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Contents

From 'Good' to 'Functionally Appropriate': Assessing Translation Quality

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What is a Good Translation?

In discussions about translations (as products) and translation (as an activity) the question of quality has always been one of top priority. It has been repeatedly said that the aim of each translation activity is to produce a good translation, a good target text (TT). But what are the criteria to say that one target text is a 'good' translation, compared to another, 'bad' or 'poor' one? The criteria listed will be different, depending on the purpose of the assessment and on the theoretical framework which the people apply who (have to) assess translation quality. Or in the words of House (1997: 1): 'Evaluating the quality of a translation presupposes a theory of translation. Thus different views of translation lead to different concepts of translational quality, and hence different ways of assessing it'.

A common answer to the question 'what is a good translation' is that a good translation is as accurate as possible (e.g. Newmark, 1991: 111). 'Accuracy', however, is a relational concept, i.e. we have to ask 'accurate' compared to what? The yardstick for such an evaluation is usually the source text (ST), in other words, the underlying notion is of translation as accurate reproduction of (the message of) the ST. This is the widely held notion within the linguistic model of translation (cf. Neubert & Shreve, 1992: 19ff.). In assessing the quality of the translation, the TT is compared to the ST in order to see whether the TT is an accurate, correct, precise, faithful, or true reproduction of the ST. This comparison involves both quantitative (i.e. completeness of message transfer) and qualitative aspects, i.e. accurate 'in denotation and in connotation, referentially and pragmatically' (Newmark, 1991: 111). This is also the predominant assessment model in translation teaching, especially in translation classes that are part of language programmes at schools or universities.

Translation Studies is not a homogeneous discipline, and the linguistic model has largely been replaced (or at least complemented) by other approaches, each of which contributes more insights to the understanding of the complex phenomenon of translation, and applies partly different criteria to translation quality assessment (TQA). When Newmark mentions 'pragmatic accuracy', he introduces textual and situational aspects, which are important criteria in the textlinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse models of translation. The important contribution of these models is that they have changed the focus from translation as text reproduction to text *production*. The basis tenet is that we do not translate words or grammatical structures, but texts as communicative occurrences (cf. de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981), i.e. we are always dealing with texts in situation and in culture, and these texts fulfil a specific function. In addition, each text is

an exemplar, or a token, of a specific text type (or genre, 'Textsorte'), and as such it is characterised by specific text-internal and text-external features which may be more or less conventionalised. For example, weather reports, instruction manuals or annual business reports are examples of highly conventionalised text types (concerning information arrangement, textual macro- and super-structurescf. van Dijk, 1980lexical choices, syntactic structures), whereas literary texts or essays do not display highly conventionalised textual features. A 'pragmatically accurate' TT is in conformity with the text-typological conventions in the target language and culture and thus fulfils the expectations of the TT addressees in a particular communicative situation.

Text-typological considerations are an important aspect of TQA, which is, however, largely ignored in the linguistic model. Although in all fairness it has to be stressed that the linguistic model has changed too, largely influenced by the development of linguistics itself. Hardly any translation scholar working within a linguistic model in the 1990s (at least in Europe) applies the traditional methods of the 1960s. House (1997) convincingly demonstrates that her linguistic approach to TQA includes textual, situational and cultural aspects.

The major contribution of textlinguistic and pragmatic approaches to TQA is an increased awareness of the fact that the linguistic format of the TT is above all determined by target language text-typological conventions, as well as by aspects of the communicative situation in the target culture in which the TT is to fulfil its function (e.g. time and place, knowledge and expectations of the TT addressees), and not primarily by the linguistic structures of the ST. A 'good' translation is thus no longer a correct rendering of the ST, in the sense of reproducing the ST meanings of micro-level units. It is rather a TT which effectively fulfils its intended role in the target culture. Instead of 'good', some translation scholars prefer to speak of '(pragmatically) adequate' or of 'functionally appropriate' translations.

The introduction of the function and/or the purpose of the TT as the decisive criterion of all translations, and thus, also of TQA, is the major contribution of functionalist approaches to translation, which were largely developed in Germany. For these approaches, quality is not given 'objectively', but depends on the text user and his/her criteria for assessing how appropriately and efficiently a text fulfils its purpose in a specific situation. TQA in such a functionalist perspective was the topic of a CILS seminar, which forms the basis of this issue.

Translation Quality Assessment Within a Functionalist Approach

'Functionalist approach' is a kind of cover term for the research of scholars who argue that the purpose of the TT is the most important criterion in any translation. This approach was largely initiated by the work of Hans Vermeer and the development of 'Skopos theory' (cf. Reiß & Vermeer, 1991). Among the scholars who work within the functionalist paradigm is Hans G. Hönig from the University at Germersheim, who was the main speaker at the CILS seminar. Since most of the publications by 'functionalists' are written in German, this seminar also provided an opportunity to publicise this approach in the UK (cf. also recently Nord, 1997; Schäffner, 1997).

At the beginning of his paper, Hönig summarises the development of the functionalist approach in Germany and presents its main ideas and arguments. Now that the functional appropriateness of the TT has become the yardstick for assessing the quality of a translation, both the translator and the TT user(s) are assigned a higher status and a more influential role than is the case in more traditional approaches to translation (cf. also Venuti's, 1995, arguments for greater visibility of the translator).

Hönig has published widely on general aspects of translation, on didactic aspects, curriculum and syllabus design. The 1982 book *Strategie der Übersetzung* which he co-authored with Kussmaul (3rd edition 1991) has become a widely used textbook in Germany. His latest book *Konstruktives Übersetzen* (1995), which is addressed both to scholars and students of translation but also to commissioners and users of translations, has quickly become a bestseller in Germany. Both in the book and in his paper he argues forcefully for self-confident translators, i.e. translators who are aware of what happens in the process of translation, and who are therefore confident in their work. Hönig stresses that the decisive qualification of translators is not their knowledge of a foreign language and their subject-specific knowledge, but it is their knowledge of what texts are used for and how they achieve their effects. It is therefore of extreme importance that they know for whom they translate and what the users want to do with the text. Only with this knowledge can a translator produce a TT that is appropriately structured and formulated in order to effectively fulfil its intended purpose for its addressees.

This is an argument which has often been criticised by scholars outside Skopos theory who say that the purpose of the target text, what the users are going to do with it, cannot justify the means. Critics argue that in a functionalist approach the ST is dethroned, the role of the client is exaggerated, and that there is no clear delimitation between translation and adaptation or other textual operations. Some of this criticism is due to misinterpretation and overgeneralisation, and therefore unjustified, but it is also partly due to a confusing use of the keyword 'function' within functionalist literature. It is sometimes used in the sense of the function that the TT fulfils in the communicative setting of the target culture (in this sense, 'function' is synonymous with 'purpose'). But it is also used for the text function, e.g. informative or persuasive function (in this sense, it is linked to speech acts and Bühler's functions of language). Another use of the term concerns the function of a word or phrase within the whole text (i.e., the relationship of micro- and macro-structures).

In his book, Hönig differentiates between a 'functioning' translation and a 'functional' translation. A functioning translation need not be a functional one. That is, a translation can be accepted in specific circumstances although it is not absolutely acceptable, e.g. because it does not conform to the conventions and the norms of the text type. Thus, the notion of the purpose as the decisive criterion for the quality of a translation is linked to the linguistic correctness of the text, i.e. conformity to linguistic, text-typological, and communicative rules and conventions of the target language and culture.

Contexts of Translation Quality Assessment

As said above, quality is not 'objectively' given, but depends on the text user and his/her assessment criteria. House (1997) referred to the fact that different concepts of translational quality go hand in hand with different ways of assessing it. Speaking about interpreting, Pöchhacker (1994) identifies various people who can assess the quality of a TT: the immediate recipients of the text, the TT producers (i.e. self-assessment), third parties, e.g. representatives of the ST producer, the client, colleagues, people with a professional interest in assessing TT, such as teachers. Different assessment scenarios apply to translation as well, and Hönig devotes a large part of his paper to this question. A major problem in this context is intersubjective reliability. Is intersubjective agreement possible at all? With each assessor having a specific aim, depending on the factors of the assessment context, and applying different assessment criteria, the answer will have to be 'No'. As Hönig shows, even within one scenario, the teaching context, agreement is not easily achieved. A common practice in assessing translations that are produced in language courses is to count linguistic errors, deduct points for each error and/or add bonus points for good solutions, for 'flashes of insight'. Such marking practice, which is often no more than vocabulary testing, usually measures the TT quality against some model translation. In contrast to this, Hönig makes a difference between diagnosis and therapy. A solid translation assessment or criticism should diagnose which effect a translated text would have in its environment for its addressees. He argues that such a functionally based assessment of translation mistakes should also be applied in a therapeutic sense in the training of professional translators, a point which was also taken up in the debate and in the responses.

In different countries there are different traditions of translation (e.g. how many texts are translated? what kinds of texts are translated? from and into which languages?) and translator training (e.g. specifically designed translator training programmes at undergraduate level at universities, as is common practice on the European continent, or one-year postgraduate courses, or on-the-job training). These differences are related to the social status of translators and to the recognition of translation as an activity and of translation studies as an academic discipline. It is widely felt in many places that there is a lack of due respect for translators; this concern is also reflected in the debate and in the responses to Hönig's position paper.

If we want to gain more recognition for the discipline, we need to become more 'visible', by publications, conferences, training programmes, etc. There is nothing wrong with having different conceptions, ideas or terminology, as long as we talk about them. When it comes to functionalist approaches, the reactions stretch from euphoria to total rejection, both on the part of translation scholars and practising translators. The arguments are often very subjective and highly emotional, as also reflected in some of the responses. Some theoretical approaches are valued higher than others, and they are therefore defended and justified.

In the preface to a recent book on academic writing, the editors say: 'We still do not know very much about the linguistic and textual features which characterise successful products and distinguish them from unsuccessful ones'

(Ventola & Mauranen, 1996: vii). This statement can be applied in a similar way to translation, i.e. we still do not know well enough when a TT can be characterised as 'good' or 'successful'. Different approaches define a 'good' translation differently and apply different assessment criteria. The development of translation studies as a scholarly discipline has shown that some approaches are more successful than others, and the functionalist approach has definitely contributed valuable arguments. In the end, all approaches have to prove their value in the practice, in the everyday enterprise of translation. There is still much to be discussed, and thus scope for future CILS seminars on translation topics.

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Positions, Power and Practice:
Functionalist Approaches and Translation Quality Assessment

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Translation quality assessment (TQA) is an essential part of any theoretical concept of translation. Models of TQA will therefore inevitably reflect an overall theoretical framework (or lack of it) and can be discussed in terms of such. On the other hand, TQA is carried out daily, often in an unreflected and sometimes authoritarian way. Empirical data from the translator's workbench must therefore be taken into account if one wants to provide a basis for an informed use of TQA in translator training. My arguments will therefore be based on many authentic examples of TQA as it is practised and on an overview of frequently used evaluation scenarios. This will provide an empirical base for a detailed discussion of theoretical concepts (mainly Gutt's *relevance* concept and Kußmaul's *functional* approach). The first part illustrates that popular concepts of translation are not built on a *tabula rasa*. Laypersons hold dogmatic positions, particularly those of 'faithfulness' and 'cultural neutrality'. These are shown to be basically functionalist concepts, albeit not recognised as such. Gutt's criticism of translation theory in general and functionalism in particular is discussed. The second part provides an overview of how TQA is carried out (in Germany) in various scenarios. This will show that TQA, as practised in the university training of translators, uses the least homogeneous criteria and seems to be neither integrated into theoretical frameworks nor based on requirements typically made by clients. The only way out of this pedagogical dilemma, it is argued, is to use TQA as a means and not as an end.

Functional Approaches in Translation Studies in Germany

Contrastive linguistics and functionalism

In the early phase of translation studies in Germany contrastive linguistics played a major role. Independent translation studies or, indeed, translatological approaches were rare because translation theory had not evolved as an independent area of scholarly research. Such research was usually seen as belonging to the realm of linguistics until Wilss in 1977 published his programmatic book *Übersetzungswissenschaft. Probleme and Methoden* which later was published in English *(The Science of Translation. Problems and Methods,* 1982).

In his earlier work Wilss was influenced by the representatives of *stylistique comparée,* Vinay/Darbelnet (1968). He makes frequent use of the notion of 'transposition' (German *'Ausdrucksverschiebung',* cf. also Catford's (1965) term 'shift'). Transposition and shift are still used to describe the translation process, the idea being that the need for transpositions or shifts arises when there is no formal one-to-one correspondence between source and target language structures. The basic concept is that whenever there is a need for transposition, we are

faced with a translation problem. For instance if we have to translate an English entence such as:

(1) The spelling of catalog/ue is divided, with the shorter form gaining.

there is no way German syntax allows us to imitate the English construction. We could therefore translate by 'transposition', e.g:

(la) *Die Rechtschreibung von 'catalog/ue' ist verschieden, wobei die kürzere Form immer mehr bevorzugt wird.* (Friederich, 1995: 133)

Contrastive approaches to translation would point out such transpositions or shifts and translation textbooks would collect them systematically with a view to providing help for translators in 'difficult situations'. Some go one step further and formulate language-pair specific 'rules' for the translation of certain syntactic or lexical phenomena, e.g. *with plus participle* is best translated into German by the use of a *wobei plus finite verb subordinate clause.* In 1971, Wilss himself published an article entitled *Englische Partizipialkonstruktionen und ihre Wiedergabe im Deutschen* (How to render English participle constructions in German). A popular German textbook of this kind is *Technik des Übersetzens* by Wolf Friederich, first published in 1969 and reprinted several times (latest edition 1995). This shows that although this approach seems to be rather obsolete from a functionalist point of view it is still popular.

Implicitly, such approaches are based on the assumption that *normally* one can (and should) imitate syntactical structures and semantic-lexical distributions fairly closely and that it is therefore important to learn about the exceptional cases where this is not possible. A large amount of international research has been, and still is, devoted to contrastive studies of this kind, contrasting and comparing specific areas of language pairs systematically with the ultimate target to provide a 'contrastive grammar' which will provide rules for translators.

Most recent contrastive studies, however, are well aware of the difficulties encountered in such an approach andby steering clear of rules and exceptionsintroduce functionalist principles into contrastive approaches. A recent example is Leona Van Varenbergh's article *Fachsprache und metaphorische Sprache im Bereich Bank und Börse. Textanalyse und Übersetzungsprobleme* (1996).

Text typology (Katharina Reiß)

The first step in a new direction was small but important. Katharina Reiß in her book *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik* (1971) still adhered to the principle of preserving the original function of the source text but she based her 'contrastive' approach not so much on lexical and syntactic units but on text-types. It is significant that she did not base her semantic analyses on traditional models but applied the so-called *organon* model of the Austrian psychologist Karl Bühler to translating. According to him the linguistic sign has three basic functions: it is a symbol of extralinguistic reality *(representational* function), it is a symptom of the sender's attitude toward the described reality *(expressive* function) and it is a signal which stimulates responses from the recipient *(appellative* function).

Bühler's notion of a threefold function of language was adapted by Reiss for

translation purposes. She talks of the predominant functions of texts which she labels as (1) *inhaltsbetonter Texttyp* (content-focused texts) such as news items, business correspondence, official documents or manuals, *(2)formbetonter Texttyp* (form-focused texts) which mainly include literary genres such as novels, plays and poetry, and (3) *appellbetonter Texttyp* (appeal-focused texts) such as advertising, satirical prose, pamphlets or election speeches.

Reiß' text types are based on the notion of dominance or hierarchy. She is aware of the fact that content-focused texts may havesometimes very obviousformal features. For instance, business correspondence is marked by a large number of politeness conventions. Also, it is hard to imagine form-focused texts without any content, and appeal-focused texts, such as advertising, may use formal (sometimes poetic) devices to market a product. For Rei it is a question of dominance. There is dominance of content over form or form over content or appeal over both form and content.

By focusing on (high-ranking) text-types, Reiß introduces (lower-ranking) variables into translation. Whereas in traditional contrastive studies words and phrases are defined as translation units, for Reiß the preservation of text types becomes the aim of translation. Consequently, lower-ranking parts of a text may, indeed, must be 'changed' if this is the only way to preserve the text type.

This is particularly obvious with the *appeal-focused* text-type, e.g. in advertising. In order to 'appeal' to readers and potential customers, publicity for products often plays with their prejudices and associations. GARDENA garden tools, for instance, are produced in Germany and their advertisements underline the technical sophistication of the products. In advertisements placed in the British press, GARDENA poked gentle fun at the German pedantry and attention to detail in the manufacturing of their products. Conversely, advertisements for British products such as AFTER EIGHT MINTS or SIR WINSTON TEA in Germany play on British snobbery and conservative attitudes.

