starts with an informal definition of translation, which runs as follows:

*The transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as is possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text (Bell 1991: xv).*

Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) also include spoken language, which, for our purposes, as explained, will not be taken in consideration.

Clearly, every definition reflects the theoretical approach underpinning it. Bell, working within a systemic functional paradigm, even in a general description like the one above, puts forth the importance of ‘equivalence’ (see section 3.1 below for an exploration of the notion) connected with the ‘functional’ roles of the ST.

As Shuttleworth and Cowie observe (1997), throughout the history of research into translation, the phenomenon has been variously delimited by formal descriptions, echoing the frameworks of the scholars proposing them.

Thus, at the beginning of the ‘scientific’ (Newmark 1981/2) study of translation, when translation was seen merely as a strictly ‘linguistic’ operation, Catford, for instance, described it in these terms:

*[…] the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Catford 1965: 20).*

That his concern was with maintaining a kind of ‘equivalence’ between the ST and the TT is apparent.

Thirty years later, in Germany, the concept of translation as a form of ‘equivalence’ is maintained, as we can see from W. Koller’s definition:

The result of a text-processing activity, by means of which a source language text is transposed into a target-language text. Between the resultant text in L2 (the target-language text) and the source text in L1 (the source-language text) there exists a relationship, which can be designated as a translational, or equivalence relation (1995: 196).

C. Nord’s definition, conversely, clearly reflects her closeness to ‘*skopos* theory’ (Reiss and Vermeer 1984); hence the importance attributed to the purpose and function of the translation in the receiving audience.

*Translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanding function of the target text (translation skopos) (Nord 1991: 28).*

We will conclude our brief survey of definitions concerning translation with what M.A.K. Halliday takes translation to be:

*In English we use the term “translation” to refer to the total process and relationship of equivalence between two languages; we then distinguish, within translation, between “translating” (written text) and “interpreting” (spoken text). So I will use the term “translation” to cover both written and spoken equivalence; and whether the equivalence is conceived of as process or as relationship (Halliday 1992: 15).*

Halliday thus proposes distinguishing the activity of ‘translation’ (as a process) from the product(s) of ‘translating’, including both ‘translation’ (concerning written text) and ‘interpreting’ (regarding spoken text). This of course reflects his notion of ‘text’, which “[…] may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of” (Halliday in Halliday & Hasan 1985/89: 10).

**Two important terms**

Two important terms serve the purpose of distinguishing between the original language and text and the translated text and the language of the translated text. The term **source** applies to the original input text-**the source text (ST)** and the language of the text-**source language (SL).** The term **target** describes the output text-**the target text** and the language of that text-**target language- (TL).**

**Translation: process of product?**

The target text is the product of translation process and is an interesting object of study itself, but another important part of translation is the translation process itself. It is important to distinguish between the process and the product as they are two different entities, but unfortunately, the term translation is ambiguous in that it covers both.

To clarify this Bell (1991) makes a distinction between **translating, a translation, and translation**.

* **translating:** the process (the activity of turning a source language text into a target text in another language
* **a translation:** the product (basically the target text)
* **translation:** the concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process

**The concept of equivalence in translation**

Translation is a kind of cross-linguistic, cross-cultural and cross-social communication. As a kind of communication, the main purpose is nothing but to establish equivalence between the source text and the target text. In other words, as the receiver of the source message and the sender of the target message, the translator should try his best to convey all the contents of the source text into the target text, otherwise, translation as a kind of communication would end in failure. The present paper intends to elaborate on the features and necessity of equivalence in translation.

**Features of Translation Equivalence**

Translation equivalence is a principal concept in Western translation theory. It is a constitutive feature and the guiding principle of translation. As Catford points out, "the central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence." (Catford 21: 1965) Actually, since the fifties of the twentieth century, many translation theorists have involved and elaborated translation equivalence in their respective theories. However, the concept of translation equivalence is sometimes distorted, and, perhaps, this is why some people deny its validity and necessity. To argue for the necessity of translation equivalence, we should first clarify its features. First of all, it is necessary for us to understand exactly the meaning of the word "equivalence" itself.

According to Mary Snell-Hornby (17: 1988), for the last 150 years, the word "equivalence" in English has been used as a technical term in different kinds of exact sciences to refer to a number of scientific phenomena or processes. For instance, in mathematics, it indicates a relationship of absolute equality that involves guaranteed reversibility. At the same time, however, it can also be used as a common word in the general vocabulary of English, and, in this sense, it means "of similar significance". In other words, the word "equivalence" is used in the English language both as a scientific term and as a common word. As a central concept in translation theory, "equivalence" cannot be interpreted in its scientific sense. It can only be understood in its common sense as a general word. As J.R Firth points out in his writing on translation, it was in the common sense and as an item of the general language that the word "equivalence" was originally used in English translation theory.(Snell-Hornby: 17)

Philosophically speaking, there are no things that are absolutely identical. Nida expresses this view as follows:

*There are no two stones alike, no flowers the same, and no two people who are identical. Although the structures of the DNA in the nucleus of their cells may be the same, such persons nevertheless differ as the result of certain developmental factors. No two sounds are ever exactly alike, and even the same person pronouncing the same words will never utter it in an absolutely identical manner. (Nida 1986: 60)*

As far as languages are concerned, there are no two absolute synonyms within one language. Quite naturally, no two words in any two languages are completely identical in meaning. As translation involves at least two languages and since each language has its own peculiarities in phonology, grammar, vocabulary, ways of denoting experiences and reflects different cultures, any translation involves a certain degree of loss or distortion of meaning of the source text. That is to say, it is impossible to establish absolute identity between the source text and the target text. Therefore, we can say that equivalence in translation should not be approached as a search for sameness, but only as a kind of similarity or approximation, and this naturally indicates that it is possible to establish equivalence between the source text and the target text on different linguistic levels and on different degrees. In other words, different types of translation equivalence can be achieved between the source text and the target text such as phonetic equivalence, phonological equivalence, morphological equivalence, lexical equivalence, syntactical equivalence and semantic equivalence. (Le Meiyun 1989)

**Necessity of Translation Equivalence**

As translation is a kind of communication, the principal task in translation-practice is to establish equivalence of the original text in the target language. In other words, any translation involves a kind of equivalence between the source text and the target text; without equivalence of certain degrees or certain aspects, the translated text cannot be regarded as translation of the original text.

In short, equivalence is of absolute necessity in and a basic requirement of translation. This can be illustrated in the following aspects:

**Necessity of equivalence as implied in the definitions of translation**

Translation is so complex a kind of activity that to define it adequately is not an easy job. So far, various kinds of definitions have been given, some of which are quoted as follows:

1. E. Tanke, the Director of the Translation Institute at Siemens, defines translation as "the process of communication in which the translator is interposed between a transmitter and a receiver who use different languages to carry out a code conversion between them." （Huang Long 1988: 18）, and later he improves it as "transfer of a text from a source language into a text in target language, the objective being a perfect equivalence of meaning between the two texts."（Huang Long:18)
2. Peter Newmark defines translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." (Newmark 1988: 5)
3. Nida defines translation as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style." (Nida 1982: 12)
4. The traditional definition: "the process of transfer of message expressed in a source language into a message expressed in a target language, with maximization of the equivalence of one or several levels of content of the message...." (Huang Long: 19)

As can be easily seen in the above, no matter how translation is defined, the concept of equivalence is inseparable and is implied in one way or the other. In a sense, each of the above definitions is constructed round the basic concept of equivalence, or as Marry Snell-Hornby points out that definitions of translation may be regarded as variations of the concept of equivalence. (Snell-Hornby: 15) The essentiality of the concept of equivalence in any definition of translation demonstrates adequately the necessity of equivalence in translation.

**Necessity of Equivalence as Required by Essence of Translation**

Just like definitions of translation, there are also various opinions concerning the nature of translation, such as "Translation is a science." "Translation is an art.", "Translation is a language activity,” etc. However, translation, in essence, is basically a kind of communication. In history, translation has always functioned as a bridge for people who do not know foreign languages to understand the source text. As a matter of fact, translators and translation theorists worldwide have long realized the essence of translation as a kind of communication. Nida has said time and again that translating means communication. Professor Fan Zhongying has also expressed the same opinion, saying that translation is a language activity, the cardinal aim of which is to communicate. (Fan Zhongying 1994: 9)

Since translation in essence is a kind of communication, equivalence between the source text and the target text naturally becomes an essential requirement. It is generally agreed that the fundamental requirement of any kind of communication is to guarantee that the message is adequately transmitted from the source to the receptor. Similarly, in translation, the translator should try his best to reproduce the closest equivalent message of the original text in the target text so that the target text reader can understand the source message adequately; otherwise, translation as a kind of communication would end in failure. Therefore, it might be safe to say that the essence of translation as a kind of communication calls for the necessity of equivalence in translation.

**Necessity of Equivalence as Demonstrated by Limitations of Translatability and Difficulty of Translation**

When we say that something is translatable, in a sense, it means that a certain degree of equivalence of the source text can be achieved in the target language. Contrarily, when we say that something is untranslatable, it means that no equivalence of the source text can be realized in the target language. In other words, the limitations of translatability are just caused by the necessity of equivalence in translation. (Catford, 93) If translation were not to seek equivalence, there would be no limitation of translatability, and any translated text can be regarded as a correct version of the original text. Therefore, we can say that the existence of limitations of translatability well demonstrates the necessity of equivalence in translation. Likewise, the difficulty of translation sometimes arises from the necessity of equivalence in translation. It is generally agreed that translation is more difficult than original creation, and this mainly results from the requirement of equivalence in translation. In the original creation, the author is free to say whatever he wants to say and say it in whatever ways he prefers to. In translation, however, the translator does not have the freedom, because he has to say what the author has said in the original text and say it in more or less the same manner as the original author has done. Liu Zhongde, a Chinese professor, argues:

"The difficulty in translation just lies in the fact that both the content and the style are already existent in the original and as a result, you will have to do your best to reproduce them as they are in quite a different language." (Liu Zhongde 1991: 7) The necessity of equivalence in translation is also suggested in the famous remark made by Yan Fu when he exclaimed: "it often takes as long as ten days or even a whole month to establish a term in translation after repeated consideration and hesitation" (Liu Zhongde: 6) As a matter of fact, it is equivalence that connects the source text and the target text and only after the realization of equivalence of some degree or in some aspects can we say that the target text is the translation of the source text; without equivalence of some degree or in some aspects, nothing can be regarded as the (successful) translation of a certain text.