These examples illustrate that words and phrases may or must be changed if the translation wants to achieve the same appeal as the source text. *Mutatis mutandis* the same principle obtains in the translation of the *expression-focused* and *information-focused* text types: information and appeal are less important in *expression-focused* passages of this text type than the preservation of the expression focus, e.g. rhymes, imagery and alliteration must be preserved when translating poetry. When translating *information-focused* text-types, however, (e.g. manuals), the information must be preserved, even if this means that in certain passages *appeal-* or *expression-focus* may be lost.

It is easy to underrate or, indeed, criticise Reiß' pioneering work with hindsight and from a modern functionalist or *relevance-oriented* (see below) point of view. Seen in the context of its time, it was a major step forward in introducing more flexibility into translation by moving away from a rigid system of contrastively defined equivalences. By making the dominant text type the basis for translation-related decision-making processes, Reiß firmly established that there is no 'absolutely correct' translation of individual words or phrases out of context. At the same time she provided her readers with methods and approaches to textual analysis which helped them to define this context in a more detailed way.

It must be seen, however, that Reiß, when discussing the translation of her text types, does this with a view to preserving the function of the source text. She is aware of the fact that there are changes of function through translation, but she essentially sees them as exceptions. So the focus of her approach is still on the source text.

Skopos *theory*

In 1978, Hans J. Vermeer, then professor at the Faculty of Applied Linguistics in Mainz/Germersheim, published an article entitled *Ein Rahmen für eine allgemeine Translationstheorie* (A general framework theory of translation). It marked the beginning of a new approach to translation studies which later became known *as functionalism.*

There is no functionalist school in the sense that the concept was worked out programmatically, but other scholars have contributed to developing the functionalist approachamong them Hans G. Hönig and Paul Kußmaul (who were colleagues of Vermeer's when he taught at Mainz/Germersheim) and Christiane Nord (then University of Heidelberg, where Vermeer taught in the eighties after he had left Mainz/Germersheim). It is also worth noting that Katharina Reiß (who was Christiane Nord's university teacher) was at that time also teaching in Germersheim.

Hans Vermeer went one decisive step further than Reiß. He placed translation firmly in the context of sociolinguistic pragmatics by declaring that translations must be seen as acts *('Handlungen').* Texts, according to Vermeer, are produced for defined recipients and with a defined purpose. This general principle also obtains for translationsthey are special cases of text-bound pragmatic acts.

One of the key words to understanding his approach is *Informationsangebot* (information offered), which means that the source text should no longer be seen as the 'sacred original', and the purpose *(Skopos)* of the translation can no longer be deduced from the source text but depends on the expectations and needs of the target readers. In order to translate successfully, the translator has to get acquainted with the specific situation of the recipients of his/her translation in the target culture.

Vermeer's ideas have become widely known under the label *skopos* theory. The Greek word *skopos* stands for the purpose of the translation which is basically decided on by the translator. S/he may be held responsible for the result of his/her translational acts by recipients and clients. In order to act responsibly, however, translators must be allowed the freedom to decide in co-operation with their clients what is in their best interests. This latter idea has been further developed by Justa Holz-Mänttäri, notably in her book *Translatorisches Handeln. Theorie und Methode* (1984) and by Hans G. Hönig in *Konstruktives Übersetzen* (1995).

The most comprehensive discussion of Vermeer's ideas can be found in the book he wrote in collaboration with Katharina Reiß under the title *Ein Rahmen für eine allgemeine Translationstheorie* (1984). It is probably the most influential work in translation studies ever published in Germany, quoted and referred to by both friends and foes of this 'framework theory of translation'. *Skopos* theory and functionalism focus on the translator, giving him/her both more freedom

and more responsibility. S/he can no longer refer to rules of the kind developed by contrastive approaches, and the traditional notion of *equivalence* becomes obsolete to those who have adopted Vermeer's ideas.

At the same time translating is described in far more complex terms than before. Translators do not just apply linguistic rules, nor is translation a purely linguistic activity. Knowledge and methods from other disciplines, notably psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, communication studies, even brain physiology are integrated into translation studies (seen from this angle, Mary Snell-Hornby's important book *Translation Studies. An Integrated Approach,* published in 1988, can be seen in this context of *skopos* theory and functionalism).

It is not surprising that Vermeer's ideas have been attacked and occasionally misunderstood. He has been accused of advocating arbitrariness and a disregard for the value of the source text. In actual fact, he never maintained that the purpose of a text should always be changed in translation. He is aware of the present tradition of literary translation in Western cultures where a literary text remains embedded in the source culture. Indeed, his approach is far from dogmatic and based on a thorough knowledge of translation traditions and conventions as witnessed by one of his later works, *zzen zu einer Geschichte der Translation*ublishedin 1992, a comprehensive and critical study of the history of translation.

The degree of precision and loyalty

Even in the eyes of those German scholars who generally adopted Vermeer's ideas, two questions remained open, both connected with the actual decision-making processes involved in translating:

> (1) How can we make sure that translators base their decisions for a certain translation-skopos on intersubjectively valid criteria, thus defending them against the above-mentioned criticism of acting arbitrarily? This question was addressed by Christiane Nord in her programmatic *Einführung in das funktionale Übersetzen* (1993), see below.
>
> (2) Is it enough to provide a 'framework theory' of translation, should there not (at least for didactic purposes) be a more detailed account of translation relevant decision-making processes?

In our book Strategie der Übersetzung (first published 1982), my colleague Paul Kußmaul and I addressed the latter question. It is significant for our functionalist approach that we talk about strategies and not about rules or principles. Translation theory, in our eyes, must provide support for decision-making strategies, but it cannot and must not establish rules *in lieu* of decision making.

In *Strategie der Übersetzung* we proposed the *principle of the necessary degree of precision (Prinzip des notwendigen Differenzierungsgrads)* as a guiding line (for a discussion cf. Snell-Hornby, 1988: 44ff.). The word 'necessary', of course, again emphasises the fact that in functionalist approaches there can never be absoluteswhat is necessary depends on the function of the translation. I shall illustrate this principle by giving a few examples from Hönig and Kusssmaul (1982: 58ff).

When we are faced with institutional terms such as 'bachelor's' or 'master's

degree', 'grammar school', 'comprehensive school', 'county council', 'House of Lords' etc., there is no equivalent institution in the target culture, and we have to paraphrase or explain the meaning of the term, but we often do not know how much information to give our target readers. Is a short paraphrase enough or should we add a sentence in brackets or even insert a footnote? Nor is it sensible to advise translators to tell their readers 'everything' about the cultural background of these terms and concepts. There has be a cut-off point where translators can safely say: 'This is all my readers have to know in this context'. But how to find and define it?

The principle of the necessary degree of precision is by no means limited to culture-specific terms, and indeed not to the meaning of words alone, but it can best be illustrated by this type of translation problem. For instance, the term 'public school' implies such a large amount of culture-specific knowledge that it is impossible to render its meaning 'completely' in a translation. Within a functionalist approach, however, the function of a word in its specific context determines to what degree the cultural meaning should be made explicit. In a sentence such as (my emphasis):

(2a) In Parliament he fought for equality, but he sent his son to *Eton*.

the translation will have to be different from translating the identical term 'Eton' in the sentence:

(3a) When his father died his mother could not afford to sent him to *Eton* any more.

The following translations would be sufficiently detailed:

(2b) *Im Parlament kämpfte er für Chancengleichheit, aber seinen eigenen Sohn schickte er auf eine der englischen Eliteschulen. (one of the English elite schools)*

(3b) *Als sein Vater starb, konnte seine Mutter es sich nicht mehr leisten, ihn auf eine der teuren Privatschulen zu schicken* (one of the expensive private schools).

Of course, there is more factual knowledge implied in the terms 'Eton' or 'public school' than expressed in the translation, but the translation mentions everything that is important within the context of the sentence, in other words, the translation is semantically precise enough.

This is, of course, not only true for cultural terms. Practically all lexical items contain several semantic features and it depends on (verbalised) co-textual or (implied) contextual information which of them is activated. There is a very illustrative example provided by Barclay *et al.* (1974) and quoted by Hörmann (1981). The word 'piano' has (potentially) several semantic features: HEAVY, WOODEN, SOUND-PRODUCING, BEAUTIFULpossibly more. If, however, a person hears or reads the sentences:

(1) The man lifted the piano (HEAVY).

(2) The man smashed the piano (WOODEN).

(3) The man tuned the piano (SOUND-PRODUCING).

(4) The man photographed the piano (BEAUTIFUL).

the verbs in turn activate one of the various features which make up the meaning

of 'piano'. The first sentence activates the feature HEAVY, the second activates WOODEN, the third SOUND-PRODUCING and the fourth BEAUTIFUL (Barclay, *et al.,* 1974: 476; Hörmann, 1981: 139).

To return to the examples: if the translation was focused on the British education system, in explaining to laypersons the difference between public and state schools, one might consider translating 'public school' in a very detailed way, perhaps adding an explanatory footnote. If, however, the translator can safely (i.e. on an informed basis) assume that readers are familiar with British cultural terms and concepts, s/he could well leave 'Eton' 'untranslated' - or rather, decide to translate it with 'Eton'.

I have now suggested four different translations for one word and - given other, defined functions of the translation - there would probably be two, three or four more. This is exactly what makes the functionalist approach to translation in general (and translation quality assessment in particular) so frustrating for its critics: there are no absolute rules, only strategies; there is no correct translation for any one word, only an acceptable one.

This does not mean, however, that by choosing a functionalist approach you can justify a mistranslation. Thus a translation such as:

> (2c) *Parlament kämpfte er für Chancengleichheit, aber seinen eigenen Sohn schickte er auf die Schule in Eton* (to the school in Eton).

would not be precise enough and would have to be classified as unacceptable. The feature 'elitist', which is implied in the term 'public school' and which is made prominent in the original sentence by the context, cannot be deduced from the translation by the German reader. Unless, that is, the translator can provide evidence that his readers are familiar with the concept of Eton (e.g. if the translation is going to be published in an anglophile and erudite weekly paper like *Die Zeit).*

I shall now return to the first question asked about the functionalist approach and provide the answer given by Christiane Nord (1993). According to Vermeer's framework theory, one could argue, any *skopos* convenient to the translator could be chosen by him/her for his/her translation. But - writes Nord (1993: 17ff) there is no absolute freedom for the translator because his/her choice is limited by what is accepted in any given society as a translation. These cultural traditions and conventions define what degree of 'resemblance' must exist between a source text and its translation in order for it to qualify as a proper translation.

It is for this reason that Nord introduces the concept of *loyalty.* Acting loyally as a translator means taking the responsibilities seriously which translators have not only with regard to their clients and users of their translations, but also with regard to the author(s) of the source text. Authors expect translations to have the features translations have in their cultural traditions, but they are usually in no position to check whether translators work in accordance with these norms. A loyal translator will therefore inform his/her client and/or user if this is the case and s/he will not consciously violate these norms and traditions without informing the author(s). In other words: the *skopos* of the translation must be compatible with the intentions of the source text author(s). If they are not, it is the translator's duty to inform his/her client accordingly.

Nord (1993: 20) illustrates this with an example which seems to make loyalty

a rather vague principle: no author of a best-selling novel will object to the translation becoming a bestseller, too. S/he will therefore not object to the translatorwhen translating the title of the bookusing means which will make it appealing for the target culture readership. Loyalty, it seems, means acting in the best interests of one's client which is more a matter of expediency than of ethical standards.

Conclusion

Functionalist approaches have become popular in translation studies and have been developed further particularly in translation teaching. This applies particularly to the works of Kiraly (1995), Kupsch-Losereit (1986, 1988), Hönig (1995), Kussmaul (1995), and Schmitt (1986, 1987).

The didactic value of functional approaches lies in the fact that they support decision-making strategies. They steer a clear middle course between vague, unreflected maxims for translators like 'One should translate as precisely as one can and freely when the need arises' and absolute rules. Functional approaches give translators the guidelines they need for their decisions. As we have seen from the discussion of the examples, however, there are no simple rules. Translators should be able to start a chain of reflection, as it were, and see the links between the textual item, the immediate context, the larger context, the function of the source text and the function (or *skopos)* of the target text in its target cultural situation.

In 1996 Nord published a review of Katharina Reiß' pioneering work entitled *Text Type and Translation Method: Review of Reiß's Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik,* thus expressing how indebted German translation theory still is to Reiß' first tentative steps towards functionalism. And so, it seems, the functionalist wheel has come full circle.

Figure 1 provides a schematic view of functionalist and non-functionalist approaches. It also serves as a guideline to the way the rest of this paper is organised: The next section first illustrates popular positions, centred around the issues *of faithfulness* and *visibility.* The discussion of the journalist's letter and the quote from *Die Welt* try to establish that *faithfulness* and claimed source text orientation are often only an expedient argument in order to achieve a special effect with target culture readerships. They are, in other words, *skopos-oriented* and therefore follow (unwittingly) the principles of functional translation. The principle of faithfulness is thus shown to be connected with questions of power as, indeed is the issue of *visibility.* In functionalism, of course, translators must be visible, necessarily so, because of the subjective nature of the understanding processes which are fundamental to translating. Since translating is to be seen as a personal decision-making process, however, the decisions taken by the translator must be made transparent to his or her client and/or readersby being loyal (Nord), by laying open his or her strategy (Hönig & Kußmaul, 1982, 1996)and thus becoming visible.

Having established that many non-functionalist positions stressing faithfulness and invisibility are, in fact, functionalist in disguise (and ruled by issues of power), funtionalism is then discussed from the perspective of relevance theory. What makes Gutt's position so interesting and challenging is the fact that on the

FUNCTIONALIST		NON-FUNCTIONALIST
	Translator	
Is loyal to his client Must be visible		Fathful to the author Should be invisible
	Translation processes should be	
Target text oriented		Source text oriented
	Aim of translation is	
Communicative acceptability		Linguistic equivalence
	Translation tools taken from	
Psycho-, sociolinguistics text linguistics (supporting decisions)		Contrastive linguistics lexical semantics (applying rules)
	Analogy	
Building bridges		Crossing rivers

Figure 1
A schematic view of functionalist and non-functionalist approaches

one hand he shares functionalist views with regard to faithfulness and invisibility, but on the other hand he is clearly opposed to functionalism and even claims that there is no need for a separate translation theory since relevance theory is powerful enough to account for all the phenomena encountered in the field of translation. Gutt's criticism can only be refuted if translation theory in general and TQA in particular acknowledge the relevance of the ideas recipients and clients have about the qualities of 'good' and 'bad' translations, because it is futile to point out the *relevance* (in Gutt's terms) of a translation to its users if, according to their positions, it does not qualify as a translation.

Consequently, in the third part of the paper, the discussion of evaluation issues takes on a new dimension. So far, readers may have gained the impression that it is an uncritical defence of functionalist approaches to TQA. As will become clear, however, functionalism begs the question of supposed reader's response. This part thus pursues the question of how translation quality is assessed in the 'real world' and how functionalist models of TQA (particularly Kußmaul's *communicative approach)* stand up to it.

In this third part, we start again by describing actual positionsthis time in practical evaluation. The difference between *therapeutic* and *diagnostic* evaluation is defined and illustrated, and used as a main criterion to differentiate between various actual evaluation scenarios (cf. Figure 2). As the overview shows there are no common TQA criteria and in about half of the scenarios described there is a mixture of criteria which seem to be mutually exclusive from a theorist's point of view. Since this appears to be the reality of actual TQA it becomes unlikely that one can safely base one's assessment on the (supposed) reaction of 'the reader' who may or may not apply an idiosyncratic mixture of these criteria. It is argued, therefore, that even if assessment is based on functionalist principles, a speculative element will remain and has to be admitted. Or indeed, as seems

to be the case in the example quoted from Kußmaul, linguistic evaluation on a contrastive basis is re-integrated through the backdoor with the critic claiming that it is a typical reader's response.

Positions

Introduction: Why translation quality assessment is necessary

Users need it because they want to know whether they can trust the translators and rely on the quality of their products.

Professional translators need it because there are so many amateur translators who work for very little money that professional translators will only be able to sell their products if there is some proof of the superior quality of their work.

Translatological research needs it because if it does not want to become academic and marginal in the eyes of practising translators it must establish criteria for quality control and assessment.

Trainee translators need it because otherwise they will not know how to systematically improve the quality of their work.