**Conclusion**

Equivalence in translation cannot be interpreted as identity in terms of its scientific sense. As we know, there are no words that have exactly the same meaning in one language. Quite naturally, no two words in any two languages are absolutely identical in meaning. As far as the whole text is concerned, it is simply impossible to transfer all the message of the original text into the target text. Therefore, equivalence in translation can only be understood as a kind of similarity or approximation. This means that equivalence between the source text and the target text can be established on different levels and in different aspects. As one of the three principal concepts in Western translation theory*,* equivalence is a constitutive feature and the guiding principle of translation. Without equivalence of certain degrees or in certain aspects, the translated text cannot be regarded as a successful translation of the original text. In short, equivalence is of absolute necessity in and a basic requirement of translation. As Catford contends, it is the central problem of translation-practice. (Catford, 21)

**Unit 2**

**Methods of Translation**

The central problem of translating has always been whether to translate literally or freely. The argument has been going on since at least the first century BC Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, many writers favored some kind of free1 translation: the spirit, not the letter; the sense not the words; the message rather than the form: the matter not the manner. This was the often revolutionary slogan of writers who wanted the truth to be read and understood. Then at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the study of cultural anthropology suggested that the linguistic barriers were insuperable and that language was entirely the product of culture, the view that translation was impossible gained some currency, and with it that, if attempted a tall, it must be as literal as possible.

The argument was theoretical: the purpose of the translation, the nature of the readership, the type of text, was not discussed. Too often, writer, translator and reader were implicitly identified with each other. Now the context has changed, but the basic problem remains.

I put it in the form of a flattened V diagram:

**SL emphasis TL emphasis**

Word for word translation Adaptation

Literal translation Free translation

Faithful translation Idiomatic translation

Semantic translation Communicative translation

**The methods**

1. **Word-for-word translation**

This is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, with The TL immediately below the SL words. The SL word-order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally. The main use of word-for-word translation is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or [o construe a difficult text as a pre-t ran slat ion process.

1. **Literal translation**

The SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problems to be solved.

1. **Faithful translation**

A faithful Translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures. It ‘transfers’ cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical ‘abnormality’ (deviation from SL norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realization of the SL writer.

1. **Semantic translation**

Semantic translation differs from ‘faithful translation’ only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value (that is, the beautiful and natural sounds of the SL text, compromising on ‘meaning’ where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. Further, it may translate less important cultural words by culturally neutral third or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents and it may make other small concessions to the readership. The distinction between ‘faithful’ and ‘semantic’ translation is that the first is uncompromising and dogmatic, while the second is more flexible, admits the creative exception to 100% fidelity and allows for the translator’s intuitive empathy with the original.

1. **Adaptation**

This is the ‘freest’ form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture converted to the TL culture and the text rewritten. The deplorable practice of having a play or poem literally translated and then rewritten by an established dramatist or poet has produced many poor adaptations, but other adaptations have ‘rescued’ period plays.

1. **Free translation**

Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original, a so-called ‘intralingual translation’, often prolix and pretentious, and not translation at all.

1. **Idiomatic translation**

Idiomatic translation reproduces the ‘message’ of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

1. **Communicative translation**

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

**Comments on the methods**

Commenting on these methods, I should first say that only semantic and communicative translation fulfill the two main aims of translation, which are first, accuracy, and second, economy. (A semantic translation is more likely to be economical than a communicative translation, unless, for the latter, the text is poorly written.) In general, a semantic translation is written at the author’s linguistic level where as a communicative at the readership’s level. Semantic translation is used for ‘expressive’ texts, communicative for ‘informative’ and ‘vocative’ texts.

Semantic and communicative translations treat the following items similarly: stock and dead metaphors, normal collocations, technical terms, slang, colloquialisms, standard notices, and ordinary language. The expressive components of ‘expressive’ texts (unusual syntactic structures, collocations, metaphors, words peculiarly used, neologisms) are rendered closely, if not literally, but where they appear in informative and vocative texts, they are normalized or toned down (except in striking advertisements). Cultural components tend to be transferred intact in expressive texts; transferred and explained with culturally neutral terms in informative texts; replaced by cultural equivalents in vocative texts. Badly and/or inaccurately written passages must remain so in translation if they are ‘expressive’, although the translator should comment on any mistakes of factual or moral truth, if appropriate. Badly and/or inaccurately written passages should be ‘corrected’ in communicative translation. Refer to ‘expressive’ as Sacred texts; ‘informative’ and ‘vocative, as ‘anonymous’ since the status of their authors is not important.

So much for the detail, but semantic and communicative translation must also be seen as wholes. Semantic translation is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, pursues nuances of meaning, yet aims at concision in order to reproduce pragmatic impact. Communicative translation is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to under-translate, to be simple, clear and brief, and is always written in a natural and resourceful style. A semantic translation is normally inferior to the original- as there is both cognitive and pragmatic loss. A communicative translation is often better than its original. At a pinch, a semantic translation has to interpret, a communicative translation to explain.

Theoretically, communicative translation allows the translator no more freedom than semantic translation. In fact, it does, since the translator is serving a putative large and not well-defined readership, whilst in semantic translation, he is following a single well defined authority, i.e. the author of the SL text.

**Unit 3**

**Translation Procedures**

While translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language. We shall now discuss these procedures, whose use always depends on a variety of contextual factors.

1. **Transference**

Transference *(*loan word, transcription) is the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure. It is the same as Catford's transference, and includes transliteration, which relates to the conversion of different alphabets: e.g. Russian (Cyrillic), Greek, Arabic, Chinese, etc- into English, The word then becomes a ‘loan word’. Some authorities deny that this is a translation procedure, but no other term is appropriate if a translator decides to use an SL word for his text, say for English and the relevant language, *decor, ambiance, Schadenfreude;* the French diplomatic words: *coup d'etat, detente, coup, attentat, demarche; dachshund, samovar, dacha*. However, when the translator has to decide whether or not to transfer a word unfamiliar in the target language, which in principle should be a SL cultural word whose referent is peculiar to the SL culture, then he usually complements it with a second translation procedure - the two procedures in harness are referred to as a ‘couplet’. Generally, only cultural ‘objects’ or concepts related to a small group or cult should be transferred.

The following are normally transferred: names of all living (except the Pope and one or two royals) and most dead people; geographical and topographical names including newly independent countries such as Zaire, Malawi, unless they already have recognized translations (see *Naturalisation* below); names of periodicals and newspapers; titles of as yet untranslated literary works, plays, films; names of private companies and institutions; names of public or nationalized institutions, unless they have recognized translations; street names, addresses, etc.

In all the above cases, a similar type of readership is assumed andwhere appropriate, a culturally-neutral TL third term, i.e. a functional equivalent, should be added,

In regional novels and essays (and advertisements), cultural words are often transferred to give local color, to attract the reader, to give a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader - sometimes the sound or the evoked image appears attractive. These same words have to be finally translated in non-literary texts (e.g. on agriculture, housing) if they are likely to remain in the TL culture and/or the target language.

There are often problems with the translation of ‘semi-cultural’ words, that is, abstract mental words which are associated with a particular period, country or individual e.g., ‘maximalism’ ‘Enlightenment.In principle, such words should first be translated, with, if necessary, the transferred word and the functional equivalent added in brackets, until you are confident that your readership recognizes and understands the word. Unfortunately such terms are often transferred for snob reasons; ‘foreign’ is posh, the word is untranslatable. But the translator’s role is to make people understand ideas (objects are not so important), not to mystify by using vogue-words. The argument in favor of transference is that it shows respect for the SL country's culture. The argument against it is that it is the translator’s job to translate, to explain.

1. **Naturalization**

This procedure succeeds transference and adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology (word-forms) of the TL.

1. **Cultural equivalence**

This is an approximate translation where a SL cultural word is translated by a TL cultural word; thus *baccalauriai* is translated as ‘(the French) “A” level’, or *Abitur (MatUTa)* as '(the German/Austrian) "A' level; *Palais Bourbon* as '(the French) Westminster; *Montecitorio* as '(the Italian) Westminster'; *charcuterie -* 'delicatessen' (now English 'deli); *notaire* - Solicitor'. The above are approximate cultural equivalents. Their translation uses are limited, since they are not accurate, but they can be used in general texts, publicity and propaganda, as well as for brief explanation to readers who are ignorant of the relevant SL culture. They have a greater pragmatic impact than culturally neutral terms. Functional cultural equivalents are even more restricted in translation, but they may occasionally be used if the term is of little importance in a popular article or popular fiction. They are important in drama, as they can create an immediate effect. ‘He met her in the pub’ *-III' a retrouvee dans le cafe.* However, the main purpose of the procedure is to support or supplement another translation procedure in a couplet.

1. **Functional equivalence**

This common procedure, applied to cultural words, requires the use of a culture-free word, sometimes with a new specific term; it therefore neutralizes or generalizes the SL word; and sometimes adds a particular thus: *baccalauriat -* French secondary school leaving exam.

This procedure, which is a cultural componential analysis, is the most accurate way of translating i.e. deculturalising a cultural word.

This procedure occupies the middle, sometimes the universal, area between the SL language or culture and the TL language or culture. If practiced one to one, it is an under-translation. If practiced one to two, it may be an over-translation. For cultural terms, it is often combined with transference: ‘*tattle’* as ‘a tax on the common people before the French Revolution, or ‘*taille’.* I refer to the combination of two translation procedures for one unit as a 'couplet'.

1. **Descriptive equivalence**

In translation, description sometimes has to be weighed against function. Thus for *machete,* the description is a ‘Latin American broad, heavy instrument’, the function is ‘cutting or aggression’; description and function are combined in ‘knife’. *Samurai* is described as ‘the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century’; its function was ‘to provide officers and administrators’, Description and function arc essential elements in explanation and therefore in translation. In translation discussion, function used to be neglected; now it tends to be overplayed.

1. **Synonymy**

Iuse the word ‘synonym’ in the sense of a near TL equivalent to an SL word in a context, where a precise equivalent may or may not exist. This procedure is used for a SL word where there is no clear one-to-one equivalent, and the word is not important in the text, in particular for adjectives or adverbs of quality; thus *personne gentille,* ‘kind’ person*.* Asynonym is only appropriate where literal translation is not possible and because the word is not important enough for componential analysis. Here economy precedes accuracy.

A translator cannot do without synonymy; he has to make do with it as a compromise, in order to translate more important segments of the text, segments of the meaning, more accurately. But unnecessary use of synonyms is a mark of many poor translations.

1. **Shifts or transpositions**

A shift or transposition is a translation procedure involving a change in the grammar from SL to TL. One type, the change from singular to plural, or in the position of the adjective: *la maison blanche,* 'the white house' is automatic and offers the translator no choice.

A second type of shift is required when an SL grammatical structure does not exist in the TL. Here there are always options.

The third type of shift is the one where literal translation is grammatically possible but may not accord with natural usage in the TL. Here Vinay and Darbelnet's pioneering book and a host of successors give their preferred translations, but often fail to list alternatives, which may be more suitable in other contexts or may merely be a matter of taste. (Grammar, being more flexible and general than lexis, can normally be more freely handled.)

1. **Compensation**

This is said to occur when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence.

1. **Componential analysis**

This is the splitting up of a lexical unit into its sense components, often one-to-two, -three or -four translations.

1. **PARAPHRASE**

This is an amplification or explanation of the meaning of a segment of the text. It is used in an ‘anonymous’ text when it is poorly written, or has important implications and omissions.

1. **Couplets**

Couplets, triplets, quadruplets combine two, three or four of the above mentioned procedures respectively for dealing with a single problem. They are particularly common for cultural words, if transference is combined with a functional or a cultural equivalent. You can describe them as two or more bites at one cherry.

You will note my reluctance to list ‘paraphrase’ as a translation procedure, since the word is often used to describe free translation. If it is used in the sense of ‘the minimal recasting of an ambiguous or obscure sentence, in order to clarify it’, I accept it.

1. **Notes, additions and glosses**

Lastly, here are some suggestions about ‘Notes’ (when and when not to use them) or supplying additional information in a translation.

The additional information a translator may have to add to his version is normally cultural (accounting for difference between SL and TL culture), technical (relating to the topic) or linguistic (explaining wayward use of words), and is dependent on the requirement of his, as opposed to the original, readership. In expressive texts such information can normally only be given outside the version, although brief concessions for minor cultural details can be made to the reader. In vocative texts, TL information tends to replace rather than supplement SLinformation.

Additional information in the translation may take various forms:

1. Within the text
2. As an alternative to the translated word
3. As an adjectival clause
4. As a noun in apposition
5. As a participial group
6. In brackets, often for a literal translation of a transferred word
7. In parentheses, the longest form of addition

Round brackets should include material that is part of the translation. Use square brackets to make corrections of material or moral fact where appropriate within the text.

Where possible, the additional information should be inserted within the text, since this does not interrupt the reader’s flow of attention. Translators tend to neglect this method too often. However, its disadvantage is that it blurs the distinction between the text and the translator’s contribution, and it cannot be used for lengthy additions.

1. Notes at bottom of page.
2. Notes at end of chapter.
3. Notes or glossary at end of book.

The remaining methods (2-4) are placed in order of preference, but notes at the bottom of the page become a nuisance when they are too lengthy and numerous; notes at the back of the book should be referenced with the book page numbers at the top. Too often I find myself reading a note belonging to the wrong chapter. Notes at the end of the chapter are often irritating if the chapters are long since they take too long to find.

Normally, any information you find in a reference book should not be used to replace any statement or stretch of the text (unless the text does not correspond to the facts) but only to supplement the text, where you think the readers are likely to find it inadequate, incomplete, or obscure.

If you are translating an important book, you should not hesitate to write a preface and notes to discuss the usage and meanings of the author's terms, particularly where you sacrificed accuracy for economy in the translation, or where there is ambiguity in the text. In the case of a scholarly work, there is no reason why the reader should not be aware of the translator's informed assistance both in the work and the comment. The artistic illusion of your non-existence is unnecessary.

**Unit Five**

**Meaning and Translation**

The semantic analysis (the study of logical or conceptual meaning), generally, must explain how the sentences of a particular language are understood, interpreted, and related to states, processes and objects in the world.

A piece of language conveys its dictionary meaning, connotations beyond the dictionary meaning, information about the social context of language use, speaker’s feelings and attitudes rubbing off of one meaning on the another meaning of the same word when it has two meanings and meaning because of habit occurrence.

Broadly speaking, ‘meaning’ means the sum total communicated through language. Words, Phrases and sentences have meanings which are studied in semantics.

Geoffrey Leech in his **‘Semantic- A Study of meaning’** (1974) breaks down meaning into seven types or ingredients giving primacy to conceptual meaning.

**Types of Meaning in Semantics**

The Seven types of meaning according to Leech are as follows.

* 1. **Conceptual or Denotative Meaning**

Conceptual meaning is also called logical or cognitive meaning. It is the basic propositional meaning which corresponds to the primary dictionary definition. Such a meaning is stylistically neutral and objective as opposed to other kinds of associative meanings. Conceptual

Meanings are the essential or core meaning while other six types are the peripheral. It is peripheral in as sense that it is non-essential. They are stylistically marked and subjective kind of meanings. Leech gives primacy to conceptual meaning because it has sophisticated organization based on the principle of contrastiveness and hierarchical structure.

E.g.

**/P/** can be described as- **voiceless + bilabial + plosive.**

Similarly

**Boy = + human + male-adult.**

The hierarchical structure of **‘Boy’ = + Human + Male-Adult**

**Or “Boy” =Human – Male/Female-adult in a rough way.**

Conceptual meaning is the literal meaning of the word indicating the idea or concept to which it refers. The concept is minimal unit of meaning which could be called ‘sememe’. As we define phoneme on the basis of binary contrast, similarly we can define sememe **‘Woman’** as = **+ human + female + adult**. If any of these attribute changes the concept cease to be the same.

Conceptual meaning deals with the core meaning of expression. It is the denotative or literal meaning. It is essential for the functioning of language. For example, a part of the conceptual meaning of **‘Needle” may be “thin”, “sharp” or “instrument”.**

The organization of conceptual meaning is based on two structural principles- Contrastiveness and the principle of structure. The conceptual meanings can be studied typically in terms of contrastive features.

For example the word “woman” can be shown as:

“**Woman = + Human, -Male, + Adult”.**

On the contrary, word

**“Boy”** can be realized as:-

**“Boy = “+ human, + male, - Adult”.**

By the principle of structure, larger units of language are built up out smaller units or smaller units or smaller units are built out larger ones.

The aim of conceptual meaning is to provide an appropriate semantic representation to a sentence or statement. A sentence is made of abstract symbols. Conceptual meaning helps us to distinguish one meaning from the meaning of other sentences. Thus, conceptual meaning is an essential part of language. A language essentially depends on conceptual meaning for communication. The conceptual meaning is the base for all the other types of meaning.

* 1. **Connotative Meaning**

Connotative meaning is the communicative value of an expression over and above its purely conceptual content. It is something that goes beyond mere referent of a word and hints at its attributes in the real world. It is something more than the dictionary meaning. Thus purely conceptual content of **‘woman’ is +human + female+ adult** but the psychosocial connotations could be **‘gregarious’**, **‘having maternal instinct’** or typical (rather than invariable) attributes of womanhood such **as ‘babbling’,’ experienced in cookery’,** ‘**skirt or dress wearing ‘etc**. Still further connotative meaning can embrace putative properties of a referent due to viewpoint adopted by individual, group, and society as a whole. So in the past woman was supposed to have attributes like frail, prone to tears, emotional, irrigational, inconstant , cowardly etc. as well as more positive qualities such gentle, sensitive, compassionate, hardworking etc. Connotations vary age to age and society to society.

**E.g.** **Old age ‘Woman’ - ‘Non-trouser wearing or sari wearing’** in Indian context must have seemed definite connotation in the past.

Present **‘Woman’---- Salwar/T-shirt/Jeans wearing.**

Some times connotation varies from person to person also

. E.g. connotations of the word ‘woman’ for misogynist and a person of feminist vary.

The boundary between conceptual and connotative seems to be analogous. Connotative meaning is regarded as incidental, comparatively unstable, in determinant, open ended, variable according to age, culture and individual, whereas conceptual meaning is not like that . It can be codified in terms of limited symbols.

* 1. **Social Meaning**

The meaning conveyed by the piece of language about the social context of its use is called the social meaning. The decoding of a text is dependent on our knowledge of stylistics and other variations of language. We recognize some words or pronunciation as being dialectical i.e. as telling us something about the regional or social origin of the speaker. Social meaning is related to the situation in which an utterance is used.

It is concerned with the social circumstances of the use of a linguistic expression. For example, some dialectic words inform us about the regional and social background of the speaker. In the same way, some stylistic usages let us know something of the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer

E.g**. “I ain’t done nothing**”

The line tells us about the speaker and that is the speaker is probably a black American, underprivileged and uneducated. Another example can be

**“Come on yaar, be a sport. Don’t be Lallu”**

The social meaning can be that of Indian young close friends.

Stylistic variation represents the social variation. This is because styles show the geographical region social class of the speaker. Style helps us to know about the period, field and status of the discourse. Some words are similar to others as far as their conceptual meaning is concerned. But they have different stylistic meaning. For example, ‘steed ’, ‘horse and ‘nag’ are synonymous. They all mean a kind of animal i.e. Horse. But they differ in style and so have various social meaning. ‘Steed’ is used in poetry; ‘horse’ is used in general, while ‘nag’ is slang. The word ‘Home’ can have many use also like domicile ( official), residence (formal) abode (poetic) , home (ordinary use).