This makes translation quality assessment (TQA) a central issue in university training courses. The way it is taught and carried out radiates into all aspects of the practice and theory of translation. In training courses it:

- establishes or undermines the authority of the lecturer/trainer;
- motivates or discourages the student/trainee;
- implicitly defines the didactic approach to translator-training;
- sets the standards for what (future generations of) translators, translation- users and clients will understand by a 'good' translation.

What we need, however, is informed and professional TQA. If scholars and practitioners do not cooperate in this area they will make it a playground for amateursas it often is now. Hundreds of critical remarks about translations are made every day, some of them even get published. They are made in translation agencies, in translation departments of multinational corporations, they are published in book reviews, they can be heard in every translation class at school or university level. Very few of these critical, often flippant, remarks are based on much more than a supposed knowledge of the source text language; very often there is no system, there are no common criteria, there is no informed discussion, only an occasional exchange of opinions. Discussions of this kind are very often eye-openers. Popular views afford us an insight into what many people think translating is all about.

Popular views on translation quality: Faithfulness

Most laypersons in the field of translation will argue that translators should confine themselves to rendering 'faithfully' what has been written in the source language and let understanding processes take care of themselves. And they often express the view that a translation will allow its reader to be integrated as a 'ghost reader' in a communication process which took place in another language and culture. I shall illustrate both aspects with two examples:

The first is an excerpt from a letter by an English journalist, German

correspondent of the *Financial Times,* whose translation of German words and institutions struck both my wife and myself as somehow odd. To give just two examples: *'Deutschlands Manager im Zwielicht'* was translated as 'the twilight of Germany's managers', making them a dinosaurial dying breed when in reality they were suspected of doing shady deals with shares. In the same article, the then *'erste Vorsitzende der IG Metall'* (secretary-general of *IG Metall)* Steinkühler was referred to as 'first chairman of IG Metall'!

Another series of similar blunders made us decide to write a letter to the *Financial Times* which was answered by the above-mentioned journalist. Here are some salient points from his answer:

> . . . my intention is always to reflect as clearly and *accurately* as possible, precisely what a speaker is saying in German. I am not writing literature. I am trying to get readers to understand what is happening in this country (. . .) I believe my readers are intelligent enough to understand when something is very literally translated, if the words in English convey a very clear idea. I think Mr. Blüm's words *('ein grauer Zeitbrei')* fitted precisely that situation: 'a grey time-porridge' may not be very elegant, but it is very clear what he is trying to say. (. . .) I am sure, as a professional translator, that you could do better. But then you are a professional translator, with plenty of time, and I am not. (. . .)
>
> One further point, in defence of occasionally using a clumsy but literal translation. I believe one of the most important tasks of a foreign correspondent is to help readers in other countries, and other cultures, understand the country from which she or he is reporting. Very often there are deep cultural divides between the country in question and the outside worldcultural gaps which can be well demonstrated by the ways people use to express themselves in their native languagethe figures of speech, for example. (. . .) To turn those figures of speech into different ones which may sound easy and familiar in English is often to lose much of the original.

Here we have a nice collection of traditional and popular views on translation, typical of a layperson:

- a translation has to be *accurate* and *precise;*

- the difference between a professional and a lay-translator is that the former has more time to attend to details of stylistic elegance. There is no difference between them, however, in terms of *accuracy;*

- it is the task of the translator to make sure that no parts of the original are lost;

- readers of a translation should be given a chance to flavour the different and strange world which is opened up to them through the art of translation.

It is worth noting that even an erudite and verbal journalist holds the views we often come across when engineers or technicians commission or discuss translations. It seems that even professionals in the field of linguistic skills are no more aware of what translating is all about than the public at large. This illustrates a point I shall come back to later: in order to objectively and professionally assess

the quality of translations one needs to have acquired a certain amount of expertise and knowledge which is *not* just a spin-off of learning a foreign language or living abroad. If, however, one does accept the quality assessment standards implied and verbalised in such statements as an expression of *opinio communis* and, therefore, as cultural norms typical of certain times and/or cultures (as the proponents of the *Translation Studies* school seem to do), one makes majority and popular views the basis of scholarly investigations.

But let us take a closer look at the strange expression 'grey time-porridge' which was coined by the journalist in order to translate *'ein grauer Zeitbrei'*. While *'ein grauer Zeitbrei'* is certainly unconventional in German, it clearly conveys the idea of monotony and lack of differentiation through its allusions to and collation of two idiomatic expressions known by every competent user of German: *'grauer Alltag'* and *'Einheitsbrei'*. English 'grey time-porridge', however, does not convey this idea, since neither 'grey' nor 'porridge' convey (metaphorically) the notion of monotony or uniformity. This was essential, however, to minister Blüm's speech, because he was talking in favour of more differentiation and flexibility in the working hours of German employees. What we don't want in this field, he said, is *'ein grauer Zeitbrei'*.

The translation 'grey time-porridge' is very likely to convince readers of the *Financial Times* that German is indeed a very odd languagea notion possibly entertained by the correspondent himself. In any case, the one thing the translation certainly does not achieve is what the journalist said he wanted to do: make readers 'understand the country' from which he is reporting. Seen through English eyes, the expression is somewhat eccentric, almost ridiculous. An English reader would probably smile wryly, raise his eyebrows and say: Do Germans (and cabinet ministers) really talk in such a woolly, imprecise, tortured, silly way?

Many people (in any country) entertain feelings of cultural superiority. Reading an article in a quality German paper or listening to a German 'expert' (possibly a university don) reduces some English people to exasperation and assumptions of cultural superiority, e.g. 'English is so much clearer, more succinct, syntactically less involved'. This translation will reinforce this attitudealbeit it may not have been the effect the journalist wanted to produce.

In one way, therefore, the journalist's assessment of translation quality is clearly source text oriented. He stresses the sanctity of the original and claims to make his readers understand the foreign mentality better. If my assessment of the effect of his translation on at least part of his readership is correct, however, it is target culture oriented, because it will serve to buttress views of cultural and linguistic superiority. In other words, by stating that his translation was *accurate* and had no special function ('to reflect as clearly and accurately as possible precisely what a speaker is saying in German') the journalist-cum-translator gave it a very special function. So, as is often the case, the choice is not between functional and non-functional translation, but between two possible functions of a translation.

My next example will make that even clearer: When US president Carter visited Germany (long before unification) and addressed a large crowd in Frankfurt, he said that he (and the American people) 'prayed' for German unification. Harry Obst, his American interpreter, rendered this into German by

'ich hoffe, daß Deutschland wiedervereinigt werden kann' (I hope that Germany will be re-unified). The German national newspaper *Die Welt,* patriotic as it was then and still is, censured him for that, saying that his translation had been imprecise, because he translated 'hope' whereas Carter's actual words had been 'pray for':

> *Dolmetscher schwächt Passage über Wiedervereinigung ab 'Wir beten zu Gott ('we pray') auf die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands.' Das wäre der Ausdruck dessen, was das deutsche Volk will. Wir beten zu Gott. daß wir in Zukunft unsere Zusammenarbeit fiir die Erfüllung unserer gemeinsamen Ziele und Verpflichtungen verstärken können, und daß diese Stärke dazu beiträgt, daß die Sache der Menschenrechte und der Freiheit in der Welt vorangebracht wird.' Das sagte der amerikanische Präsident Jimmy Carter abweichend von dem zuvor an die Presse verteilten Text in seiner Rede auf dem Frankfurter Römer. Sein amerikanischer Dolmetscher, dessen unpräzise Übersetzung schon tags zuvor in Bonn auf Unverständnis gestoßen war, schwächte Carters Worte ab, indem er übersetzte: 'Ich hoffe, daß Deutschland wiedervereinigt werden kann'.*
> *(Die Welt,* 1978)

Of course, the interpreter was right, because Jimmy Carter was well known for employing biblical words when other people would be more secular, the reason being that he was brought up in America's 'Bible Belt', a region known for bible-based metaphors and expressions. So the interpreter conveyed the right idea to the German audience: Carter, quite conventionally and like many other politicians taken to see and condemn the Berlin Wall, expressed his hope that one day it would come down. He did not want to give the Germans the (wrong) idea that German unification is prayed for in American churchesor, indeed, by American politicians.

Die Welt, however, would have it otherwise. Understandably so, if one takes its political bias into account. The issue, however, was not 'imprecise translation' *(unpräzise Übersetzung,* as *Die Welt* wrote) but political expediency. *Die Welt* would have preferred a different translationnot, however, to learn more about Carter and the Bible Belt, but in order to give his utterance a meaning in line with Die Welt's (and possibly the majority of its readers) political views.

As in the first example, *precision* is claimed to be the most important quality of a translation. And the translator is accused of leaving out elements inherent in the source text, thus toning down its impact *('schwächte die Passage ab').* Yet again, claimed source text orientation is only an expedient argument in order to achieve a certain effect with (part of) the target culture readership. The interpreter's rendering of 'pray' was just as functional as the one *Die Welt* would have preferred. It just so happened that the interpreter wanted to serve the interests of his German audienceand not those of *Die Welt.*

Very often, clients employing translators or paying for their services tacitly or explicitly bind them to be 'faithful to the original'. This does not mean, as the second example illustrated, that clients are disinterested third parties wanting to 'preserve the source text'. 'Faithfulness' and 'cultural neutrality' are probably the most popular norms imposed on translators by clients. Yet the same clients in many cases make translators responsible for rendering the source text in such a way that it makes sense to specific recipients in a specific situation. Demands to

be 'faithful' and 'culturally neutral' (i.e. to 'preserve the source text') are impossible to carry out by any professional translators. They are frequently made, however, because of the same basic misunderstanding of translation processes. They put shackles on translators and then ask them to perform some feats of linguistic acrobatics.

Popular views on translation quality: Cultural neutrality (invisibility)

There are two overlapping aspects to the mistaken demand of cultural neutrality. One is the illusion that the different words of language-cultures A and B are just different labels for the 'same thing'. This does sometimes lead to rather funny situations:

In a classroom, trainee nurses are being taught elementary medical knowledge. Among them are some British nurses for whose benefit an interpreter is translating the lecture consecutively into English. *'Was heißt es, wenn ein Patient sagt, er hat Zucker?'*, the lecturer asks. And he looks expectantly at his interpreterwho is hesitating. And for a very good reason: *'Zucker haben'* is a very common idiomatic expression used by laypersons for diabetes. So the lecturer wanted to test whether the trainee nurses knew the proper medical termwhich is, of course, 'diabetes'. Since English, however, does not provide a popular and commonly used term like *'Zucker haben'*, the interpreter was at a loss: Should he translate 'word-by-word' and come up with something like 'when a patient says he suffers from sugar', which obviously is a puzzling question, even for medical experts? Or should he translate the lecturer's question by: 'What does it mean when a patient says he has diabetes?' and thus risk his client's wrath because he gave the answer to his question away by asking it? Or, indeed, should he infuriate the client even more by telling him that he could not translate such an easy question?

The other aspect is expressed by the *Financial Times* journalist in the following way:

> (. . .) my intention is always to reflect as clearly and accurately as possible, precisely what a speaker is saying in German. I am not writing literature. I am trying to get readers to understand what is happening in this country (. . .)

In other words: In his eyes it is the ultimate aim of a translation to enable a target culture reader to understand the meaning of the source text as fully as a source culture reader. Or, to quote Arnt Lykke Jakobsen (1994: 54):

> The aim of legal translation, therefore, is typically to enable target culture readers to understand the meaning which the source text has in the legal system to which it belongs.

Here is an example of a 'legal translation': If a Turkish person who worked in Germany and went back to Turkey wants to apply for his pension with the German pensions board he has to send a certified translation of his Turkish ID-card to the German office. In order to get the translation he first needs a certified copy of his ID-card from the Turkish authorities. The Turkish office responsible for the certified copy is called *'Nüfus Idaresi'*. To translate this into

German is a problem, because there is no office with the same function in Germany. Its functions are shared by two German institutions, one called *'Standesamt'* (responsible for documents concerning births, marriages and deaths), and the other, the *'Personenregisteramt'* or *'Einwohnermeldeamt'* is responsible for issuing passports and ID-cards .

So in the translation of the ID-card the translator should term the Turkish office *'Personenregisteramt'* in order to convince the German Pension Board that this is an official document issued by an authorised public institution. When translating other documents, however, particularly those issued in connection with certificates of death, marriage or birth, *'Standesamt'* would be the appropriate term to translate *'Nüfus Idaresi'*. The official at the German Pensions Board will not be particularly interested in 'the meaning the source text has in the legal system to which it belongs', as Jakobsen stated. All s/he wants to know is whether this is a bona fide document issued by an authorised institution and whether it contains all the data needed. On the contrary, s/he would be very confused by a translator's footnote explaining the cultural differences, and would most likely not accept a certified translation which rendered *'Nüfus Idaresi'* as 'Standesamt/Personenregisteramt'. In other words, the recipient of this translation is not so much interested in the cultural aspects of the meaning of the source text, but in its function.

What the translator did in this example was termed applying a *cultural filter* by Juliane House (1977). There are, however, cases where cultural differences and conventions in legal texts cannot or must not be filtered out. When legal documents are based on different legal conventions (Roman and Anglo-Saxon law, for instance) no legal *tertium comparationis* can be definedas, for instance, in divorce decrees. In such cases, the legal implications have to be pointed out by the translator, according, that is, to the recipient's knowledge.

In either case the translation is functional in the sense that it will serve the needs of the recipient. The quality of the translation can therefore only be assessed in relation to those defined needs.

Nor is this phenomenon only encountered in the translation of LSP-texts. As Venuti notes after discussing Bywater's and John Jones' translations of Aristotle:

> Here a specific cultural constituency controls the representation of foreign literatures for other constituencies in the domestic culture, privileging certain domestic values to the exclusion of others and establishing a canon of foreign texts that is necessarily partial because it serves certain domestic interests.
> (Venuti, 1995: 13)

Under no circumstances, however, will any translation enable 'the' reader to understand the meaning of the source text as completely as a source culture reader. The problem, as in most cases, is caused by the word *meaning*. If we accept thataccording to Vermeer*meaning* is an understanding of a text worked out by a relevant group of text recipients, the *meaning* of a text is not an inherent quality of the text but a quality lent to it by a relevant group of recipients. It is based on culturally determined intertextual connections, cultural conventions and individual psychological expectation structuresin short, on the quantity and quality of all the *top-down* processes which are an essential part of the

understanding process. It is therefore impossible to transfer this meaning from one culture to the other. The words which make up a text are only part of the meaningindeed, in the psycholinguistic theory of *schemes and frames* (Fillmore, 1977) it is claimed that they serve mainly as stimuli for the recipient to work out a text which satisfies his needs.

Power

A large part of the knowledge base and linguistic presuppositions which necessarily mould and shape the eventual result of our understanding are culture-dependent and conventionalised. It is, of course, possible for a translator to explain some of these implications through footnotes or comments, but by doing so the recipient of the translation *cum* comments is even further removed from the original, spontaneous understanding processes as they took place in the SL. What s/he gets is a meta-text, functionally addressed to his or her needs, but s/he will never understand it in the same way *as a source text reader*. Quite the opposite: the more a translator explains a text, the less can s/he hope for a reader response which is even remotely similar to that of the source text recipients.

Nor do we need toif, that is, we accept that all translations should do is to serve the needs of those who have a legitimate interest in using them. That interest may take different forms; in some cases, recipients want to get an idea of how communication took place in the SL, so they have to be informed accordingly on a metalinguistic, cognitive-cultural level. In most cases, however, recipients of translations are not at all interested in the 'full meaning' of the SL-text. They want the translator to present them with a text which seems so natural that it makes them believe they were addressed directly by the author of the SL-text.

Let us assume that in a court (in Germany) the (English) defendant is asked

'How long did you stay in that bar?' and he answers: 'Till closing time'. It is obviously not enough for the court interpreter to render this literally into German by saying *'Bis die Bar schloß'* although this could be termed a 'faithful rendering'. But the meaning would not fit into the receivers' knowledge base and expectation structures (i.e. a precise time reference), since with such a rendering a German audience will not understand that the defendant's answer is, in fact, very precise. It canand shouldbe converted into a time reference like 10.30 pm.

Quite often, however, a translation which reads or sounds like an original text seems to be suspect for the clients or users because, in their eyes, 'accuracy' and 'stylistic elegance' are mutually exclusive in a translation. Both the lecturer and the judge in my examples may well admonish the interpreter not to give a fancy rendering of what he thinks this means but to 'stick to the words'. In their eyes, it is the function of a translation to make clear that it is a translation, a very special function indeed, but yet a function.