Stylistic variation is also found in sentence. For example, two criminals will express the following sentence

**“They chucked the stones at the cops and then did a bunk with the look”**

(Criminals after the event)

But the same ideas will be revealed by the chief inspector to his officials by the following sentence.

**“After casting the stones at the police, they abandoned with money.”**

(Chief Inspector in an official report)

Thus through utterances we come to know about the social facts, social situation, class, region, and speaker-listener relations by its style and dialect used in sentences.

The illocutionary force of an utterance also can have social meaning. According to the social situation, a sentence may be uttered as request, an apology, a warning or a threat, for example, the sentence,

**“I haven’t got a knife”** has the common meaning in isolation. But the sentence uttered to waiter mean a request for a knife’

Thus we can understand that the connotative meaning plays a very vital role in the field of semantics and in understanding the utterances and sentences in different context.

* 1. **Affective or Emotive Meaning**

For some linguists it refers to emotive association or effects of words evoked in the reader, listener. It is what is conveyed about the personal feelings or attitude towards the listener.

E.g. **‘home’ for a sailor/soldier or expatriate**

and **‘mother’ for a motherless child,** a married woman (esp. in Indian context) will have special effective, emotive quality.

In affective meaning, language is used to express personal feelings or attitude to the listener or to the subject matter of his discourse.

For Leech affective meaning refers to what is convey about the feeling and attitude of the speak through use of language (attitude to listener as well as attitude to what he is saying). Affective meaning is often conveyed through conceptual, connotative content of the words used

E.g**. “you are a vicious tyrant and a villainous reprobation and I hate you”**

**Or “I hate you, you idiot”.**

We are left with a little doubt about the speaker’s feelings towards the listener. Here speaker seems to have a very negative attitude towards his listener. This is called affective meaning.

But very often we are more discreet (cautious) and convey our attitude indirectly.

**E.g. “I am terribly sorry but if you would be so kind as to lower your voice a**

**little”**

Conveys our irritation in a scaled down manner for the sake of politeness. Intonation and voice quality are also important here. Thus the sentence above can be uttered in biting sarcasm and the impression of politeness maybe reversed while –

**e.g.**

**“Will you belt up?”**- can be turned into a playful remark between intimates if said with the intonation of a request.

Words like darling, sweetheart or hooligan, vandal have inherent emotive quality and they can be used neutrally.

I.A. Richards argued that emotive meaning distinguishes literature or poetic language from factual meaning of science. Finally it must be noted that affective meaning is largely a parasitic category. It overlaps heavily with style, connotation and conceptual content.

**4.5 Reflected Meaning**

Reflected meaning and collocative meaning involve interconnection

At the lexical level of language, Reflected meaning arises when a word has more than one conceptual meaning or multiple conceptual meaning. In such cases while responding to one sense of the word we partly respond to another sense of the word too. Leech says that in church service ‘the comforter and the Holy Ghost ’refer to the third in Trinity. They are religious words. But unconsciously there is a response to their non-religious meanings too. Thus the ‘comforter’ sounds warm and comforting while the ‘Ghost’ sounds ‘awesome’ or even ‘dreadful’. One sense of the word seems to rub off on another especially through relative frequency and familiarity (e.g. a ghost is more frequent and familiar in no religious sense.).

In poetry too we have reflected meaning as in the following lines from **‘Futility’**

**‘Are limbs so dear achieved, are sides,**

**Full nerved still warm-too hard to stir’**

Owen here uses **‘dear’** in the sense of expensiveness. - But the sense of beloved is also eluded.

E.g. **Daffodils**

**“Thou could not but be gay**

**In such jocund company”**

The word **‘gay’** was frequently used in the time of William Wordsworth but the word now is used for ‘**homosexuality’.**

In such type cases of multiple meaning, one meaning of the word pushes the other meaning to the background. Then the dominant suggestive power of that word prevails. This may happen because of the relative frequency or familiarity of the dominant meaning. This dominant meaning which pushes the other meaning at the background is called the reflected meaning.

Reflected meaning is also found in taboo words. For examples, are terms like erection, intercourse, ejaculation The word **‘intercourse’** immediately reminds us of its association with sex (sexual intercourse). The sexual association of the word drives away its innocent sense, i.e. **‘communication’**. The taboo sense of the word is so dominant that its non-taboo sense almost dies out. In some cases, the speaker avoids the taboo words and uses their alternative word in order to avoid the unwanted reflected meaning. For example, as Bloomfield has pointed out, the word **‘Cock’** is replaced by speakers, they use the word **‘rooster’** to indicate the general meaning of the word and avoid its taboo sense. These words have non-sexual meanings too. (E.g. erection of a building, ejaculate-throw out somebody) but because of their frequency in the lit of the physiology of sex it is becoming difficult to use them in their innocent/nonsexual sense.

Thus we can see that reflected meaning has great importance in the study of semantics.

**4.6 Collocative Meaning**

Collocative meaning is the meaning which a word acquires in the company of certain words. Words collocate or co-occur with certain words only e.g. Big business not large or great. Collocative meaning refers to associations of a word because of its usual or habitual co-occurrence with certain types of words. **‘Pretty’** and **‘handsome’** indicate **‘good looking’.**

However, they slightly differ from each other because of collocation or co-occurrence. The word **‘pretty’** collocates with – **girls, woman, village, gardens, flowers, etc**.

On the other hand, the word **‘handsome’** collocates with – **‘boys’ men, etc**. so **‘pretty woman’ and ‘handsome man’**. While different kinds of attractiveness, hence ‘handsome woman’ may mean attractive but in a mannish way. The verbs **‘wander’** and **‘stroll’** are quasi-synonymous- they may have almost the same meaning but while ‘cows may wonder into another farm’, they don’t stroll into that farm because **‘stroll’** collocates with human subject only. Similarly one ‘trembles with fear’ but ‘quivers with excitement’. Collocative meanings need to be invoked only when other categories of meaning don’t apply. Generalizations can be made in case of other meanings while collocative meaning is simply on idiosyncratic property of individual words. Collocative meaning has its importance and it is a marginal kind of category.

**4.7 Thematic Meaning**

It refers to what is communicated by the way in which a speaker or a writer organizes the message in terms of ordering focus and emphasis .Thus active is different from passive though its conceptual meaning is the same. Various parts of the sentence also can be used as subject, object or complement to show prominence. It is done through focus, theme (topic) or emotive emphasis. Thematic meaning helps us to understand the message and its implications properly. For example, the following statements in active and passive voice have same conceptual meaning but different communicative values.

**e.g.**

**1) Mrs. Smith donated the first prize**

2) **The first prize was donated by Mrs. Smith**.

In the first sentence **“who gave away the prize** “is more important, but in the second sentence **“what did Mrs. Smith gave is important”.** Thus the change of focus change the meaning also.

The first suggests that we already know Mrs. Smith (perhaps through earlier mention) its known/given information while it’s new information.

Alternative grammatical construction also gives thematic meaning. For example,

**1) He likes Indian good most.**

**2) Indian goods he likes most**

3) **It is the Indian goods he likes most**.

Like the grammatical structures, stress and intonation also make the message prominent. For example, the contrastive stress on the word **‘cotton’** in the following sentence give prominence to the information

1. **John wears a cotton shirt**
2. **The kind of shirt that john wears is cotton one.**

Thus sentences or pairs of sentences with similar conceptual meaning differ their communicative value. This is due to different grammatical constructions or lexical items or stress and intonations. Therefore they are used in different contents.

**“Ten thousand saw I at a glance”**

Wordsworth here inverts the structure to focus on **‘ten thousand”**

Sometimes thematic contrast i.e. contrasts between given and new information can be conveyed by lexical means.

**e.g.**

**1) John owns the biggest shop in London**

**2) The biggest shop in London belongs to John.**

The ways we order our message also convey what is important and what not. This is basically thematic meaning.

**Associative Meaning**:

Leech uses this as an umbrella term for the remaining 5 types of meanings( connotative, social, affective, reflective and collocative).All these have more in common with connotative than conceptual meaning. They all have the same open ended, variable character and can be analyzed in terms of scales or ranges ( more/less) than in either or contrastive terms. These meanings contain many imponderable factors. But conceptual meaning is stable

**Summary of Seven Types of Meaning**

1. **Conceptual Meaning:** Logical, cognitive or connotative content.
2. **Connotative Meaning:** What is communicated by virtue of what language refers
3. **Social Meaning:** What is communicated of the social circumstances of Language
4. **Affective Meaning:** What is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the Speaker through language.
5. **Reflected Meaning:** What is communicated through associations with another Sense of the same world.
6. **Collocative Meaning:** What is communicated through associations with words which co-occur with another word.
7. **Thematic Meaning:** What is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis.

**Unit Six**

**Translation and Culture**

Culture can be defined as the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression. More specifically, I distinguish 'cultural' from 'universal’ and 'personal’ language.

**Cultural, universal and personal languages**

*Die, live, star, swim* and even almost virtually ubiquitous artifacts (objects made by human beings) like *mirror* and *table* are universals. Usually there is no translation problem there.

*Monsoon*, *steppe*, *dacha*, *tagliatelle* are cultural words - there will be a translation problem unless there is cultural overlap between the source and the target language.

And if a person expresses himself in a personal way – “You’re *weaving* (creating conversation) as usual”, “His ‘underlife’ (personal qualities and private life) is evident in that poem”, “and He’s a *monologger”* (never finishes the sentence) – the person uses personal, not immediately social, language. This is often called idiolect, and there is normally a translation problem.

Note that operationally I do not regard language as a component or feature of culture. If it were so, translation would be impossible. Language does however contain all kinds of cultural deposits, in the grammar (genders of inanimate nouns), forms of address (like *እርሶ)* as well as the lexis (the sun sets) which are not taken account of in universal either in consciousness or translation. Further, the more specific a language becomes for natural phenomena (e.g., flora and fauna) the more it becomes embedded in cultural features, and therefore creates translation problems.

Most “cultural” words are easy to detect, since they are associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated but many cultural customs are described in ordinary language (“topping out a building”, “time, gentlemen, please”, “mud in your eye), where literal translation would distort the meaning and a translation may include an appropriate descriptive-functional equivalent. Cultural objects may be referred to by a relatively culture-free generic term or classifier (e.g. “tea”) plus the various additions in different cultures, and you have to account for these additions: “lemon”, “milk”, “biscuits”, “cake”, other courses, various times of day) which may appear in the course of the SL text.

**CULTURAL CATEGORIES**

However, in this chapter 1 shall be discussing the translation of 'foreign\* cultural words in the narrow sense. Adapting Nida, I shall categorize them and offer some typical examples:

1. *Ecology*

Flora, fauna, winds, plains, hills: “honeysuckle”, “downs”, “sirocco”, “pampas”, *tabuleiros* (low plateau), “plateau”, *selva* (tropical rain forest), “savanna”, “paddy field”

1. *Material culture* (artifacts)
2. Food: “zabaglione”, “sake”, *Kaiserschmarren*
3. Clothes: “anorak”, *kanga* (Africa), *sarong* (South Seas), *dhoti* (India)
4. Houses and towns: *kampong, bourg, bourgade* “chalet”, “low-rise”, “tower”
5. Transport: “bike”, “rickshaw”, “Moulton”, *cabriolett* “tilbury”, *caliche*
6. *Social culture -* work and leisure

*ajaki amah, condotttere, biwa, sithar, raga,* “reggae”, “rock”

1. *Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts*
2. Political and administrative
3. Religious: *dharma, karma,* “temple”
4. Artistic
5. *Gestures and habits*

“Cock a snook”, “spitting”

**GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A few general considerations govern the translation of all cultural words. First, your ultimate consideration should be recognition of the cultural achievements referred to in the SL text, and respect for all foreign countries and their cultures. Two translation procedures which are at opposite ends of the scale are normally available; **transference**, which, usually in literary texts, offers local color and atmosphere, and in specialist texts enables the readership (some of whom may be more or less familiar with the SL) to identify the referent - particularly a name or a concept - in other texts (or conversations) without difficulty. However, transference, though it is brief and concise, blocks comprehension, it emphasizes the culture and excludes the message, does not communicate; some would say it is not a translation procedure at all. At the other end, there is **componential analysis**, the most accurate translation procedure, which excludes the culture and highlights the message. Componential analysis is based on a component common to the SL and the TL**,** say in the case of *dacha,* “house”, to which you add the extra contextual distinguishing components (“for the wealthy”, “summer residence”*).* Inevitably, a componential analysis is not as economical and has not the pragmatic impact of the original. Lastly, the translator of a cultural word, which is always less context-bound than ordinary language, has to bear in mind both the motivation and the cultural specialist (in relation to the text's topic) and linguistic level of the readership.

**ECOLOGY**  
Geographical features can be normally distinguished from other cultural terms in that they are usually value-free, politically and commercially. Nevertheless, their diffusion depends on the importance of their country of origin as well as their degree of specificity. Thus 'plateau' is not perceived as a cultural word, and has long been adopted in Russian, German and English, but translated in Spanish and usually Italian *(mesa, altipiano).* Many countries have 'local' words for plains -'prairies', 'steppes', 'tundras', 'pampas’, 'savannahs', 'llanos', *campos,* *paramos,* and ‘bush’- all with strong elements of local color. Their familiarity is a function of the importance and geographical or political proximity of their countries. All these words would normally be transferred, with the addition of a brief culture-free third term where necessary in the text. This applies too to the ‘technical’ *tabuleiros* (Brazilian low plateau) if one assumes that the SL writer would not mention them if he does not attach importance to them.

Thatsame criteria apply to other ecological features, unless they are important commercially — consider ‘pomelo’, 'avocado', 'guava, 'kumquat', 'mango', 'passion fruit', ‘tamarind’ - when they become more or less a lexical item in the 'importing' TL (but note 'passion fruit’, *passifiore, Passionsfrucht) -* and may be subject to naturalization: *mangue, tamarin, avocat* (Sp. *aguacate)* particularly as here, in French.

Nida has pointed out that certain ecological features - the seasons, rain, and hills of various sizes where they are irregular or unknown may not be understood denotatively or figuratively, in translation. However, here, television will soon be a worldwide clarifying force.

**MATERIAL CULTURE**

Food is for many the most sensitive and important expression of national culture; food terms are subject to the widest variety *of* translation procedures. Various settings: menus - straight, multilingual, glossed; cookbooks, food guides; tourist brochures; journalism increasingly contain foreign food terms. Whilst commercial and prestige interests remain strong, the unnecessary use of French words (even though they originated as such, after the Norman invasion, 900 years ago) is still prevalent for prestige reasons (or simply to demonstrate that the chef is French, or that the recipe is French, or because a combination such as 'Foyot veal chops with Perigiueux sauce' is clumsy). Certainly it is strange that the generic words *hors tfoeuvre, entree, eniremets* hold out, particularly as all three are ambiguous: 'salad mixture’ or Starter'; 'first' *or* ‘main course’; light course between two heavy courses' *or* ‘dessert’ (respectively). In principle, one can recommend translation for words with recognized one-to-one equivalents and transference, plus a neutral term, for the rest (e,g. s 'the pasta dish' - cannelloni) - for the general readership.

In fact, all French dishes can remain in French if they are explained in the recipes. Consistency for a text and the requirements of the client here precede other circumstances. For English, other food terms are in a different category. Macaroni came over in 1600, spaghetti in 1880, ravioli and pizza are current; many other Italian and Greek terms may have to be explained. Food terms have normally been transferred, only the French making continuous efforts to naturalize them *(rosbif, choucroute).*

Traditionally, upper-class men's clothes are English and women's French (note 'slip', ‘bra') but national costumes when distinctive are not translated, e.g., *sari,* *kimono, yukata, dirndl* 'jeans' (which is an internationalism, and an American symbol like 'coke'), *kaftanjubbah.*

Clothes as cultural terms may be sufficiently explained for TL general readers if the generic noun or classifier is added. If the particular is of no interest, the generic word can simply replace it. However, it has to be borne in mind that the function of the generic clothes terms is approximately constant, indicating the part of the body that is covered, but the description varies depending on climate and material used. Again, many language communities have a typical house which for general purposes remains untranslated: *palazzo* (large house); *hotel* (large house); ‘chalet’, 'bungalow', *hacienda, panda, posada, pension,* French shows cultural focus on towns by having *ville bourgzmi* *bourgade* (cf. *borgo, borgata, paese)* which have no corresponding translations into English. French has 'exported’ *salon* to German and has 'imported' *living* or *living* *room.*

Transport is dominated by American and the car, a female pet in English, a 'bus', a 'motor', a 'crate', a sacred symbol in many countries of sacred private property. American English has 26 words for the car. The system has spawned new features with their neologisms: ‘lay-by’, 'roundabout' ('traffic circle'), ‘fly-over’, 'interchange' *(eckangeur),* There are many vogue-words produced not only by innovations but by the salesman's talk, and many anglicisms. In fiction, the names of various carriages *(calecke, cabriolet,* 'tilbury, ‘andau’, 'coupe’, 'phaeton') are often used to provide local color and to connote prestige; in text books on transport, an accurate description has to be appended to the transferred word. Now, the names of planes and cars are often near-internationalisms for educated (?) readerships: 747', 727s, DC-IO1, 'jumbo jet\ 'Mini', 'Metro', 'Ford', ‘BMW’, 'Volvo'.

Notoriously the species of flora and fauna are local and cultural, and are not translated unless they appear in the SL and TL environment ('red admiral’, *vulcain,* *Admiral).* For technical texts, the Latin botanical and zoological classifications can be used as an international language, e.g., ‘common snail’, *helix aspersa.*

**SOCIAL CULTURE**

In considering social culture one has to distinguish between denotative and connotative problems of translation. Thus *ckarcuterie, droguerie, patisserie,* *chapellerie, chocolaterie, Kondiwrei* hardly exist in Anglophone countries. There is rarely a translation problem, since the words can be transferred, have approximate one-to-one translation or can be functionally denned, 'pork-butcher'/hardware', 'cake' or 'hat' or 'chocolate' 'shop', 'cake shop with cafe'. Whilst many trades are swallowed up in super- and hypermarkets and shopping centers and precincts *(centre commercial, zone* *pitonmerey Einkaufszenvrum)* crafts may revive. As a translation problem, this contrasts with the connotative difficulties of words like: 'the people'; 'the common people'; 'the masses'; 'the working class' *la classe ouvriere;* 'the proletariat'; 'the working classes'; 'the hoi polloi' *Cihe piebsy, les gens du commun; la plebe;* 'the lower orders'; *classes infirieures.* Note that archaisms such as the last expressions can still be used ironically, or humorously, therefore put in inverted commas, that 'the working class' still has some political resonance in Western Europe amongst the left, and even more so in Eastern Europe; though it may disappear in the tertiary sector, 'proletariat' was always used mainly for its emotive effect, and now can hardly be used seriously, since the majorities in developed countries are property-owning. 'The masses' and 'the people' can be used positively and negatively, but again are more rarely used. 'The masses' have become swallowed up in collocations such as 'mass media' and ‘mass market’. Ironically, the referent of these terms is no longer poor, a toiler or a factory worker. The poor remain the out-of-work minority. The political terms have been replaced by *la base, die Base,* 'the rank and file', 'the grass roots’, the bottom of the bureaucracies.

The obvious cultural words that denote leisure activities in Europe are the national games with their lexical sets: cricket, bull-fighting, *boule, petanque,* and hockey. To these must be added the largely English non-team games: tennis, snooker, squash, badminton, fives, and a large number of card-games, the gambling games and their lexical sets being French in casinos.