Since TQA can only operate within the limits set by the defined or implied function of the translation, the question for any translator to ask is: 'Who has the power to define the function of a translation, orto quote from Through the Looking Glass"Who is to be master?":'

> 'When *I* use a word', Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean neither more nor less'.
> 'The question is', said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean so many

> different things'.
> 'The question is', said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be masterthat's all'.
> (Carroll, 1965: 269)

Many a translator has experienced the bitter truth of this remark. Power rests with those who produce 'originals'be they journalists, scientists or politicians. They have something, original or trivial, to say, and the fact that they have been asked to say or write something puts them in a position of power. They are the experts; translators, in their view, are not.

Translatorsso the common viewhave nothing to say, they are asked to 'just translate' what has been said. Some of them, at least when they start their careers, are prepared to do far more than that: they want to design texts, tailorn-made for their clients. They are willing to anticipate their clients' needs and expectations, but are they allowed to? Will any author authorise them to cut out redundant passages, to homogenise their mixed metaphors, to correct obvious logical flaws? This is indeed a delicate task. How does one tell the engineer who wrote the documentation for a certain product that he wrote A, but really wanted to say B? With most authors, translators will soon find out *who is to be master.*

Most authorsincluding those who authorise translationssee themselves as a rider, and their horses are called translators. Translators' services are needed to jump over language barriers, but it is the rider, and not the horse, who holds the reins. Horses may be spurred on or chastised, as the case may be, but few riders will listen to their horses. As a result and as in most cases where power is so clearly assigned to one party only, the other party will become opportunist. Translators eventually learn not to act in their clients' best interests, but in their own. They will develop new (perhaps cynical) criteria for the TQA of their work, e.g., as long as everybody is happy (or as long as I get paid) it must be good. And they do not care any longer whether everybody is happy only because nobody can be bothered. This is the ultimate stage in applying the principles *of functional translation:* The function of translated texts, then, is not to provoke those who have the power to chastise.

Susan Bassnett (1991: 10) sees the problem, too, but she is more optimistic:

> The problem of evaluation in translation is intimately connected with the previously discussed problem of the low status of translation, which enables critics to make pronouncements about translated texts from a position of assumed superiority. The growth of Translation Studies as a discipline, however, should go some way toward raising the level of discussion about translations, and if there are criteria to be established for the evaluation of a translation, those criteria will be established from within the discipline and not from without.

Functionalism and relevance

The most comprehensive criticism of the functionalist approach in translation theory in general and in quality assessment in particular was launched by E.A. Gutt (1991). Gutt argues that translation can be accounted for within the relevance

theory of communication developed by Sperber and Wilson (1987). According to him there is no need for a distinct general theory of translation.

Relevance theory makes a distinction between *interpretive* and *descriptive* use of language, which is rooted in human psychology: human beings have two different ways of entertaining thoughtsthey can entertain them as being true of some state of affairs *(descriptive)* or by virtue of the interpretive resemblance they bear to some thoughts *(interpretive)*. Most kinds of translation can be analysed as varieties of interpretive use.

Gutt distinguishes direct from indirect translation. *Direct* translation corresponds to the idea that translation should convey the same meaning as the original. It requires the recipients to familiarise themselves with the context envisaged for the original text. The idea that the meaning of the original can be communicated to any group of recipients, no matter how different their background, is, according to Gutt, a misconception based on mistaken assumptions about communication. *Direct* translation is merely a special case of what Sperber and Wilson term *interpretive* use, whereas *indirect* translation is the general case and corresponds to Sperber and Wilson's *descriptive* type of communication.

With all translations, Gutt argues, the quality depends on how well it meets the basic criterion for all human communication, which is consistency with the principle of relevance. Thus, the different varieties of translation can be accounted for without recourse to typologies of texts, translations, functions or the like. In short: we do not really need a theory of translation, because the relevance theory of intralingual communication already takes care of all types of communication-throughtranslation. As a result of this, Gutt fully acknowledges that notions of equivalence are problematic in assessing the quality of a translation:

> (. . .) the notion of equivalence itself may not be truly evaluative in nature but merely comparative, in that it allows only statements about 'sameness' and 'difference'. Such statements are, of course, useful but do not in and of themselves constitute value judgements*but only on the further assumption* that the more 'equivalent' a translation is, the better it is. But this assumption is problematic in that it shows that for evaluation equivalence is not the most basic notion of translationit rather needs to be related to a theory of values. It is not surprising, therefore, that equivalence-based theories have been seriously challenged; thus Reiß and Vermeer (1984), Hönig and Kußmaul (1982), and others have argued that a translation is not necessarily the better the more equivalent in function it is to the original.
> (Gutt, 1991: 14, emphasis Gutt's)

Although I naturally do not agree with Gutt sweeping translation theory, (particularly functional theory) under the carpet of relevance theory I certainly agree with what he writes about equivalence. And when he goes on to point out that translators have to make sure how their translations are received, I am again of the same opinion:

> Most importantly, in order for the communication to succeed, the assumptions about the nature of the communication act (. . .) must be shared by the

> translator and his audience. Furthermore, because of the asymmetrical distribution of responsibilities in ostensive communication, the burden will be on the translator: he has to ensure that it is clear to his audience what his intentions in this respect are, and also that his intentions meet the audience's expectations.
> In some cases these assumptions may be clear from the audience's request for the translator's assistance (. . .) In other cases, these assumptions may be clear from the 'label' with which the receptor text is presented. Thus the fact that the receptor text is labelled 'translation' may suffice to make clear what degree of resemblance is intended. However, such labelling can be relied on only under the condition that the assumptions conveyed by this label are, in fact, the same for both translator and audience. Given the divergence of ideas among both experts and laymen about what translation should be like, reliance on this label alone (. . .) seems risky indeed.
> Therefore, in many cases and especially when addressing a wide or varied audience, the translator will do well to make his intentions explicit. Thus the practice of some translators to explain their translation principles in a foreword makes good sense in our relevance-theoretic framework and could probably be used more widely to make translations successful.
> (Gutt, 1991:183)

So the picture is somehow puzzling. On the one hand I agree with two of the most important conclusions in the field of evaluation Gutt arrives at on the basis of his theory, on the other hand I cannot agree that translation theory is irrelevant in the light of relevance theory.

The relevance and function of a text are, of course, related concepts. That there is a large area of agreement becomes clear when Gutt says that the idea that the meaning of the original can be communicated to any group of recipients, no matter how different their background, is a misconception based on mistaken assumptions about communication. He emphasises that recipients of the target text have to familiarise themselves with the concepts envisaged for the source text. And he implicitly holds the translator responsible for the success of his target text communication, advising him to clarify the function of his translation in some sort of preface or introduction.

So as in functionalism, Gutt denies the concept of the 'sanctity' of the source text and stresses translators' responsibility for successful communication. What worries him, however, is that viewed from this angle there is no more relationship between original and translation than in any other interlingual communication. He asks:

> What makes the translation a translation if it can differ in virtually all aspects from the original? (. . .) What point is there in relating these target-language texts to the originals at all?
> (Gutt, 1991: 54)

His answeras explained aboveis that there is indeed no need to develop and apply translation theoriesthe concept of relevance is powerful enough. What the relevance-theory model, as applied by Gutt, fails to see, however, is the relevance of the ideas recipients have about 'good' and 'bad' translation. Clearly, if a recipient has the idea that the quality of a translation can be assessed by

back-translation it will be futile to point out to him or her that the translated text is 'relevant' to him or her as it is since s/he will not accept that it is a translation.

Theoreticallybut only theoretically!many translated texts could indeed be composed in the *descriptive mode,* i.e. 'true of some state of affairs'. A person translating the handbook for a Japanese car into German could study the handbooks for German cars and then write his Mazda or Toyota handbook quite independently of the original text by just replacing certain specifications. But what handbook would s/he base his or her version on? Would it be Volkswagen's, BMW's or Opel's? S/he will have to choose one, becauseas s/he will soon find outeach manufacturer follows different conventions, even employs different terminologies.

The translation of software documentations from (American) English into German has become a mine-strewn field for exactly that reason. Again, we could well imagine a *descriptive* composition of a text with the translator disregarding the 'original' altogether. But s/he would do so at his or her peril since most corporations offering these products have very definite ideas on what a translation should look and sound like. The differences between firms mainly concern the amount and kind of (American) English terms to be used in German software manuals. Some are very restrictive, pointing out to their technical writers and translators that there are German terms available for practically every English term; others (mainly multinational corporations) argue that most users are more familiar with English terms and employ them freely even when speaking and writing German. Each firm, therefore, has its own corporate identity and translation practicesometimes even philosophyand this becomes part of the yardsticks used when assessing the quality of a translation. Gutt himself seems to acknowledge this when he writes:

> Thus the fact that the receptor text is labelled 'translation' may suffice to make clear what degree of resemblance is intended. However, such labelling can be relied on only under the condition that the assumptions conveyed by this label are, in fact, the same for both translator and audience.
> (Gutt, 1991: 183)

He even advises translators to preface their translations by a short explanation for their users but he fails to recognise that this makes it necessary for translators to know what they are doingin other words, to have a specific translation strategy based on functional translation theory.

Relevance theory and particularly the concept of *descriptive* language use ignore the fact that no text, whether it is a translation or not, is truly descriptive in the sense that it renders a factual description. Intertextual norms and conventions exist before the author of a text puts pen to paper and they play an important role in the way s/he sets about his or her task. Translators, consciously or subconsciously, apply their ideas of what a translation should be like while at the same time envisaging their clients' ideas in this field. No writer and no translatorwhether s/he translates *descriptively* or *interpretively*starts with a *tabula rasa*-concept of how to be true to a certain state of affairs.

This is particularly obvious in Germany where translators and interpreters are often faced with an awkward choice: to use the established translation for certain

terms (which is factually a bad translation) or to use a better one of their own (which may not be accepted by the recipients because they have heard and seen the bad one so often). For example, 'non-governmental organisations' is conventionally translated as *'Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen'*, whereas *'nichtstaatliche'* or 'private *Organisationen'* would be more appropriate. But the 'bad' translation, clearly based on a pair *of false friends* e.g. 'government' = *'Regierung'* has become official by now so that it must be used in certain translation and interpretation tasks. A similar case is 'sustainable development' = 'nachhaltige Entwicklung' *('kontinuierliche'* or *'umweltverträgliche Entwicklung'* would be better). Not so long ago I heard an interpeter working for a computer firm using *'herunterbrechen'* for 'break down' and *'aufdaten'* for 'update'much against her will but to the satisfaction of her clients. In cases like these it is no good for the translator to insist that her translation is *descriptively* correct. In many situations she will have to accept the interpretation given to this term (i.e. that it is a valid and official translation) whether she likes it or not.

What is a *descriptive* or *interpretive, indirect* or *direct,* good or bad translation can often not be decided by the translator him- or herself. S/he must, however, be aware of the strategy s/he is employing. Many translators are not. If translators themselves are not aware of what they are doinghow can we expect laypersons to recognise and acknowledge (let alone assess) the merits of different translation strategies? This is only possible if translators are trained to become aware of what they are doing and also of the views, norms, standards and conventions brought to bear on their work. They must also be taught to discover these where they are not verbalised but only implied. And they must see them as parts of certain *evaluation scenarios* to which they have to adapt their translation strategies.

The sum of these abilities I term *translatory competence* and the theoretical framework necessary to build it up and impart it *translation theory*.

Practical Evaluation

Since implied and explicitly stated user expectations are such an important part of TQA I will now take a closer look at what actually happens in TQA in various settings. The main criterion used to differentiate between various evaluative approaches will be that of *therapeutic* and *diagnostic* TQA.

Therapeutic and diagnostic TQA

The following passage from the book *Modern Linguistics* by Neil Smith and Deirdre Wilson (1979) had to be translated by students in a test:

> (4a) Any system as complex as a human language is bound to lend itself to a variety of independent approaches. For example, languages are used to communicate: one obvious line of research would be to compare human languages with other systems of communication, whether human or not: gestures, railway signals, traffic lights, or the languages of ants and bees.

One student translated the last phrase as

(4b) . . . *oder mit den Sprachen von Bienen und Enten* (or the languages of bees and ducks).

Two lecturers (A and B) are discussing the merits of this translation. A argues:

> To translate 'ants' as *'Enten'* is an elementary mistake of the worst kind. It is clearly caused by a terrible interference'ants' superficially resembles *'Enten',* and the student's English is so poor that she fell into the trap. That mistake alone disqualifies her as a translatorat least we should penalise this with a triple mistake.

Lecturer B does not agree with his colleague:

> There is nothing wrong with that sentence if you look at it with the eyes of the average reader. He will understand that the languages of bees and ducks are mentioned as examples for *other systems of communications.* The reader will readily accept that ducks can communicate, too. Admittedly, the language of ants is probably more prototypical than that of ducks, but that doesn't really matter.

Lecturer A, slightly irritated, retorts:

> So you would pass a student who doesn't know elementary English?

To which B replies:

> Indeed I wouldas long as everybody understands his German.

This dialogue may be fictitious, but the implicit positions are not: Position AI term *therapeutic:* Why was this error made? And what does this error tell us about the student's linguistic competence (or, rather, incompetence)? So the error is regarded as symptomatic of the student's surmised transfer competence; certain 'elementary' errors a priori exclude translatory competence. Position BI term *diagnostic:* An error has to be perceived as such by a relevant user of the translation (linguists, in that sense, are irrelevant users of translations). If an error cannot be noticed by a relevant user then it is not one.

Pym (1992) makes a similar distinction between *binary* and *non-binary errors.* According to him, *binarism* is the typical approach of translation evaluation within foreign language teaching, where rules of correct grammar, vocabulary etc. are applied. I shall discuss the *therapeutic-diagnostic* distinction in more detail, but first I should like to present my overview of what typically happens in various evaluative settings (Figure 2).

Criteria / Evaluation situation	To be checked, edited, controlled	Correct time invested assessed	Cardinal sins, Bonus malus	Text production standard applied	ST - TT oriented	Therapeutic - Diagnostic
(1) Language acquisition (Schools) (Teacher)	NO	NO	YES	RARE	ST	TH
(2) Translation courses (University) (Lecturer)	RARE	RARE / NO	YES / NO	YES / TT	ST / DIA	TH / DIA
(3) Testing Translators (Agencies) (Senior Translators)	NO	RARE	YES	YES / NO	ST / TT	DIA
(4) Quality Assurance (Translation Department) (Senior Translators)	YES	YES	NO	YES	ST / TT	DIA
(5) Users of translations	NO	NO	YES	YES / NO	more TT	DIA / TH
(6) Translation critics (Books, journals) (Linguists) (Literary Experts)	NO	NO	NO	NO / YES	more ST	DIA / TH

Explanations: Data from Peter A. Schmitt Evaluierung von Fachübersetzungen (forthcoming) and Evaluierungs-Workshop Leipzig, 25 November 1994. Also from:
(1) Teacher in Baden-Württemberg where written translations (English into German) are part of the Oberstufen (A-level) course work.
2) My own observations — abroad and at home.
(3) From a diploma thesis by one of my students (Stoll, 1995) who investigated TQA processes in translation agencies.
(4) Summary of observations from a senior translator (head of department at a pharmaceutical firm).
(5) Typical responses collected unsystematically.
(6) Based on the extended (and published) discussion of Haefs' translation of Norfolk's

Figure 2
Evaluative settings

Evaluation scenarios

The main conclusions to be drawn from this overview of evaluation scenarios are the following:

(1) There are no common TQA criteria.

(2) The most common criterion is that of meeting the text production standards in the target text.

(3) In 50% of the evaluation scenarios it is unclear whether assessment is carried out on the basis of source text orientation or target text orientation. In these scenarios we also find a mixture of therapeutic and diagnostic criteria.

(4) The most homogeneous evalution criteria are applied in *language acquisition* and in *quality assurance* scenarios.

(5) The least homogeneous TQA criteria are assembled in university training courses.

Obviously, many teachers and lecturers are not aware of the fact that there is such a wide variety of evaluation scenarios and applied criteria. Some of them blithely substitute the authority of their position for any awareness of the complexity of the evaluative situations. The results are disastrous:

- students feel that TQA is subjective and arbitrary;

- they spend most of their energy adapting to the subjective standards of their teachers and feel that it is a waste of time to gain insights into the nature of translation processes as provided by translation theory;

- as a result of this they acquire neither the self-awareness nor the self-confidence they need to carry out translation tasks when they are on their own in the realand sometimes confusingworld of translations.

Supposed reader's reaction

The problem with any TQA (whether it is based on a theoretical model or on what is believed to be just 'common sense') is that it tacitly implies an assessment of a supposed reader's reaction. However, the empirical basis of the reader's putative reaction is often unclear. As a consequence, *therapeutic* and *diagnostic* TQA criteria often become mergedeven in books like Paul Kußmaul's *Training the Translator* (1995) which strictly follows functionalist principles:

> The assessment of errors in language teaching traditionally takes into consideration the stage of proficiency that can be expected of the students, and the 'seriousness' of a mistake is regarded from a pedagogical point of view. This means that due account has to be taken of who the student is and what level they are at in their studies. Subjective considerations are inevitably involved here.
>
> When using the communicative approach we do not have to think about the person who produced the translation. In order to evaluate a translation we do not have to know what went on in the student's mind when producing an error. We can restrict ourselves to the effect the error has on the target reader. In psycholinguistic terms, we are trying to imagine what kind of scene is created in the target reader by a particular linguistic frame used by the translator. One might argue, however, that this approach is just as speculative since we do not really know what goes on in a reader's mind, and that our speculations instead of being retrospective are prospective, but are speculations nevertheless. Still, I believe, it is easier to imagine oneself as an average reader than as an unsuccessful student translator.
> (Kußmaul, 1995:129-30)

But not much later Kußmaul recommends awarding bonus points for solving tricky problemsclearly a therapeutic approach:

> As Nord rightly said, we should do everything we can to motivate our students, and a positive TQA of problems solved will certainly help in this respect.
> (Kußmaul, 1995:134)

and:

> I certainly would not give additional good points for brilliant solutions here.
> (Kußmaul, 1995:136)

Apart from this, the communicative effect the error has on the target reader is often not an error at all if we can trust the reactions of educated native speakers of English. For instance, I asked three native speakers to carefully read the following passage and they all said there was nothing wrong with it:

> Why Study Language
> Introductory books and courses on linguistics invariably try to get away from their rather complex-sounding titles as soon as they can, by producing a thumb-nail definition which (it is hoped) will provide a more familiar starting point. This is usually something like 'Linguistics is the scientific study of language'. The authors then proceed to explain exactly why it is important to emphasise that linguistics is language studied scientifically, and follow this up by analysing the object of study, language, in some detail. All of which assumes a considerable amount of prior interest and commitment on the part of the reader. It is, however, no small task to embark on a thorough introduction to linguistics, most books of this kind have four hundred pages or more!
> David Crystal, (1971: 9)

I had 'retranslated' the *error* (in Kußmaul's view) into the English source text and presented this 'faulty version' to my subjectsin the third line from the end, 'however' must be replaced by 'after all'. They did not have any problems with it, whereas Kußmaul's diagnosis is very harsh:

> The line of thought of the German translation is completely illogical, if not absurd. (. . .) The mistranslation thus seriously disturbs textual cohesion and should therefore be viewed as a serious error.
> (Kußmaul, 1995: 141)

Can we really condemn a target text passage as 'completely illogical, if not absurd' if we cannot *prove empirically* that it really does have these disastrous effects? Is a diagnosis of this kind really based on the communicative effect? Is it not more likely that the effect is psychological rather thansupposedlycommunicative?

Being expert evaluators of translations we know the textual and actual worlds of the languages and cultures involved very well. And in order to do justice to the translations we assess we dive deeply into the depths of our considerable textual, linguistic, cultural and domain knowledgeif only to avoid the accusation by our colleagues or students of having 'overlooked' a nuance or shade of meaning. Whether all the treasures we have unearthed in this process

are of value to any relevant group of users of the translation becomes a question which is very difficult to answer. In order to do so, we would have to take several steps back and pretend to have forgotten what we know.

And there is another problem, perhaps even a dilemma: even if you have decided to be strictly *diagnostic* in the above sense, and even if you have set a translation task whereby providing parallel textseverybody should know what the client or user expects, you still have a problem: in the translations you have to evaluate, some turns of phrase may be more felicitious or idiomatic than others; there may be passages which you feel sound a bit strange without you being able to prove that they violate user expectations as defined.

If you ignore these differences, you may demotivate or even punish those students who spend a lot of time finding a perfect solution. If you do not, however, you will (a) have a hard time adequately describing the subtle differences between two versions, and (b) go against your own principles and apply non-diagnostic criteria.

Conclusions

If you alter a text by translating it you very often will not even know who is going to use the product of your labourindeed sometimes the eventual user may not even notice that the text was translated. It is, however, also possible that the end-users of your translation care very little about its quality because they will read it very superficially. Another possible scenario is that your client applies very hard and fast rules to what s/he thinks a translation should be or doregardless of what use somebody may or may not make of your translation eventually. And there is yet another possibility: your client and/or user may be convinced that translations are at best poor compromises, throwing the old *traduttore traditore* adage at you.

In most cases translators do not know on what criteria their work will be evaluatedor whether anybody is interested in its quality at all. Conversely, practically everybody feels competent to criticise translations from almost any angle they may have chosen:

> I have never heard such a word/phrase/sentence.
> I looked this word up in the dictionary and it should be . . .
> I asked a native speaker and she said that in English you must say . . .
> No translator can do justice to the subtleties of the original.

Implicitly or explicitly, most critics of translations claim to act competently in the interests of the users of translations although they often do not know who these are and they themselves are not typical users. In this respect there is no difference between theoretically founded models of TQA and evaluations as carried out by laypersons. This makes practical TQA a speculative enterprise.

The heated debate which took place in intellectual circles after Norfolk's *Lemprière's Dictionary* had been translated disastrously into German provided ample proof of that. Everybody felt qualified to air their views on translation in general and the merits of this one in particular; there was no position too sublime or too ridiculous not to be held, and when eventually a translatologist (Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast, 1994) analysed the translation 'scientifically' she only

added to the confusion by declaring (after some 50 pages of painstaking linguistic analysis) that one could not assess the quality of the (a?) translation as such.

Even if assessment is based on functionalist translation (as, in my opinion, it

should be) the speculative element will remainat least as long as there are no

hard and fast empirical data which serve to prove what a 'typical' reader's

responses are like. Research on *readability* and *text optimisation* as carried out in

the cognitive sciences may well provide them in the near future.

As long as everybody is guessing (while some are pretending to know) this is my advice to those who have to practise TQA almost daily because they are engaged in the training of translators:

(1) Do not engage in any formal assessment if you have not, prior to it, explained you assessment criteria.
(2) Base your assessment criteria on an existing evaluation situationas described in Figure 2.
(3) Make the text you set fit the scenario and/or use texts which have been translated.
(4) Discuss the assessment scenario in terms of its implications for a viable, general translation theory.

In doing so, courses will achieve several important goals:

- Trainers will become much more credible because they will no longer be forced to hide behind the shield of their authority.

- Consequently, students will accept that TQA is something that happens and not something that is used against them.

- Being exposed to various TQA situations and perceiving the differences they make on translation strategies, students will learn to appreciate knowledge about translation strategies, translation processes and the various approaches of translation theories.

- In the process of comparing different evalution situations and their effects, students are forced to argue their casesa very essential skill for a translator who wants to make his or her living by being able to prove that his or her translation is better than that of an amateur translator.

To sum up: When training translators, quality assessment should not be an end but a means.

Note

1. Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment. A Model Revisited (Tübingen: Narr, 1997) was not available from the publisher's at the time of submitting the manuscript.

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The Debate

Visibility of the Translator and Readers' Receptions

Jean-Pierre Mailhac (Salford University): You were speaking of the visibility and the presence of the translator. Shouldn't we make a distinction between visibility and presence? In my view, the translator is only visible to the reader, for example in footnotes, where the translator is saying 'Here I am, and I'm drawing your attention to this or that'. In other cases, I think, you have various degrees of presence, but not really visibility. When you translate 'Eton' as 'Eton', then you have minimum presence, but when you translate it as *'englische Eliteschule'* or *'teure Privatschule'* you have greater presence, but you are still invisible as a translator.

Hans G. Hönig (University of Mainz-Germersheim): In Germany, often the translators are not mentioned on the cover of a book. In your terminology, would this be classified as visibility or as presence?

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I think there are different dimensions of presence. The name of the translator appearing on the front page of a book, that's one type of presence, but I was actually thinking of the reader feeling some kind of intervention by the translator. Normally, readers wouldn't notice what additions, changes, etc., a translator made, because they don't have the source text to compare. That is, to a reader the translator is not visible. The only time he or she may become visible is if there is a translator's preface or footnotes.

Hans G. Hönig: I think presence helps with visibility. It's important that the readers know that there is a translator, and if you have a translator's preface explaining translation strategies, then the translator also becomes more visible. That's why I think these two issues are connected. Let us look at some examples from Lawrence Norfolk's best-selling novel *Lemprière's Dictionary,* the translation of which caused quite a stir in Germany. 'Those ladies over there, her sisters (but they had to be over forty) were awaiting their callers' was translated as *'Diese Damen da drüben, ihre Schwestern (aber das mußten über vierzig sein), erwarteten ihre Besucher'.* This suggests that there were 40 sisters in the room which is not very logical. Or: '. . . the young man is asleep, lolling on his shoulder. Cleaver shrugs him off'. A slightly indecent passage in English, you probably understand what it refers to, whereas in German you are really lost and do not know what the author is talking about: '. . . *der junge Mann schläft, der Kopf baumelt ihm auf die Schultern. Cleaver wendet sich achselzuckend von ihm ab'.*

It depends on a reader's experience and education I would say, whether he or she sees the translator at work or not. For me, the translator becomes very visible. I realise that the translator must have translated this on a word-by-word basis, not being very well acquainted with English idiomatic expressions. Butand this is the interesting pointin that debate in Germany the translator defended himself by saying he wanted to be invisible, he wanted the German readers to react to the English text as if it was written in English, in other words, he wanted them to be able to savour the English language and the English background of the translation. You could say that this is a very feeble excuse and the translation

is rubbish, but there was an extensive discussion in all the quality papers in Germany and also on radio, where all kinds of possible views were brought in, and there was absolutely no consensus on whether this was a good translation or a bad translation. The panel of the radio programme was made up of people who had studied philology and literature, and also representatives of publishers as well as practising translators. But there was not one single theoretician of translation, no translatologist. So, my point is this: it depends on the reader's knowledge and expectations whether he or she interprets this as visible or invisible. I think you can't say that the fact that some translator tries to make himor herself invisible will actually have the effect of being invisible to a certain kind of reader who has a certain experience in the field.

Christina Schäffner (Aston University): Just to add to this: when the book in question was published in Germany, there was actually a letter sent by 11 translators who had pointed out many translation errors and they asked the publisher to withdraw the book from the market. This became the basis for all the debate which then followed. Some people complained about the translation, others defended the text, saying 'the German sounds okay for me'.

Said Faiq (Salford University): Did the average reader take part in the debate?

Hans G. Hönig: Yes and no. No, in the sense that they were not consulted, and yes, because sales reached record heights, mainly as a result of the debatein spite of the bad translation.

Kirsten Malmkjær (Cambridge University): If we did more extensive research on reader receptions of translations I expect we would find more objections. This is a neglected area of translation studies. People do not seem to have any difficulty in reading these translations. Normally, nobody objects. In this case, however, some people did object.

Christina Schäffner: Yes, and these were the translators. Because they had the source text.

Kirsten Malmkjær: But I would have thought that most people reading that there were 40 sisters would think: 'This is odd'. One could test readers' reactions. A research project was carried out by Willie van Pier who was interested in stylistic effects. The results are published in his 1986 book *Stylistics and Psychology: Investigations of Foregrounding* (London: Croom Helm). He gave various texts to a selection of readers to see whether what stylisticians say about the manipulation of language was true or not. He found that it was true more or less. It seems to me that it would be possible to do a similar test with translations.

Rokiah Awang (Aston University): Isn't visibility also a cultural problem? As regards your second example, in my culture, in Malaysia, things like sex are not openly talked about. The translator would act as a gatekeeper is such cases and probably delete this sentence. And also the reader does not expect such a sentence to be translated exactly.

Hans G. Hönig: In my second example, there is a logical flaw. The English text clearly gives you cause and effect. In the German translation there is no cause and effectyou don't know why Cleaver leaves. There could be all kinds of

reasons for that. So, again you could say, quite clearly it's a logical flaw. The question remains, however, whether readers will notice that.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I think these are very interesting examples, but probably atypical in many ways of what normally happens. Here, we are dealing with a translator who is deliberately going out of his way to be seen and to be noticed somehow through the translation. It's probably not typical of what translators normally do. I think the key question about visibility is: Visibility to whom? Who are the people who actually noticed the translator? Are they bilinguals who had access to the source text? Or are they readers who are not bilingual and who didn't have access to the source text?

Hans G. Hönig: But that of course brings us back to the question: On whose judgements do we base the assessment? If we base it solely on readers' reactions who do not know the original text we certainly end up with a different result than when we consult a person who has at least a working knowledge of both languages or may even know the original text.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I think basing your teaching on the notion of 'I will teach whatever will be suitable in terms of reader's reaction' is like saying 'I am going to train a surgeon teaching him to avoid only the mistakes likely to be noticed by the patient', knowing that the patient could well die years later as a result of a mistake. Or take another comparison: when a mechanic services your car, you may have no way of knowing really what happened to the engine, of knowing whether the car has been properly serviced or not. Would you train mechanics so that they just do the things which are visible and forget about the rest? This would be the logical conclusion of this kind of attitude to readers' reactions to translations.

Hans G. Hönig: But you can't prove long-term damage to the reader of a mistranslation.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: No, but it's still there.

Hans G. Hönig: But where is the damage done? If we can't answer this, it's problematic to 'objectively' judge the translation.

Functionalism, Comparative Linguistics and Intercultural Communication

Kirsten Malmkjær: Christiane Nord's idea of loyalty might help to explain some of these issues and to answer your question. A lot of people think when they read a literal translation that they get something which is fairly similar to what they would have got if they had been able to read the original. And they would not have got the '40 sisters' in the original. I would like to link this to the question of the relationship between the functionalist theory and contrastive linguistics. It is a pity that it is set up as an opposition. If you bring in the notion of loyalty, which I think we can legitimately do in the case of literary translation, then it seems to me that one of the things that you are expecting your translation to do for its readers is to show what the original looks like. And here linguistics comes in, there are linguistic features in the original that ought to be reproduced in a translation. And when there are clear distortions, as with 40 sisters, it is legitimate

to say: 'Here is a translation mistake'. It seems to me that this translator was not aware of the function of 'they' in the source text and instead he thought the function is the same as *'das'* in the German texts, which of course it isn't. I think it is unfortunate always to see various approaches to translation as being directly opposed to each other. Why can't we take what is good from a variety of sources? It's interesting to see that Kußmaul in his book ends up doing contrastive linguistics.

Christina Schäffner: In this case, the linguistic aspects are also linked to world knowledge. 'They' definitely refers to the sisters but *'das'* does not; these words do not have the same referent. In addition, who in the world would have 40 sisters? Common sense would probably get in the way of the reading process, the reader should get stuck and say 'Well, this is a bit strange, it doesn't correspond to reality'.

Margaret Rogers (University of Surrey): I would like to link the point of linguistic accuracy to the ants and the bees example, because it struck me as odd when I read it. I know you were trying to make a slightly different point, but in discussions of natural language we've never heard anybody discuss the language of ducks, but we have heard people discuss the language of bees and certainly of ants as well. In that context, I would therefore say it is a translation mistake, because it doesn't fit into the frame of knowledge which the reader is expecting.

Hans G. Hönig: *The* frame of knowledge and *the* reader? That is the question. But since you quoted that example, may I just point out how strategic the translator was, because in the English it says 'ants and bees'. The translator who 'mistranslated' 'ants' by *'Enten'* did at least one thing, he changed the order. Why? Because he realised that the more prototypical animal in that context is the bee. So again here, this may be madness, but there's method in it!

Margaret Rogers: But there might be alternative explanations as to why the translator changed the order, or did he make his choice explicit?

Hans G. Hönig: No, I did not get back to the student to ask him why he did this. But stillit's a possibility.

Said Faiq: Maybe the translator said: They are talking about human language and experiments on animal communication, so it doesn't really matter whether it is a duck or an ant as long as I remain within that superordinate category of animals. And he probably thought that he was not flouting the conceptual references if he used any animal name.

Siti Mustapha (Aston University): There is also a cultural difference. In Malaysia, for example, chicken and ducks are the prototypical animals when we speak of animal communication. A Malaysian reader would have accepted 'ducks' without hesitation.

Kirsten Malmkjær: But here it's rather a question of linguistic interference, the closeness of 'ants' and *'Ente'*.