**SOCIAL ORGANISATION - POLITICAL AND** **ADMINISTRATIVE**

The political and social life of a country is reflected in its institutional terms. Where the title of a head of state ('President', 'Prime Minister', ‘King’) or the name of a parliament *(Assembler Nationale? Camera dei Deputati* or 'Senate') are 'transparent', that is, made up of 'international' or easily translated morphemes; they are through-translated ('National Assembly', 'Chamber of Deputies'). Where the name of a parliament is not 'readily' translatable *(Bundestag (Germany); Storting* (Norway); *Sejm* (Poland); *Riksdag* (Sweden); *Eduskunta* (Finland); *Knesset* (Israel), it has a recognized official translation for administrative documents (e.g,, 'German Federal Parliament' for *Bundestag,* 'Council of Constituent States' for *Bundesrat)* but is often transferred for an educated readership (e.g,, *Bundestag)* and glossed for a general readership ('West German Parliament'). A government inner circle is usually designated as a 'cabinet' or a 'council of ministers' and may informally be referred to by the name of the capital city. Some ministries and other political institutions and parties may also be referred to by their familiar alternative terms, i.e., the name of the building *-Elysee, Hotel* *Matignon, Palais Bourbon*, 'Pentagon', 'White House', *Momecitorio,* 'Westminster' –or the streets- 'Whitehall', ‘Via delle Borteghe Oscure’ (Italian Communist Party), '(10) Downing Street' - where they are housed.

Names of ministries are usually literally translated, provided they are appropriately descriptive. Therefore 'Treasury' becomes 'Finance Ministry'; 'Home Office', 'Ministry of the Interior’; ‘attorney- general, 'chief justice’, or the appropriate cultural equivalent; 'Defense Ministry', 'Ministry of National Defense'. Translations such as 'Social Domain' and 'Exchange Domain' (Guinea) should be replaced by ‘Social Affairs’ and ‘Trade’.

When a public body has a 'transparent' name,the translation depends on the 'setting': in official documents, and in serious publications such as textbooks, the title is transferred and, where appropriate, literally translated. Informally, it could be translated by a cultural equivalent, e.g., 'the French Electricity Board' or 'the Postal Services'.

Where a public body or organization has an ‘opaque’ name - say, *Maison de la* *Culture,* ‘British Council’, 'National Trust', ‘Arts Council’, *Goethe-Institut,* - the translator has first to establish whether there is a recognized translation and secondly whether it will be understood by the readership and is appropriate in the setting; if not, in a formal informative text, the name should be transferred, and a functional, culture-free equivalent given *(Maison de la Culture,* ‘arts centre’); such an equivalent may have to extend over a word-group: ‘National Trust’, *organization* *chargee de la conservation des monuments et pares nationaux (britanniques),* in some cases, a cultural equivalent may be adequate: ‘British Council’, *Alliance jranqaise*, *Goethe-Institute,* but in ail doubtful cases, the functional equivalent is preferable, e.g., 'national organization responsible for promoting English language and British culture  
abroad'; the description (e.g., the composition and manner of appointment of the body) should only be added if the readership requires it; a literal translation or neologism must be avoided. If the informative text is informal or colloquial, it may not be necessary to transfer the organization’s name. The cultural (or, if this is non-existent, the functional) equivalent may be sufficient- For impact and for neatness, but not for accuracy, a TL cultural equivalent of an SL cultural term is always more effective than a culturally free functional equivalent but it may be particularly misleading for legal terms, depending on the context. "A" level' for the *bac* has all the warmth of a metaphor, but there are wide differences. One assumes that any series of local government institutions and posts should be transferred when the terms are unique *(rdgion, dipartemeni arrondisse-ment, canton?* *commune)* and consistency is required. 'Mayor', *maire, Burgermeister*', *sindaco* translate each other, although their functions differ. *Giunta* ('junta') is usually transferred though, being an executive body usually elected from a larger council, 'board' is the nearest English equivalent; this becomes *junte* in French, though used only for non-French institutions. Ironically, the caution about *faux amis* applies to 'dictionary' rather than 'encyclopedia' words. Thus, ‘prefect’, 'secretary' and *Conseil* *d'Etai (consiglio di stato)* but not 'tribunal' tends to translate each other, although their functions differ,

The intertranslability of single words with Graeco-Latin morphemes extends through political parties to political concepts. Within the frame of right, centre and left, about twenty words make up the names of most of the political parties of Europe, East and West. Whilst concepts such as 'liberalism' and 'radicalism' each have a hazy common core of meaning, they are strongly affected by the political tradition of their countries, not to mention the confusion of ideas that either identify or polarize socialism and communism. Here the translator may have to explain wide conceptual differences (e.g., 'the Italian Liberal Party is right wing', 'the British - left of centre’; 'the French right is liberal').

In general, the more serious and expert the readership, particularly of textbooks, reports and academic papers, the greater the requirement for transference - not only of cultural and institutional terms, but of titles, addresses and words used in a special sense. In such cases, you have to bear in mind that the readership may be more or less acquainted with the source language, may only be reading your translation as they have no access to the original, may wish to contact the writer of the SL text, to consult his other works, to write to the editor or publisher of the original- Within the limits of comprehension, the more that is transferred and the less that is translated, then the closer the sophisticated reader can get to the sense of the original - this is why, when any important word is being used in a special or a delicate sense in a serious text, a serious translator, after attempting a translation, will add the SL word in brackets, signaling his inability to find the right TL word and inviting the reader to envisage the gap mentally (e.g., any translation of Heidegger, Husserl, Gramsci). No wonder Mounin wrote that the only pity about a translation is that it is not the original. A translator's basic job is to translate and then, if he finds his translation inadequate, to help the reader to move a little nearer to the meaning.

**Historical terms**

Up to now I have been discussing the translation of modern institutional terms. In the case of historical institutional terms, say, *procureur-general? le Grand Sifcte, I'Ancien* *Regime, Siicle des Lumieres^ Anschluss, Kulturkampf, intendant, ispravnik, zemstvo,* *obshchina, duma,* the first principle is not to translate them, whether the translation makes sense (is 'transparent’) or not (is ‘opaque'), unless they have generally accepted translations. In academic texts and educated writing, they are usually (e.g., all the above except *Steele des Lumieres,* lthe Age of Enlightenment’) transferred, with, where appropriate, a functional or descriptive term with as much descriptive detail as is required. In popular texts, the transferred word can be replaced by the functional or descriptive term.

**International terms**

International institutional terms usually have recognised translations which are in fact through-translations, and are now generally known by their acronyms; thus 'WHO'jOMS *(Organisation Mondialede la* *Sant€), WGO (Weltgesundheitsorganisa-tion);* ILO, *BIT (Bureau International du* *Travail), IAA (Internationales Arbeitsami),* In other cases, the English acronvm prevails and becomes a quasi-inter nationalism, not always resisted in French ('UNESCO', 'FAO\ 'UNRRA\ 'UNICEF'),

Ironically, whilst there is a uniquely platitudinous international vocabulary of Marxism and communism which offers translation problems only in the case of a few writers like Gramsci, the only international communist organisations are CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance - Comecon), the Warsaw Pact, which appears to have no official organisation, and the International Bank for Economic Co-operation *(Internationale Bank fur wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit* -*IBWZ).* The others - WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions - German *WGB)* and World Peace Council (German *RWF)* etc- - appear to have fallen into decline.

**Religious terms**

In religious language the proselytizing activities of Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church and the Baptists, are reflected in manifold translation *(Saint-Siege,* *Papsilicker Stuhl).* The language of the other world religions tends to be transferred when it becomes of TL interest, the commonest words being naturalised ('Pharisees')- American Bible scholars and linguists have been particularly exercised by cultural connotation due to the translation of similes of fruit and husbandry into languages where they are inappropriate.

**Artistic terms**

The translation of artistic terms referring to movements, processes and organizations generally depends on the putative knowledge of the readership. For educated readers, ‘opaque’, names such as ‘the Leipzig *Gewandhaus’* and ‘the Amsterdam *Concertgebouw’* are transferred, ‘the Dresden *Staatskapelle’* hovers between transference and ‘state orchestra’; 'transparent' names (‘the Berlin’, ‘the Vienna, 'the London' philharmonic orchestras, etc.) are translated. Names of buildings, museums, theatres, opera houses, are likely to be transferred as well as translated, since they form part of street plans and addresses. Many terms in art and music remain Italian, but French in ballet (e.g., *fouette-, pas de deux). Art nouveau* in English and French becomes *Jugendstil* in German and *stile liberty* in Italian. The *Bauhaus* and *Neue* *Sacklichkeit* (sometimes ‘New Objectivity’), being opaque, are transferred but the various -isms are naturalised, (but usually *tachisme)* even though 'Fauvism’ is opaque. Such terms tend to transference when they are regarded *n&faits de civilisation,* i.e., cultural features, and to naturalisation if their universality is accepted.

**GESTURES AND HABITS**

For 'gestures and habits’ there is a distinction between description and function which can be made where necessary in ambiguous cases: thus, if people smile a little when someone dies, do a slow hand-clap to express warm appreciation, spit as a blessing, nod to dissent or shake their head to assent, kiss their finger tips to greet or to praise, give a thumbs-up to signal OK, all of which occur in some cultures and not in others.

Summarizing the translation of cultural words and institutional terms, I suggest that here, more than in any other translation problems, the most appropriate solution depends not so much on the collocations or the linguistic or situational context (though these have their place) as on the readership (of whom the three types - expert, educated generalize and uninformed *-* will usually require three different translations) and on the setting.

**Unit Four**

**The Translator and the Communication Process Made by the Translator**

**Who are translators?**

What does it take to be a translator or interpreter? What kind of person would even want to, let alone be able to, sit at a computer or in court day after day turning words and phrases in one language into words and phrases in another? Isn't this an awfully tedious and unrewarding profession?

It can be. For many people it is. Some people who love it initially get tired of it, burn out on it, and move on to other endeavors. Others can only do it on the side, a few hours a day or a week or even a month: they are writers or teachers or editors by day, but for an hour every evening, or for an afternoon one or two Saturdays a month, they translate, sometimes for money, sometimes for fun, mostly (one hopes) for both. If a really big job comes along and the timing and money are right, they will spend a whole week translating, eight to ten hours a day; but at the end of that week they feel completely drained and are ready to go back to their regular work.