Hans G. Hönig: Oh, yes! But I've chosen this example because it poses very hard questions to the lecturer who has to mark translations. And I do think that we have to be clear about what stance we take, whether it's the therapeutic or the diagnostic approach. In my experience it is usually a mixture of both. When

marking one identical paper, the same lecturer will sometimes take a therapeutic and sometimes a diagnostic attitude, but I think this is not very valuable to the students. Whether lecturers take the therapeutic or the diagnostic approach doesn't matter, but they have to make it clear to their students beforehand which approach they are going to use, and they have to base their approach within a framework theory of translation, contrastive linguistics is not sufficient.

Christina Schäffner: My experience is that at universities the therapeutic approach is dominant and translation is very often seen as a linguistic exercise. Normally, no dictionary is allowed in examinations, and the assignment is just 'Translate into English!' or 'Translate into German!' When you don't give a purpose for the target text, then all you are checking is language knowledge. And when the criterion is to check how many words the students have got wrong, then translating 'ant' as *'Ente'* is a serious mistake. When you apply a functional approach, and when a specific purpose is given, then different assessment criteria need to be applied.

Helen Kelly-Holmes (Aston University): I wonder whether the notion of the translator's visibility or presence is actually such a specifically translation related issue. Is this not simply a sort of a situating strategy, situating information about one culture in another culture? This is something we see in all sorts of texts which function for intercultural communication, not only translations. For example, things which are specific to the source culture are explained in the text. Or is the notion of the translator's visibility something distinct from intercultural communication?

Hans G. Hönig: I think it is, because visibility is an issue for clients. Most clients actually insist on translators and interpreters not being visible. Let me make a short digression and talk about interpreting. There has been a very interesting and comprehensive study of clients' assessment of interpreters, commissioned by the AIIC. In about 80 conferences, more than 200 interviews were conducted by interpreters themselves, among them Barbara Moser, and the evaluation was done by her husband Peter Moser, who is a sociologist, so that was an ideal combination. One of the questions was: 'What annoys you most about an interpreter?' Keeping in mind that we are talking about visibility, you probably, like me, expected something like mistranslation or inaccuracy in terminology to be at least among the top three. But this was in ninth place! Top of the list were: Lack of microphone discipline, an unpleasant voice, lack of synchronicity, in other words, too much *décalage*. What most of the clients would have liked is an interpreter with a computer-like voice, no idiosyncrasies, more or less instantaneous, an interpreter with no human faults. To me this is an example of invisibility.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I am not surprised at all by these results because clients are not in a position to check the accuracy of the terminology, they don't understand the source text anyway, so what they pick up are the mannerisms, the presentation, that's all they can actually comment upon.

Hans G. Hönig: But if the terms are inaccurate they'll certainly notice that.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: Well, they can pick up some of them, in some technical fields. But in many instances they will not be able to notice that something has

been mistranslated or that the terminology is not accurate because they don't have access to the source text. So they focus on presentation, and it is not surprising that these items should be at the top of the list.

The Power of the Client

Said Faiq: Particularly in the Arab world, the voice is most important, and people even tend to prefer the female voice if there are particularly long sessions. I think this is also related to the question of how important we think the client is. In my MA class translating from English into Arabic we sometimes contact different assumed clients to see what expectations or wishes they have as to the translation they want. Very often we find that they haven't actually thought about this, but when you start talking to them about certain problems with the translation, then they sometimes ask for changes or additions which are not necessarily very helpful.

Christina Schäffner: This also adds another aspect of presence or visibility of the translator: how are you making yourself known in the process of translation? As translator you are the expert, you have knowledge both of the languages and of the cultures. If your client wants a more literal translation, you have to point out what the consequences would be.

Hans G. Hönig: Would you agree with me that quality in translation is something to be negotiated between the client and the translator?

Said Faiq: If the client is the user of that translation, I think I do agree. But there is also the intermediary side of it. There is the agency, and sometimes the agent doesn't know or doesn't care about the translator. The agent wants his or her money, there is the client, and the translator is at the other end. In this case, quality is negotiated via the agent. The agent finds himself or herself in a very tricky situation by saying 'yes' to everything to satisfy the client because the client pays, and the agency wants to keep every client. At the same time, agents try not to lose their translators, but sometimes they put too heavy demands on them, e.g. by saying 'Do as you are asked, you know, you are getting paid, I am getting paid, so just do it'. Clients sometimes don't know what they want, i.e. they have no TQA for themselves. Or we can say they have their own TQA, but it is removed from translation theory. Clients have the power because they pay, and they can change a lot. I can give an example. I translated a text about epilepsy for a company. The translation was sent to the client in Saudi Arabia who is a doctor there and he wanted to use it for his own hospital. Three weeks later I got the translation back via the agent with a little note saying: 'Brilliant, thank you very much, but I would rather use these verbs'. He is a doctor, knowing only a bit of English, but he sent me the text back asking for changes. There are five verbs which he likes to use in his medical discourse and I was forced to use them.

Hans G. Hönig: Well, this is the issue of corporate identity which I also touched upon in my paper. As I pointed out, this is a very delicate point in Germany, particularly in software manuals. I provided some examples of translators having to use mistranslations which have been accepted over the years and there is no way they can avoid them. I suggested the word 'negotiable' to you. I don't know how many people would agree that translation quality is something negotiable,

something to be worked out. I think this is quite an upsetting statement for some translators and certainly for the public at large, I would presume.

The Functional Approach and Literary Translation

Gunilla Anderman (University of Surrey): I feel that the functional approach would be difficult to use in certain forms of literary translation. Human experience is rooted in the specific, we go from the specific to the general. And if you replace the specific reference with a more general term or give an explanation as in the example about Eton, then somehow the impact of that particular feeling doesn't come across. I myself translate for the stage, and recently I had a passage in which somebody referred to a particular incident which took place in a suburb with an unpronounceable name in English. So the suggestion was, let's just put 'suburb'. But you can't do that, because one doesn't talk in these general terms. Even the actress reacted to it. My point is that I can see that what you are doing in your examples is a very good solution for a particular type of informative texts, but when you want to convey other aspects you might have difficulties. And it might even be better to put something in that people don't understand, rather than giving a long explanation, since then they somehow have to try to comprehend.

Hans G. Hönig: I grant you that. Translation strategies are certainly related to the text genre, and even perhaps to certain cultures. When you translate novels of a certain quality or indeed poetry, then you are faced with an almost insurmountable problem because you have no *tertium comparationis*. In other words, you cannot get out of language because there is no object of comparison you can refer to as you can in my examples. In literary texts, language itself talks. Think for example of polysemy or metaphor. If a word that was used before in the text is taken up again but now on a metaphorical level and if it connects to other words, then of course, and I certainly agree with you, you cannot use the method I suggested here. But I would say that the principle of the necessary degree of precision still applies, only, and that's the advantage of this stretchable principle, it has to encompass far larger issues than it does in the Eton example.

Said Faiq: Eton is an example of a culture-specific institution, and in such cases the translator would be extremely visible because we need to explain what's meant by Eton, culturally, socially, economically. Alternatively, you can change it to something local if you want to transpose it from one country to another, but here the translator has to be extremely careful in finding an Eton in German culture which is similar in size, prestige and history, which is probably very difficult.

Helen Kelly-Holmes: But there is no point in doing this because this is a text about an English person who is in Parliament. And this also brings in another issue: To what extent are we supposed to teach Germans a little bit about British culture? For example, is there any way to work in the name plus some implication in a less clumsy way? 'He still sent his son to exclusive Eton', or something like this.

Christina Schäffner: There is always the question of the relevance of micro-level information for the whole text. The necessary degree of precision is quite a good

way of dealing with such cases because the translation solutions will be different in different contexts.

Kirsten Malmkjær: If this example was not used for translation but, let's say, for a reading class in English as a Foreign Language, people would say: If you look at the context here you'll see that there is a 'but' and you can work up from that 'but' to the level of the sentence and context to arrive at the relevant interpretation. You could use this argument and say that in a translation, the reader might be able to make the same kind of inference about what sort of institution Eton is. No matter how much explanation you give about Eton, you still wouldn't get that specific English ethos about it.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: One of the key dimensions when it comes to deciding what kind of additional information you can or cannot fit in as a translator when you get a reference like Eton, is the issue of shared information in a particular communication situation. If in a literary text, a British person talks about Eton, and you have additional information in the translation, this would completely change the perceived value of Eton as a social entity. It would imply that Eton is something which needs an explanation. There is an interesting example in the translation of *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole,* where Adrian Mole talks about 'the AA'. The translator actually added *'l'Association Automobile'* between brackets, which implies that the reference was not transparent in the situation, as if Adrian Mole felt the need to give additional information. This completely changes the cultural value of the AA. Again, one of the key factors is the shared information which is assumed in a particular situation. In a newspaper article, this is quite different, you have maximum presence, and you can put a lot more information in, whereas in a literary text, you have minimum presence.

Myriam Salama Carr (University of Salford): In your paper you say that the more explanation the translator gives, the less reader response one may get. I agree with this statement very much. I'm currently looking at English translations of Naguib Mahfouz's novels from Arabic into English, and I was struck by the use of footnotes in one of the translations. I find them terribly disruptive because the novel itself is very specific to Egypt in the thirties, you have references to various political leaders, institutions, etc. This information is probably needed by the English reader, but you are constantly reminded when you read the English text that you are looking at something terribly foreign, something that needs explanations, and this no longer belongs to the actual novel. And you also lose the sort of universality you get in novels. I wonder whether the problem could have been solved by having a glossary appended or something less obtrusive.

Hans G. Hönig: Or a translator's preface as an introduction, which we sometimes have. But you may have a problem with your publisher, who may not understand the logic of this and say: 'Why don't you just translate it in the right way so that readers won't have a problem?' I am pleased to see that translators' prefaces are becoming more common.

Gunilla Anderman: But you can never do that for the stage.

Christina Schäffner: You could add some explanation in the text of the programme.

Hans G. Hönig: Exactly. In a programme you often have some explanatory notes about the play. Why not have something about the translation?

Gunilla Anderman: Yes, but this possibility is limited because you have to understand certain references very quickly, at a specific moment. To keep that information in your head while you watch the play is much more difficult than having a book in which you can refer to the preface or look something up.

Hans G. Hönig: Talking about plays, one of the most successful musicals, *My Fair Lady,* was also translated into German. In German, it's very difficult to have something similar to Cockney. So the most successful translation uses Berlin dialect which is somehow of the same nature as Cockney. That's fine, but the translator did not change the setting at all. So Eliza, speaking Berlin dialect, goes to the races at Ascot. That again is illogical, but it is accepted. As far as I know, nobody has ever complained about this 'mistranslation'. Again I would say that quality is defined in the context of the musical, quality is indeed negotiable. And what Myriam has just said is a very important point. When you read a novel you want to get absorbed into its world. That is part of the pleasure of reading a novel. You don't always want to have the barriers of the translator's footnotes. You may not even bother reading the explanations because as a reader you are looking for the foreigness.

The Power of the Translator

Said Faiq: In one of our previous seminars, Lawrence Venuti spoke about the American way of translating Japanese novels. The clients of the translations, i.e. the publishers, are only interested in selling them to the American readers, they are not interested in the exotic or in the foreign. Venuti said that if you want to translate for a living and for a publisher, then you have to forget about your own appreciations as a reader-cum-translator. But if you want to preserve the otherness of the text in your translation, then it will not be published in the States, and you will not make money. In all countries, publishers, editors and revisers of translations who work for publishers are the gods of translation. If the translator is lucky enough to have his or her translation causing what the German translation of *Lemprière's Dictionary* caused in Germany, then you have free publicity and the book will sell like hot cakes. But, generally speaking, I think that there is this enterprise which controls translation from and into different languages around the world. Publishers decide what gets translated.

Christina Schäffner: But this power of the publishers applies mainly to literature. When you think of other text types, there is often no powerful publisher. For example, instruction manuals come with the device a company wants to sell, and this device has to operate. I once heard of a case of serious translation mistakes in an instruction manual for some electrical appliance. One person was actually killed because he followed the instructions, and subsequently the translator was taken to court. In such cases you can't blame a publisher. The readers have obviously different expectations when they are reading an instruction manual to when they are reading *Lemprière's Dictionary,* and obviously different levels of tolerance too as to the quality of the translation. But I think translators themselves should be more powerful.

Said Faiq: When it comes to non-literary types of texts I think that there is some implicit trust between the parties involved in the translation process. I'm not quite sure whether this is part of TQA or not.

Christina Schäffner: Could we then say that the translator has more power in the case of pragmatic text types?

Said Faiq: Probably, yes.

Hans G. Hönig: Yes and no. My wife is a translator, and I know from her that clients can be incredibly stubborn. To give an example: She had to translate an advert for a banking group from German into English. At the top there was a picture of people playing cricket, and the German caption was something like: 'In your country it may be a different ball game'. She told them that cricket is quite normal in Britain, and not at all something esoteric as it is to a German reader. For the translation into English she suggested changing either the picture or the text. But her client said: 'That's none of your business, you just translate the text'. And this happens very often. I think we must try to negotiate. I'm coming back to this because I think it is important. One of the reasons why I addressed my book *Konstruktives Übersetzen* to laypeople was that I feel what we really need is an enlightened layperson. If we had more informed laypeople, then I am sure we could negotiate better and we would get better results in assessing translation quality, on either side.

Gunilla Anderman: But I think this enlightenment should start with people's idea of language. Take for instance the extraordinary reaction to Jean Aitchison's radio lectures. People thought they could disagree about matters of language because they feel that language is something that belongs to everyone and therefore they think they have the expertise to make any statement. I think you have to solve that problem before you move on to translation, but it's very, very difficult.

Hans G. Hönig: I absolutely agree, I also talk about this in my book.

Christina Schäffner: As Gunilla is saying, since everybody uses language every day, a lot of people feel competent to comment on it. And it's similar with translations. In your book you destruct some traditional assumptions or illusions laypeople have about translations, i.e. the assumption that translation comes naturally to everybody who knows more than one language, the assumption that a translation is a mirror-image of the source text, the assumption that meanings can be read from the forms. It is particularly this last assumption which is reflected in frequently heard instructions to a translator to just translate what is there and not bother about the rest.

Steffen Sommer (Aston University): There is still a problem with the status of translation, of translation theory and the position of the translator. It isn't a protected profession like others. There are still too many poor translations on the market. A reason for this is, I believe, that translations are accepted as a text type. Christiane Nord says that a text type is determined by its function and it can't be the function of translation to be a translation. But that's exactly what happens. People believe that translation is a text typeif the text is a translation, it has to look like a translation. That's why clients don't want translations to be perfect.

Hans G. Hönig: Yes, this does happen, but one has to differentiate. Not all clients want the translation to look like a translation.

Beate Herting (Leipzig University): Would you link this to the concept of visibility? When you were talking about using footnotes, I felt that in these cases the visibility of the translator was something negative for you. But you also say that in a functionalist approach the translator must be visible. Do you mean the translator must make his or her presence felt as an active partner in the negotiating process? In your book you say that translators must convince other people that they are experts in their field and that they have some kind of special knowledge which they got at a university, for instance. This seems to me to be a positive interpretation of the concept of a translator's visibility.

Hans G. Hönig: Both of these aspects can be seen in a positive way, and I discuss both of them in my book. Firstly, because of the nature of language and of communication, and because of cultural differences, a translator must be visible in a translation, there is no other way. And, secondly, also for the clients or the users of the translation, it is better if the translator is visible as a partner, to use Justa Holz-Mänttäri's concepts and ideas. If a translator is visible, he or she can serve clients and users far better than if he or she pretends to be just a medium who is not visible. So from both sides I would say it is better and it is in any case inevitable that translators are visible, they must be visible. In a way, this is a dogmatic statement, but it is also a factual statement based on a communicative approach to language.

Political Agendas Behind Translations

Sue Wright (Aston University): In certain texts the idea is to obfuscate, to hide the meaning with euphemisms, or to soften the impact by using certain formulations. I'm thinking of the Gulf War and the various terms for killing people that were used. Does anyone have any examples of how translators stripped away that obfuscation to make clear what was actually being said? In such a case, rather than being the gatekeeper that Rokiah was talking about, who takes meaning away, the translator could actually add meaning. I'm thinking of cases where as a result of a translation, the obfuscation is gone and the meaning is clear to the readers. It seems that the translator would be very present in such a translation.

Helen Kelly-Holmes: It depends on the approach the translator takes. They can deliberately try to recreate the euphemism and the ambiguity. They may also take a very active, visible, almost subversive approach and change the text.

Hans G. Hönig: This is a very important issue in interpreter training. Interpreters are trained, through note-taking and other devices, to take a scenic approach to understanding. In other words, they have to grasp scenes holistically because that's the most efficient way of understanding. But problems occur if there is intended vagueness in a political speech, which is quite frequent. Particularly on occasions where interpreters are present, e.g. after-dinner speeches or welcoming ceremonies at airports, politicians often say something about what they are going to do, and on such occasions they are usually very vague and leave their options open. This is a real problem for interpreters, because, on the one hand, we train

them to understand holistically and fill in scenes, but in cases like these they must be very careful not to complete the scene and make it transparent to the other side. That's why we also teach them how to be vague in certain circumstances.

Myriam Salama Carr: Feminist translators, e.g. in Canada, are sometimes advocating a 'shock-effect translation'. For instance when it is suggested that the French original, which meant something like 'I will enter history without lifting my skirt', could be translated as 'without opening my legs'. I think this is quite a good example to illustrate getting rid of the euphemism and also an example of a kind of subversive role of the translator.

Christina Schäffner: There is also a particular philosophy and political agenda behind this feminist approach to translation. Because of their agenda, they deliberately use translation strategies with which they can make certain things much more explicit.

Said Faiq: Yes, that's very functional, but whose function is it? Sometimes the function is actually forced upon the text. In the case of the feminist translators, and also in the case of translations during the Gulf War, there is an agenda which governs the function of the whole text. The translations of the official communiqués which the allied forces allowed to be produced during the war were carefully monitored so as not to arouse any bad feelings among the Arab countries that took the side of the Americans. Other newspapers which were pro-Saddam at that time translated differently or added information. There is an agenda behind any translation, and this agenda influences the function of the text. This agenda is motivated by what you want to achieve for the receivers of the translation.

Rokiah Awang: Such an agenda is also obvious in my research on news translation in Malaysia. I found some cases where the words have been changed. For example, you have 'terrorist Serbs' in the target text while in the original it's only 'Serbs'. The translator added the word 'terrorist' to present a negative image of the Serbs compared to the Muslims. This happens very often.

Said Faiq: During the eighties, when the Soviets had invaded Afghanistan, the Reagan Administration always used the phrase 'Afghan Mujahedin'. 'Mujahedin' is the Arabic word meaning 'freedom fighters'. But any Soviet politician at that time would use the term 'terrorists' to describe the Mujahedin in Afghanistan. Now, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, I think the American politicians would call what the Mujahedins, or particularly the Talibans in Afghanistan, are doing extreme terrorist activities. It's power again, this time geopolitical power, particularly when we talk about the genre of political texts.

Culture-specific Attitudes Towards Translation

Hans G. Hönig: Yes, these are issues of power, but, at least in Germany, there is also another issue and I think that makes Germany different perhaps from Britain. Let's look at some figures: every seventh book published in Germany is a translation. Seventy-five percent of all translations are from English. In Britain, only one percent of all books published are translations. German society has always been exposed to translations, and this has one important consequence: most educated Germans have very firm and sometimes dogmatic views on

translation. They feel this is something they know about, they've heard about, and they will quote the old clichés, like 'As literal as possible, as free as necessary'. I have the feeling that Germany in particular has this sort of translation consciousness which as a translator you come up against very often. And that makes it even more difficult because you hardly meet a person who will ask you what translation is aboutthey'd rather tell you what translation is about. That is connected to the issue of Quality Assessment because, as was said earlier, the public has views on what translations should be like, and indeed, sometimes an incomprehensible text for them is a translation. I would really like to know from you whether you feel Britain is different in this respect or whether it is the same.

Christina Schäffner: I just wonder whether this particular German attitude and awareness might also be the reason why a lot of the theoretical concepts of translation originated in Germany.

Margaret Rogers: When you say that there are huge differences in the level of awareness of translation in Britain and in Germany, then the implication would be that translators might actually have an easier job working for a UK client. But I don't think that's the case. Professional translators here have very similar difficulties to those which German translators experience, as you describe in your book.

Gunilla Anderman: I agree with Margaret. This is in line with what Toury and Even-Zohar talk about, i.e. the idea that if you have an influential literary tradition you have to write in such a way that you fit in with that tradition. So the difficulty of going into English is very frequently that there is a particular norm of how to write a book or a play, etc., because English is a major language and has a strong literary tradition. For a speaker of a world language with an established literary tradition it's easy to make the assumption that other forms of writing could be expected to conform to that tradition. In other countries such as Germany, on the other hand, you would probably find people more open to books in translation.

Hans G. Hönig: And less open in Britain?

Gunilla Anderman: I think so. There are always reviewers who will more or less say that 'I don't like literature in translation'.

Margaret Rogers: It is very hard to express in a tangible, concrete way, but I think the attitude in Britain, at least by the cultural elite, is that there is something a little bit suspicious about translations. This attitude, which is monolingually based, connects with the whole attitude that there is something suspicious about foreign languages anyway.

Helen Kelly-Holmes: Just saying something in a foreign language is a guaranteed way to make people laugh.

Hans G. Hönig: The example of the journalist and his attitude to translation which I discuss in my paper, would you say that is typical, or is it unfair?

Margaret Rogers: At least he thought about it, although he comes to conclusions which I might not agree with. But it's very rare for anybody to even articulate something about translation which shows any degree of thought. Usually comments are at the level of pure prejudice.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I think that the volume of translation in a given country will inevitably have an impact on the attitude of the readership towards cultural references. If you are in a country where there is a lot of translation done and you are used to it, then the foreigness of the novel, for instance, will be retained and the readership will be quite happy with it. However, if it's a country which is not as open because there isn't much translation, then there may be pressure from publishers to water down the foreigness and to make it transfer, or simplify or whatever, in order to minimise the cultural shock or the transplantation for the reader.

Hans G. Hönig: That could be an interesting point to pursue in research. If that is true then you need different assessment systems from ours in Germany.

Said Faiq: I think translations into English are not as common as translations from English into other languages, because English is an international language. There is a widespread attitude that others should learn English and that they should translate our literary heritage, but not the other way around. There is a novel about the Arab world published recently by an Egyptian writer who was educated in Britain. She wrote the novel in English and the title is *'In the Eye of the Sun'*. The title conforms a bit more to the Arabic style than to the English style, but the novel was extremely well received. A leading literary critic at Oxford wrote: 'This is a brilliant novel'. They like it because a foreigner has put in a lot of effort to learn the language, and to learn the format of writing a literary work in English. We don't need a translator's workshe is writing in our language and we like it.

Myriam Salama Carr: It would be interesting to know what the reception might have been if this were a translation from the Arabic. It might have been quite negative.

Kirsten Malmkjær: I don't think you can necessarily say that a book is well received just because it was written in English rather than being translated into English. If you look at the recent success of Scandinavian literature in English translation that is not the case. Peter Høeg for example, sold more books in America than any other translated author. And his story is extremely Danish, it retains the entire culture and everything. What I think it may share with that Egyptian author is that it criticises its home culture. But while it focuses on Denmark, it broadens out to some general criticism of the Western world, so you can accept it in English because the problems are somewhere else.

Quality Assessment and Translator Training

Helen Kelly-Holmes: You said a lot about users of translation. But in the training process, at universities for example, no real users will actually judge the translations our students produce. So how will they be judged? Will they be judged as the target text in the target text tradition? Although we said translations should not be seen as a specific text type, I'm just wondering, if you want more visibility for the translator, aren't you going to make translations into a sort of a text type?

Hans G. Hönig: Visibility doesn't mean that you feel the presence of the translator all the time. It means that he or she acts responsibly, and you can only

act responsibly if you are recognised as a person and as a partner. The consequence of this is that you are also responsible for the functional success of the text you provide. But you will only guarantee this success if you know about the needs of your clients and end-users. And to me this means that the translator has to be visible in the negotiating process. We talked about readers' reactions, I put great hope in the latest developments in the field of readability studies and text optimisation. It's not so easy to test whether one text is more readable than another one. Perhaps this fairly young discipline may eventually provide an empirical basis for what we are looking for: how can we establish, empirically, that certain texts function better than others. Such an approach would give us some kind of basis for evaluation. But at the moment we do not have these data, and that's why I feel that the communicative approach lacks a foundation.

Christina Schäffner: Would this lack of data be one reason why we always come back to comparing the source text and the target text? Although we say we want to apply a functional or a communicative approach, what we are doing in the end is looking at the target text to see if and how parts of the source text have been rendered.

Hans G. Hönig: Probably this is one reason, but I think it's fair to compare the texts, as long as you tell your students. It would be infinitely better if we at least were honest about what we are doing. But it's notjust the question of being honest for the sake of being honest, you have to know quite a bit about what you are doing, and you can't even analyse what you do yourself unless you have acquired certain tools. In my classes, I try to show some scenarios, certain tools and connections and how they fit into translation theory. I cannot give an absolute solution, only this piece of advice: know what you are doing, and pass on your knowledge to your students when you teach translation, and test to see whether they know what they are doing. Formal exams are also part of this. This has of course all kinds of implications, let me name just one. If you want to assess the quality of your students' translations diagnostically you will have to give them all the translation tools, like dictionaries for instance. I know of institutions where it is claimed that translation quality is assessed diagnostically, but students are not allowed to use a dictionary. This is a paradoxical set-up, it is clearly wrong and has to be changed.

Margaret Rogers: Even if we could define what makes one text more readable than another one for a particular readership, the question still remains for us as trainers: What do we do in the classroom, and how can we actually help the students to get to the point when they produce a text of the required kind under certain conditions? In foreign language teaching and learning, which has a longer pedagogical history than translation teaching for professional purposes, researchers are beginning to ask: how is the student's progress related to the teacher's beliefs about what he or she does in the classroom? I think we can draw a parallel here, but even if we understood what we were trying to produce, how do we teach that to the students? In my experience, there is no direct connection between what I do as a teacher and what the students learn.

Said Faiq: There is another important question for assessing translations: who is in charge of setting the check-lists for TQA? In the end, it is the lecturer who says:

This is the check-list for a good, an appropriate, or equivalent translation. I think TQA has always been done by the person in charge, and that particular person knows both languages concerned and goes into the classroom with the interpretation that he or she arrived at of a particular text used in the seminar, which may even be a completely wrong understanding.

Beate Herting: The diagram in your paper which illustrates the two different approaches to TQA gives the impression that the assessment within any one scenario is homogenous. However, this is not the case. We find different approaches among teachers training future professional translators. This may depend on the underlying theoretical approach you favour personally, and also on your own experience as a professional translator, your own experience with clients, agencies and so on. This should not be underestimated because it clearly gives you some idea of what to tell the students and it gives them some guidelines in preparation for their future work. Another factor that influences the choice of the assessment approach is the students' command of the language. At our university, student translators can learn a language from scratch, e.g. Spanish or Italian. In these translation classes, lecturers prefer to adopt the therapeutic model, they want to have proof of the students' command of the language, whereas in the English Department we use the diagnostic model. We can do this because the students have a rather good command of English when they come to the university. We should not think that within university translator training, everybody has got the same ideas of translation assessment, or even the same concepts of what translation is about.

Hans G. Hönig: My experience is that even within one language department, there is no consistent approach. Even within the marking of one paper, I find that some approaches are clearly therapeutic and others are diagnostic. I think that I have made it abundantly clear that I am not against a therapeutic approach as long as it is defined as such. It is a very sensible approach in language acquisition phases, and then of course one can act accordingly as far as tools are concerned. Then it is probably reasonable not to give students a dictionary if you want to test their level of language acquisition, but then you probably should also consider whether translation classes are the most efficient way of teaching a foreign language. There may be other methods that are more efficient.

Anyway, what I find most useful in classroom situations is variation in the scenarios. That's what I mean by TQA as a means and not an end, and this is illustrated in Column 2 in my diagram. I find one scenario and I tell the students that I am going to mark a specific text according to some assessment strategy that is normally used in this scenario, and I look at how much time it takes me to correct their mistakes. If they make one horrendous mistake but they make it consistently, e.g. always translating 'bulb' as *'Zwiebel',* when in German it could also be a light bulb, it is very easy to correct, because I can use the search and replace facility on my computer. However, my computer cannot replace semantic and syntactical errors so easily. This approach is new to the students and it motivates them to translate within that framework. To change scenarios from term to term, or even within one term, makes them sensitive towards the whole issue of assessment. You provoke a discussion and inevitably end up providing

a framework model of translation theory. You show that TQA cannot be an isolated yardstick which has nothing to do with a framework theory. It has to be based on a framework theory and on a view of what language is used for. Students become motivated to talk about these questions if they experience different situations themselves. I find that a change of scenario does everybody a lot of good.

Myriam Salama Carr: In our MA programme at Salford we do teach principles of translation assessment to students and they do have an idea of what is happening in the field and how translations can be assessed. I usually end up saying that in the end, whoever is going to be your assumed client is bound to be influenced by their own linguistic background or training and will have certain criteria as well. I think, as long as they are aware of this, this is fine. I know that I do not judge translations in the same way as other colleagues would do, I may place more emphasis on certain aspects. But I would also argue that even when you are dealing with trainee translators, as opposed to teaching languages, your work has to be therapeutic. One of the criteria which I find quite useful, is whether a translation is usable. I do appreciate that this is artificial, because who decides whether a translation is usable or not, and this is where perhaps your own experience as a professional translator could be quite useful. The time you need to revise a text until it can be useful at a fairly basic level is important in this respect.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: We are dealing with different types of users in a teaching situation and constantly work with all of them. There is the real user, the person who might not spot the mistakes in a translation done commercially for his or her own purpose. Then there is a kind of idealisation of a user, the one we postulate for a given exercise, such as 'you translate this video for client X' and there is an assumption that client X can spot any mistakes in the translation a student produces. Then there is the lecturer who is the actual recipient of the translation, and even though we are pretending through this simulation that the lecturer is not there, it is quite clear that the lecturer is there, and the students are hugely aware that they are writing for their lecturer. The lecturer will also have certain priorities. For instance, if you know that you have covered a particular aspect in a seminar before the translation exam is set, this will determine the way you are going to mark the translation. So you have this difference in the recipients. I do not think that there is a problem in that multiplicity and I think that you need to operate with all these levels at the same time. You cannot say to people that the average user will probably tolerate all sorts of things, therefore we are going to pitch everything at that level. You are constantly aiming higher so that you know, hopefully, you will produce high-quality translations, but also if the standard drops slightly, it will still be reasonable. If you take an example of a pun in a text, you will discuss it with your students and you will try to get the best possible solution. But you may also say that in reality, if, for example, you are given a very poor script for a video and the video itself is very poor, then you will not really say to your students that they are expected to spend hours on it. Instead you ask them to do a translation which is at the same level as the original.

Maeve Olohan (UMIST): One of the modules on the MSc Translation Studies

course at UMIST is a translation project. Students are translating into and/or out of languages for which we do not have expertise. What they do is translate a fairly sizeable text and then write a commentary on it. As part of that commentary they have to explain who they decided their target audience will be and what the function of their translation would be. In this case the conflict between types of recipients does not occur, and definitely the lecturer as a recipient is cut out. They have only one recipient since they decide who their target audience is, and on the basis of this they can justify their decisions.

Hans G. Hönig: The issue of time is indeed very important. In Germany, students usually have far too much time, if you compare it to the work of professional translators. We have something like 500 words in three hours. You can also test their translation competence by giving them rather less time, and I do this often. Then of course it becomes more problematic if you always strive for the perfect solution. Obviously, you do not have enough time to look for a good way to translate a pun, for example. As a lecturer, you will then have a hierarchy of what is more important and what is less important within that translation and within the specified scenario.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: If you do have a pun, it would be quite good in a teaching situation to say 'this would be a nice solution', not 'you must achieve that in three hours'. Just show the students what a good solution to a specific problem would be.

Hans G. Hönig: The problem is that lecturers usually think up the perfect solution at home, when they have plenty of time. I am not sure that this is a realistic scenario. It would be better to work it out in the classroom. I occasionally ask my students to bring a text which I have not seen before.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I agree with you. All I am saying is that there is no harm in giving them a nice translation if you have got one. I do not think it should be withheld from them, if you have one, simply because in real life they might not have time to find it.

Christina Schäffner: As long as this sample translation is not taken as the one and only solution, the 'correct' one. There is sometimes a danger with sample translations provided by you as a lecturer. The students might think this is the 'correct' solution and they think they have made a mistake if they don't have the same solution.

Gunilla Anderman: What seems to be happening now is that a number of proposals concerning standards are appearing in different countries to use as quality assessment for professional translators. The German one, the so-called DIN standard, is now becoming available in English translation. The Education and Training Committee of the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI) set up a special sub-committee to work on this and has submitted a report to the ITI Council, but it is a bit of a sensitive issue because the implementation of the proposals might be quite expensive. I believe there is now an Austrian one as well as an Italian one. It might not be a bad idea, when these documents appear, to bring them into the classroom, and actually let students see what the general consensus is concerning standard requirements for professional translators.