Other people, possibly even the majority (though to my knowledge there are no statistics on this), translate full time — and don't burn out. How do they do it? What skills do they possess that makes it possible for them to "become" doctors, lawyers, engineers, poets, business executives, even if only briefly and on the computer screen? Are they talented actors who feel comfortable shifting from role to role? How do they know so much about specialized vocabularies? Are they walking dictionaries and encyclopedias? Are they whizzes at *Trivial Pursuit?*

These are the questions we'll be exploring throughout the book; but briefly, yes, translators and (especially) interpreters do all have something of the actor in them, the mimic, the impersonator, and they do develop remarkable recall skills that will enable them to remember a word (often in a foreign language) that they have heard only once. Translators and interpreters are voracious and omnivorous readers, people who are typically in the middle of four books at once, in several languages, fiction and nonfiction, technical and humanistic subjects, anything and everything. They are hungry for real-world experience as well, through travel, living abroad for extended periods, learning foreign languages and cultures, and above all paying attention to how people use language all around them: the plumber, the kids' teachers, the convenience store clerk, the doctor, the bartender, friends and colleagues from this or that region or social class, and so on. Translation is often called a profession of second choice: many translators were first professionals in other fields, sometimes several other fields in succession, and only turned to translation when they lost or quit those jobs or moved to a country where they were unable to practice them; as translators they often mediate between former colleagues in two or more different language communities. Any gathering of translators is certain to be a diverse group, not only because well over half of the people there will be from different countries, and almost all will have lived abroad, and all will shift effortlessly in conversation from language to language, but because by necessity translators and interpreters carry a wealth of different "selves" or "personalities" around inside them, ready to be reconstructed on the computer screen whenever a new text arrives, or out into the airwaves whenever a new speaker steps up to the podium. A crowd of translators always seems much bigger than the actual bodies present.

But then there are non-translators who share many of these same characteristics: diplomats, language teachers, world travelers . . . What special skills make a well-traveled, well-read language lover a translator?

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the primary characteristics of a good translator are similar to the expectations translation users have for the ideal translation: a good translator is reliable and fast, and will work for the going rate. From an internal point of view, however, the expectations for translation are rather different than they look from the outside. For the translator, reliability is important mainly as a source of professional pride, which also includes elements that are of little or no significance to translation users; speed is important mainly as a source of increased income, which can be enhanced through other channels as well; and it is extremely important, perhaps even most important of all, that the translator enjoy the work, a factor that is of little significance to outsiders. Let's consider these three "internal" requirements in order: professional pride, income, and enjoyment.

**Professional pride**

From the user's point of view, it is essential to be able to rely on translation — not only on the text, but on the translator as well, and generally on the entire translation process. Because this is important to the people who pay the bills, it will be important to the translator as well; the pragmatic considerations of keeping your job (for in-house people) or continuing to get offered jobs (for freelancers) will mandate a willingness to satisfy an employer's or client's needs.

But for the translator or interpreter a higher consideration than money or continued employability is professional pride, professional integrity, professional self-esteem. We all want to feel that the job we are doing is important, that we do it well, and that the people we do it for appreciate our work. Most people, in fact, would rather take professional pride in a job that pays less than get rich doing things they don't believe in. Despite the high value placed on making a lot of money (and certainly it would be nice!), a high salary gives little pleasure without pride in the work.

The areas in and through which translators typically take professional pride are reliability, involvement in the profession, and ethics.

***Reliability***

Reliability in translation is largely a matter of meeting the user's needs: translating the texts the user needs translated, in the way the user wants them translated, by the user's deadline. The demands placed on the translator by the attempt to be reliable from the user's point of view are sometimes impossible; sometimes disruptive to the translator's private life; sometimes morally repugnant; often physically and mentally exhausting. If the demands are at all possible, however, in many or even most cases the translator's desire to take professional pride in reliability will override these other considerations, and s/he will stay up all night doing a rush job, cancel a pleasant evening outing with a friend, or translate a text reliably that s/he finds morally or politically loathsome.

Professional pride in reliability is the main reason we will spend hours hunting down a single term. What is our pay for that time? Virtually nothing. But it feels enormously important to *get it right:* to find exactly the right term, the right spelling, the right phrasing, the right register. Not just because the client expects it; also because if you didn't *do it right,* your professional pride and job satisfaction would be diminished.

***Involvement in the profession***

It is a matter of little or no concern to translation users, but of great importance to translators, what translator associations or unions we belong to, what translator conferences we go to, what courses we take in the field, how we network with other translators in our region and language pair(s). These "involvements" sometimes help translators translate better, which is important for users and thus for the pride we take in reliability. More crucially, however, they help us feel better about being translators; they enhance our professional self-esteem, which will often sustain us emotionally through boring and repetitive and low-paid jobs. Reading about translation, talking about translation with other translators, discussing problems and solutions related to linguistic transfer, user demands, nonpayment, and the like, taking classes on translation, attending translator conferences, keeping up with technological developments in the field, buying and learning to use new software and hardware — all this gives us the strong sense that we are not isolated underpaid flunkies but professionals surrounded by other professionals who share our concerns. Involvement in the translation profession may even give us the intellectual tools and professional courage to stand up to unreasonable demands, to educate clients and employers rather than submit meekly and seethe inwardly. Involvement in the profession helps us realize that translation users need us as much as we need them: they have the money we need; we have the skills they need. And we will sell those skills to them, not abjectly, submissively, wholly on their terms, but from a position of professional confidence and strength.

***Ethics***

The professional ethics of translation have traditionally been defined very narrowly: it is unethical for the translator to distort the meaning of the source text. As we have seen, this conception of translator ethics is far too narrow even from the user's point of view: there are many cases when the translator is explicitly asked to "distort" the meaning of the source text in specific ways, as when adapting a text for television, a children's book, or an advertising campaign. From the translator's internal point of view, the ethics of translation are more complicated still. What is the translator to do, for example, when asked to translate a text that s/he finds offensive? Or, to put that differently, how does the translator proceed when professional ethics (loyalty to the person paying for the translation) clash with personal ethics (one's own political and moral beliefs)? What does the feminist translator do when asked to translate a blatantly sexist text? What does the liberal translator do when asked to translate a neo-Nazi text? What does the environmentalist translator do when asked to translate an advertising campaign for an environmentally irresponsible chemical company?

As long as thinking about translation has been entirely dominated by an external (nontranslator) point of view, these have been nonquestions — questions that have not been asked, indeed that have been unaskable. The translator translates whatever texts s/he is asked to translate, and does so in a way that satisfies the translation user's needs. The translator *has* no personal point of view that has any relevance at all to the act of translation.

From an internal point of view, however, these questions must be asked. Translators are human beings, with opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. Translators who are regularly required to translate texts that they find abhorrent may be able to suppress their revulsion for a few weeks, or months, possibly even years; but they will not be able to continue suppressing those negative feelings forever. Translators, like all professionals, want to take pride in what they do; if a serious clash between their personal ethics and an externally defined professional ethics makes it difficult or impossible to feel that pride, they will eventually be forced to make dramatic decisions about where and under what conditions they want to work.

And so increasingly translators are beginning to explore new avenues by which to reconcile their ethics as human beings with their work as translators. The Quebecoise feminist translator Susanne Lotbiniere-Harwood (1991), for example, tells us that she no longer translates works by men: the pressure is too great to adopta male voice, and she refuses to be coopted. In her literary translations of works by women she works very hard to help them create a woman-centered language in the target culture as well. In *The Subversive Scribe* Suzanne Jill Levine (1992) tells us that in her translations of flagrantly sexist Latin American male authors, she works — often with the approval and even collaboration of the authors themselves — to subvert their sexism.

This broader "internal" definition of translator ethics is highly controversial. For many translators it is unthinkable to do anything that might harm the interests of the person or group that is paying for the translation (the translation "commissioner" or "initiator"). For other translators, the thought of being rendered utterly powerless to make ethical decisions based on personal commitments or belief structures is equally abhorrent; it feels to some like the Nurnberg "ethics" of the SS, the claim that "we were just obeying orders." When the translator's private ethics clash substantially with the interests of the commissioner, to what extent can the translator afford to live by those ethics and still go on earning a living? And on the other hand, to what extent can the translator afford to compromise with those ethics and still go on taking professional pride in his or her work?

**Income**

Professionals do their work because they enjoy it, because they take pride in it — and also, of course, to earn a living. Professional translators translate for money. And most professional translators (like most professionals of any field) feel that they don't make enough money, and would like to make more. There are at least three ways to do this, two of them short-term strategies, the third long-term: translate faster (especially but not exclusively if you are a freelancer); create your own agency and farm translation jobs out to other freelancers (take a cut for project management); and (the long-term strategy) work to educate clients and the general public about the importance of translation, so that money managers will be more willing to pay premium fees for translation.

***Speed***

Speed and income are not directly related for all translators. They are for freelancers. The situation is somewhat more complex than this, but basically the faster a freelancer translates, the more money s/he makes. (Obviously, this requires a large volume of incoming jobs; if, having done a job quickly, you have no other work to do, translating faster will not increase your income.) For in-house translators the links between speed and money are considerably less obvious. Most in-house translators are expected to translate fast, so that employability, and thus income, is complexly related to translation speed. Translation speed is enforced in a variety of unofficial ways, mostly though phone calls and visits from engineers, editors, bosses, and other irate people who want their job done instantly and can't understand why you haven't done it yet. Some in-house translators, however, do translations for other companies in a larger concern, and submit records of billable hours to their company's bookkeeping department; in these cases monthly targets may be set (200 billable hours per month, invoices worth three times your monthly income, etc.) and translators who exceed those targets may be given bonuses. Some translation agencies also set such targets for their in-house people.

A translator's translating speed is controlled by a number of factors:

1. typing speed
2. the level of text difficulty
3. familiarity with this sort of text
4. translation memory software
5. personal preferences or style
6. job stress, general mental state

(1—3) should be obvious: the faster one types, the faster one will (potentially) be able to translate; the harder and less familiar the text, the slower it will be to translate. I will return to (4) in the next section. (6) is also relatively straightforward: if you work under great pressure, with minimum reward or praise, your general state of mind may begin to erode your motivation, which may in turn slow you down.

(5) is perhaps less obvious. Who would "prefer" to translate slowly? Don't all translators want to translate as rapidly as possible? After all, isn't that what our clients want?

The first thing to remember is that not everyone translates for clients. There is no financial motivation for rapid translation when one translates for fun. The second is that not all clients need a translation next week. The acquisitions editor at a university press who has commissioned a literary or scholarly translation may want it done quickly, for example, but "quickly" may mean in six months rather than a year, or one year rather than two.

And the third thing to remember is that not everyone is willing or able to force personal preferences into conformity with market demands. Some people just do prefer to translate slowly, taking their time, savoring each word and phrase, working on a single paragraph for an hour, perfecting each sentence before moving on to the next. Such people will probably never make a living as freelancers; but not all translators *are* freelancers, and not all translators need to make a living at it. People with day jobs, high-earning spouses, or family money can afford to translate just as slowly as they please. Many literary translators are academics who teach and do research for a salary and translate in their free time, often for little or no money, out of sheer love for the original text; in such situations rapid-fire translation may even feel vaguely sacrilegious.

There can be no doubt, however, that in most areas of professional translation, speed is a major virtue. I once heard a freelancer tell a gathering of student translators, "If you're fast, go freelance; if you're slow, get an in-house job." But translation divisions in large corporations are not havens for slow translators either. The instruction would be more realistic like this: "If you're fast, get an in-house job; if you're really fast, so your fingers are a blur on the keyboard, go freelance. If you're slow, get a day job and translate in the evenings."

Above all, work to increase your speed. How? The simplest step is to improve your typing skills. If you're not using all ten fingers, teach yourself to, or take a typing class at a community college or other adult education institute. If you're using all ten fingers but looking at the keyboard rather than the screen while you type, train yourself to type without looking at the keys. Take time out from translating to practice typing faster.

The other factors governing translating speed are harder to change. The speed with which you process difficult vocabulary and syntactic structures depends partly on practice and experience. The more you translate, the more well-trodden synaptic pathways are laid in your brain from the source to the target language, so that the translating of certain source-language structures begins to work like a macro on the computer: zip, the target-language equivalent practically leaps through your fingers to the screen. Partly also it depends on subliminal reconstruction skills that we will be exploring in the rest of the book.

The hardest thing to change is a personal preference for slow translation. Translating faster than feels comfortable increases stress, decreases enjoyment (for which see below), and speeds up translator burnout. It is therefore more beneficial to let translating speeds increase slowly, and as naturally as possible, growing out of practice and experience rather than a determination to translate as fast as possible right now.

In addition, with translating speed as with other things, variety is the spice of life. Even the fastest translators cannot comfortably translate at top speed all day, all week, all month, year-round. In this sense it is fortunate, in fact, that research, networking, and editing slow the translator down; for most translators a "broken" or varied rhythm is preferable to the high stress of marathon top-speed translating. You translate at top speed for an hour or two, and the phone rings; it is an agency offering you a job. You go back to your translation while they fax it to you, then stop again to look the new job over and call back to say yes or no. Another hour or two of high-speed translating and a first draft of the morning job is done; but there are eight or ten words that you didn't find in your dictionaries, so you get on the phone or the fax or e-mail, trying to find someone who knows. Phone calls get immediate answers; faxes and e-mail messages take time. While you're waiting, you pick up the new translation job, start glancing through it, and before you know it (some sort of automatism clicks in) you're translating it, top speed. An hour later the fax machine rings; it's a fax from a friend overseas who has found some of your words. You stop translating to look through the fax. You're unsure about one of the words, so you get back on e-mail and send out a message over a listserver, asking other subscribers whether this seems right to them; back in your home computer, you jump over to the morning translation and make the other changes. You notice you're hungry, so you walk to the kitchen and make a quick lunch, which you eat while looking over the fax one more time. Then back to the afternoon translation, top speed. If the fax machine hasn't rung in an hour or two, you find a good stopping place and check your e-mail; nothing for you, but there's a debate going on about a group of words you know something about, so you type out a message and send it. Then you edit the morning translation for a while, a boring job that has to be done some time; and back to the afternoon translation.

And all this keeps you from burning out on your own translating speed. Interruptions may cut into your earnings; but they may also prolong your professional life (and your sanity).

**Enjoyment**

One would think that burnout rates would be high among translators. The job is not only underpaid and undervalued by society; it involves long hours spent alone with uninspiring texts working under the stress of short deadlines. One would think, in fact, that most translators would burn out on the job after about three weeks.

And maybe some do. That most don't, that one meets freelance translators who are still content in their jobs after thirty years, says something about the operation of the greatest motivator of all: they enjoy their work. They must — for what else would sustain them? Not the fame and fortune; not the immortal brilliance of the texts they translate. It must be that somehow they find a sustaining pleasure in the work itself.

In what, precisely? And why? Is it a matter of personal style: some people just happen to love translating, others don't? Or are there ways to teach oneself to find enhanced enjoyment in translation?

Not all translators enjoy every aspect of the work; fortunately, the field is diverse enough to allow individuals to minimize their displeasure. Some translators dislike dealing with clients, and so tend to gravitate toward work with agencies, which are staffed by other translators who understand the difficulties translators face. Some translators go stir-crazy all alone at home, and long for adult company; they tend to get in-house jobs, in translation divisions of large corporations or translation agencies or elsewhere, so that they are surrounded by other people, who help relieve the tedium with social interaction. Some translators get tired of translating all day; they take breaks to write poetry, or attend a class at the local college, or go for a swim, or find other sources of income to pursue every third hour of the day, or every other day of the week. Some translators get tired of the repetitiveness of their jobs, translating the same kind of text day in, day out; they develop other areas of specialization, actively seek out different kinds of texts, perhaps try their hand at translating poetry or drama. (We will be dealing with these preferences in greater detail in Chapter 3.)

Still, no matter how one diversifies one's professional life, translating (like most jobs) involves a good deal of repetitive drudgery that will simply never go away. And the bottom line to that is: if you can't learn to enjoy even the drudgery, you won't last long in the profession. There is both drudgery and pleasure to be found in reliability, in painstaking research into the right word, in brain-wracking attempts to recall a word that you know you've heard, in working on a translation until it feels just right. There is both drudgery and pleasure to be found in speed, in translating as fast as you can go, so that the keyboard hums. There is both drudgery and pleasure to be found in taking it slowly, staring dreamily at (and through) the source text, letting your mind roam, rolling target-language words and phrases around on your tongue. There are ways of making a mind-numbingly boring text come alive in your imagination, of turning technical documentation into epic poems, weather reports into songs.

In fact in some sense it is not too much to say that the translator's most important skill is the ability to learn to enjoy everything about the job. This is not the translator's most important skill from the user's point of view, certainly; the user wants a reliable text rapidly and cheaply, and if a translator provides it while hating every minute of the work, so be it. If as a result of hating the work the translator burns out, so be that too. There are plenty of translators in the world; if one burns out and quits the profession, ten others will be clamoring for the privilege to take his or her place.

But it is the most important skill for the translators themselves. Yes, the ability to produce reliable texts is essential; yes, speed is important. But a fast and reliable translator who hates the work, or who is bored with it, feels it is a waste of time, will not last long in the profession - and what good are speed and reliability to the ex-translator? "Boy, I used to *be fast."* Pleasure in the work will motivate a mediocre translator to enhance her or his reliability and speed; boredom or distaste in the work will make even a highly competent translator sloppy and unreliable.

And in some sense this textbook is an attempt to teach translators to enjoy their work more — to drill not specific translation or vocabulary skills but what we might call "pretranslation" skills, attitudinal skills that (should) precede and undergird every "verbal" or "linguistic" approach to a text: intrinsic motivation, openness, receptivity, a desire to constantly be growing and changing and learning new things, a commitment to the profession, and a delight in words, images, intellectual challenges, and people.

In fact the fundamental assumptions underlying the book's approach to translation might be summed up in the following list of axioms:

1. Translation is more about people than about words.
2. Translation is more about the jobs people do and the way they see their world than it is about registers or sign systems.
3. Translation is more about the creative imagination than it is about rule-governed text analysis.
4. The translator is more like an actor or a musician (a performer) than like a tape recorder.
5. The translator, even of highly technical texts, is more like a poet or a novelist than like a machine translation system.

Which is not to say that translation is not about words, or phrases, or registers, or sign systems. Clearly those things are important in translation. It is to say rather that it is more productive for the translator to think of such abstractions in larger human contexts, as a part of what people do and say.

Nor is it to say that human translation is utterly unlike the operation of a tape recorder or machine translation system. Those analogies can be usefully drawn. It is merely to say that machine analogies may be counterproductive for the translator in her or his work, which to be enjoyable must be not mechanical but richly human. Machine analogies fuel formal, systematic thought; they do not succor the translator, alone in a room with a computer and a text, as do more vibrant and imaginative analogies from the world of artistic performance or other humanistic endeavors.

Is this, then, a book of panaceas, a book of pretty lies for translators to use in the rather pathetic pretense that their work is really more interesting than it seems?

No. It is a book about how translators actually view their work; how translating actually feels to successful professionals in the field.

Besides, it is not that thinking about translation in more human terms, more artistic and imaginative terms, simply makes the work *seem* more interesting. Such is the power of the human imagination that it actually makes it *become* more interesting. Imagine yourself bored and you quickly become bored. Imagine yourself a machine with no feelings, a computer processing inert words, and you quickly begin to feel dead, inert, lifeless. Imagine yourself in a movie or a play (or an actual use situation) with other users of the machine whose technical documentation you're translating, all of you using the machine, walking around it, picking it up, pushing buttons and flipping levers, and you begin to feel more alive.

**The communication process made by the translator**

The translator is basically a communicator, that is, a participant in a communication situation.

The normal communication situation looks like this:

Language A Language A

Sender Message Recipient

Encoding Decoding

The translator’s role is somewhat different from the role of the sender and recipient in the normal monolingual communicative situation because the translator must both decode and encode, and he/she works within the framework of two codes or languages, in what is called bilingual communication situation. Look at the following diagram.

Source language Target Language

Sender Message Translator Message Recipient

(ST) (TT)

Encoding Decoding Encoding Decoding

Therefore, the translator, in the decoding process analyzes the language specific source text into a non-language specific idea, or conceptual representation (basically the content of the text). Then in the encoding process, the translator reproduces the representation into a language specific target text.