Hans G. Hönig: May I quote the German DIN definition of what a translation is? It is DIN002345/1996: *'schriftliches Übertragen eines Textes aus einer Ausgangssprache in eine Zielsprache'*"Written form of rendering a text from a source language into a target language'. This is a very general and uncontroversial statement. So I wonder whether your optimism is justified.

Gunilla Anderman: There may be no other difference than presentation, and maybe some practical aspects which might not be a bad idea to make students aware of.

Said Faiq: I believe we should be very flexible, on the one hand, by adopting some TQA which also allows for change and variability, and, on the other hand, in order to be fair to students, we need to regularly incorporate references to theoretical aspects and concepts in the teaching of translation. In the profession now we have translator-cum-theorists of translation. We teach translation, but at the same time we want to do research and write about it. In my institution we have people who imagine that they are theoreticians, but all they do is say, 'well, I know the two languages and I tell the students "this is not correct in German" and they have to accept it'. We have extremely good professional translators and interpreters, but they hate theory.

Christina Schäffner: But the attitude to theory depends on how you combine the practical translation exercises with translation theory in your classes. You cannot separate the two, you cannot just teach theory alone, by giving the students some key concepts and definitions. You also have to show convincingly the relevance of this for any translation they do.

Beate Herting: We mentioned the concept of usable translations as a criterion for assessment. I think it might be dangerous to use this term, because we all know that there are translations on the market which are of course usable, but which none of us would consider to be good translations. If you think of all the badly translated instruction manuals from Chinese that are on the German market. If I say to my students that their translations must be usable, they can bring me something like this and say that this is usable too. In order to avoid such attitudes, I think it is necessary to integrate theory and practice. If I understand Said correctly, he was advocating starting from a more practical translation activity and then you try to make your students aware of underlying theoretical principles of translation studies. In Leipzig, we do this the other way round. We have a course which is called 'Specific Translation Studies' which is language-pair specific, and at the end there is an examination. For this, the students choose a text and they create a fictitious or real translation commission. It is not simply a translation examination in which only the translation itself is assessed. We also make the students talk about the strategies they used, because it is very important to let them consciously reflect on what they do and why they do it. This is a very successful course, and it is usually also successful in overcoming the reluctance to think about theoretical concepts in translation training.

Myriam Salama Carr: When I say 'usable', I'm thinking of revision as well. I do agree that you can have translations which would not be usable but which seem to function. On our courses too, students are asked to suggest good solutions and justify them, which I think is very important.

Sue Wright: When you speak about different solutions, there must definitely be limits, either set by the language or by cultural traditions. Certainly in the French tradition, there is a belief that there is a French language which is immovable and that there are norms and standards, and we can find the correct solution. I wonder if something like the German translation of *Lemprière's Dictionary,* that is, keeping the idiosyncrasies of English and going against the accepted rules, is possible or acceptable in French.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: I think it is true that the average French person would be very sensitive to language issues, this is deeply rooted in the French approach to language. People will pontificate and come up with all sorts of comments about language which are totally unacceptable to anyone who knows anything about language. There is a long tradition of state intervention and discussion of language matters in newspapers.

Sue Wright: It gives you less leeway when you are translating. I feel constrained when I translate into French. I feel that there are fewer solutions going that way.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: There is probably the theory and the reality of language use and translation. I am sure that you will get French recipients of translations rejecting them as being inadequate, basing their judgement on these absolute formal criteria of what the French text should be like, but I am also sure that in the reality of the profession there will be a lot of translations on the market which do not meet such criteria at all.

Said Faiq: It is also good to push the creative ability of translators to the limit, when the language puts barriers in front of you. This is challenging, and this is what is nice about translation.

Myriam Salama Carr: The rules and norms are also changing, for instance in the field of literature. Some translations that were done within the tradition of fluency in the target language have been redone into French because they are not seen as faithful enough. For instance, Dostoyevski was re-translated quite recently, and this new translation tries to reflect the idiosyncrasies of the original author. Of course, such changing rules, standards and norms need to be taken into consideration when you want to assess the quality of a translation.

Jean-Pierre Mailhac: You say at the end of your paper that in training translators, quality assessment should not be an end but a means. I would welcome some clarification of that. Looking at your Figure 1, it looks as though in every case TQA is a means to an end. In language acquisition it is there to teach the language and to assess whether the students have improved their performance. The same applies to translation courses. You assess a translation and use the mark for various purposes. In testing translators the purpose is to see if they have improved or not. There always seems to be a purpose for TQA. I cannot think of a situation where you could just do TQA without a purpose. How can you have TQA which is not a means to an end?

Hans G. Hönig: By just substituting the authority of your position for transparent criteria of evaluation. This happens quite often. You do not give explanations, but just say 'That is how I have always done it'. That to me is not a tool to create awareness of TQA and embed it into an overall translation theory. That is just an

end in itself. In other words, it is just a final assessment of the quality and no more, whereas, according to my ideas, you can use TQA as a teaching tool, as a means to increase awareness, and probably in the end you also get better translation quality results. That is the difference.

What is That Translation For? A Functional View of Translation Assessment from a Pedagogical Perspective: A Response to Hans G. Hönig

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Introduction

Just as the small child, puzzled by someone she had just met, once asked her mother: 'Mummy, what is that man for?', so we are exhorted in the functionalist view of translation always to ask after the purpose of a translation. While the child's question springs from an unusual perspective, the notion of the translation as an instrument of some kind is one that has been gaining considerable ground beyond its German origins. In this context, Hans G. Hönig's paper on translation assessment from a functionalist perspectivewritten in English and well illustrated as alwaysis to be welcomed. In his coverage of what he calls 'translation quality assessment' (TQA), Hönig covers a wide range of issues, including: a historical perspective on translation evaluation; popular views on translation quality; the relative power of authors, commissioners, users and the translator; competing theoretical models; and a comparison of various 'evaluation scenarios'. In our response to Hönig's paper, it is to the issue of evaluation scenarios that we would like to turn, focusing on translation assessment in the context of translator training. This is a topic which is of central interest in the training of translators and one which, as Hatim and Mason note, is 'under-researched and under-discussed' (1997: 197). We will approach the topic under some headings which reflect what we perceive to be certain parallels with the discussion of related issues in second/foreign (L2) language learning and pedagogy: error analysis; error evaluation; and authenticity. It is our contention that translation pedagogy can benefit from the considerable body of observational and experimental research which has been built up over the last three decades in L2 studies, whereas empirical research on the teaching of translation is just beginning.

The starting point for our discussion is Hönig's implicit comparison of the assessment of professional translations and those of student translators.

Error Analysis and the Assessment of Translation Quality

In order to distinguish between the 'evaluation scenarios' which he selectslanguage learning in schools, university translation courses, agency testing of translators, quality control in companies, users of translation, and translation criticsHönig applies a number of 'criteria', only one of which is discussed, namely, what he calls the therapeutic versus the diagnostic approach. To recap,

the therapeutic approach focuses on the student and his or her competence, seeking the cause of the error, whereas the diagnostic approach focuses on the user of the translation and his or her supposed reaction. According to Hönig, the evaluation of translations done by trainee translators is in practice characterised by both approaches, in other words, taking an overall view, there is considerable ambivalence in the evaluation of student translations.

Hönig's choice of the metaphor of diagnosis and therapy is a puzzling one: in a medical context, the two processes are chronologically linked, with diagnosis being the necessary precursor to therapy. The successive temporal element of diagnosis preceding therapy presents particular problems when attempting to transfer the literal meaning to the context of translation evaluation, since the two approaches are presented by Hönig as alternatives with different foci. By contrast, the field of error analysis in second and foreign language learning, begun in the 1960s and developed during the 1970s, treats diagnosis and therapy as successive stages in the analytic process. Based on the seminal work by Corder, Ellis (1994: 48) summarises the steps as shown in Table 1 in the left-hand column; we have elaborated these stages in the second column and added a third column to show what could be considered parallel stages in the evaluation of a translation in a university context. We have omitted from the table the first stage as reported by Ellis, i.e. collection of a sample of learner language.

Table 1 A comparison of learner language and student translation performance from the perspective of error analysis

Steps in Error Analysis (EA) as summarised by Ellis (1994: 48)	Commentary on EA in second/foreign language learning	Corresponding stages in the evaluation of a student translation
Identification of errors	A complex issue involving sociolinguistic (e.g. language varieties), psycholinguistic (e.g. so-called 'covert' errors; slips in performance versus competence: 'mistakes' versus errors) and linguistic (e.g. channel of communication) questions	Involves not only notions of correctness (e.g. in interpreting ST denotational meaning and in producing TT language code) but also of appropriateness (cf. Hatim & Mason, 1997: 203)
Description of errors	Assigning errors to various types, often classified according to linguistic levels (i.e. syntax, morphology, lexis, etc.); focuses on the product	Assigning errors to various types (e.g. errors of terminology, phraseology, sentence meaning, cohesion, etc.); focuses on the product (i.e. the TT)
Explanation of errors	Attempting to find explanations for the learner's errors to establish 'competence', i.e. L2 knowledge; methodological problem posed by attempt to infer processes from product	Attempting to find explanations for the translator's performance as evidenced in the product; process-oriented, aiming to establish competence (or competences)
Evaluation of errors	Assessing the impact of the error on the reader/listener; involves notions of error gravity	Assessing the impact of the error on the reader

Notes: ST: Source text; TT: Target text; L2: Second/foreign language

Returning to Hönig's evaluation schema of diagnosis versus therapy, the diagnosticor functionalistapproach seems to correspond to the last stage of error evaluation in Table 1 where the emphasis is on reader reaction; therapy (i.e. the non-functionalist approach) seems to belong to an earlier stage, i.e. error explanation. Hönig's dichotomy suggests, however, that in a functionalist approach to translation evaluation, explanation plays no role. Furthermore, the earlier stage of error identification is impossible to separate from reader impact, since the reader is the sole arbiter of what counts as an error. While the designations 'diagnosis' and 'therapy' seem unsatisfactory for the reasons outlined, Hönig's distinction may perhaps be better characterised as a concern with the product and its impact on the one hand ('diagnosis') and with the processes giving rise to the product on the other hand ('therapy').

In order to assess the implications of this model of evaluation, let us consider Hönig's own hypothetical example of the test translation of a passage from Smith and Wilson's (1979) introductory book on linguistics *Modern Linguistics.* The example is repeated here for ease of reference:

> For example, languages are used to communicate; one obvious line of research would be to compare human languages with other systems of communication, whether human or not: gestures, railway signals, traffic lights or the languages of ants and bees.

Hönig's argument centres on the putative translation of 'ants' as *'Enten'* (ducks): Lecturer A, following the non-functionalist therapeutic approach to evaluation, attempts to explain the error as one of interference and judges it to be a grave error, pointing to the student's poor level of English. Lecturer B, following the functionalist diagnostic approach, is more tolerant, judging the change in denotational meaning not to be an error at all, since the reader will readily accept that ducks have a system of communication and will not notice the shift. However, if we follow the stages of error analysis set out in Table 1, then it is not necessarily justified to assume that Lecturer A (who has been set up as the Aunt Sally here) would 'penalise [the error] with a triple mistake'. If we accept that the stages of explanation and evaluation can be separated, then more choices become open to us as teachers of translation, reflecting the fact that the objectives of TQA are different in a professional context and a training context. In the former, one important objective is to establish that the translation is fit for its purpose; in the latter, while the translation should indeed still be fit for the purpose which was specified to the student, we should not forget the pedagogical role of the exercise. The commissioner of a translationin the sense of Vermeerhas no desire to educate the translator; if the work is unacceptable, s/he can simply go elsewhere. The translation teacher, on the other hand, has an eye to the student's future progress: students ultimately need to be able to judge for themselves what is an error and to justify their translation decisions.

One way of providing students with the feedback required so that they can gain some insight into their translating is to separate out the stages of explanation and evaluation, as we have proposed here. This would have the advantage of liberating the issue of error gravity, of which there are many possible definitions, from the narrow strictures of the contrastive-linguistic approach without

ignoring the issue of relative acceptability. In the context described, the impact of the translation of 'ants' as *'Enten'* is not disastrous; in another context, it could be.

Error Evaluation and the Reader

L2 teachers are constantly called upon to make judgements regarding the relative gravity of learners' errors, as also are teachers of translation. A number of factors have been shown to be important in influencing the judgement of language teachers, including the status of the 'judge' as a native speaker or non-native speaker of the target language and the pedagogical approach employed (Ellis, 1994). It is in the pedagogical approach in particular that we see parallels with Hönig's discussion of functionalist and non-functionalist approaches to translation evaluation. If the L2 teacher is working within a communicative approach, for instance, then the possible impact of the error on the reader/listener is likely to be an important consideration. In a more traditional pedagogical approach, errors arising from the violation of rules which are considered 'basic' and/or have already been taught and practised, may be judged to be particularly serious. The parallels with Hönig's *'ants'/'Enten'* example present themselves easily. Lecturer A (the non-functionalist) considers the lexical confusion to be an 'elementary error' and penalises the error accordingly. Lecturer B (the functionalist) pursues an approach which is more consistent with communicative criteria of evaluation in L2 pedagogy, focusing on the reception of the text by the reader, apparently a more 'authentic' measure of evaluation.

What the L2 studies on error evaluation demonstrate is that the reaction of evaluators to various errors and error types varies according to a number of factors. It is clear that the evaluation of translations may also vary according to a number of factors. What we would like to suggest here, however, is that the example presented by Hönig does not support his case well, even within a functionalist approach.

In his justification of Lecturer B's so-called 'diagnostic' evaluation of the *'ants'/'Enten'* translation, Hönig relies on an appeal to the imagined response of a typical reader for his own notion of error gravity, as we have seen. Let us briefly consider his example from this perspective, since it is crucial to the functionalist argument. As we shall see, the view is difficult to sustain, even within a functionalist approach; indeed, Hönig himself acknowledges that anticipating reader reaction is a problematic concept.

Surprisingly, Hönig does not describe the commission given to the student taking the hypothetical test: issues of readership and purpose are not taken up. For example, was the readership of the translation, to be, say, undergraduate or postgraduate students beginning the study of linguistics, or was it to be a wider lay audience? In the first case, the level of knowledge assumed in the source text could also be assumed in the target text. In the latter case, certain adjustments could be expected. Let us consider our imagined reader of the Smith and Wilson translated passage in this light.

Our first consideration is that we know of no discussion in the linguistics literature of the 'language' of ducks as a system of communication worthy of

comparison with human language. While the imagined reader of the translation of Smith and Wilson's book may not be aware of this at first reading, s/he may find the reference to ducks puzzling at a later stage when the subject is studied in greater depth. The passage concerned is also particularly salient, since it occurs in the opening paragraph of the book. Hönig's expedient that ducks are indeed less prototypical than ants with respect to systems of communication is not really helpful in this context, if we assumein the absence of any other instructionsthat the book in question is not obviously aimed at the lay reader, to whom the distinction between ducks and ants might well be irrelevant in the absence of further study. This is different from the case of Steven Pinker's later and widely publicised book *The Language Instinct,* Penguin, 1994, which is aimed at a more popular audience.

Hönig's suggestion that research in the cognitive sciences may in the near future provide an indication of the typical reader's reaction seems optimistic. Judging the reader's reaction involves, as the above example shows, judging the reader's level of present knowledge and even anticipating their future level of knowledge.

Authenticity

The case which Hönig makes for assessing the quality of student translations as products in relation to their intended purpose implies, as we have already argued, a direct but not necessarily justified analogy with the assessment of quality in a professional context. It raises a number of questions which relate to testing procedures.

Teachers are expected to grade their students' relative successwhether in relation to the norm of the group or a given criterion, whereas commissioners of a translation do not have several translations of the same source text from which to select the one they like best. Furthermore, in a pedagogical situation, the roles of commissioner and user of a translation are conflated, since it is always the teacher who evaluates and reacts to the work; the user who has been built into the translation brief is hypothetical, a kind of virtual user. It is the teacher's responsibility not only to set the text (or to 'commission' the job, to use the functionalist term used to describe the professional context), but also to judge the possible effect of the translation on the intended user of the translation. There is no direct parallel to this role in a professional context. The commissioner of the translation may provide some feedback to the translator, but this usually only occurs in the case of a complaint in which the motivation is financial. Feedback from any user, if it occurs at all, is usually mediated through a third party, possibly the commissioner of the translation. Teachers, on the other hand, have a primary and direct duty to help students to improve their present and future performance.

So teachers can be said to have two major and simultaneous functions: they are facilitators of learning and they are evaluators of what has been learnt. In any particular exercise, it is often hard to separate out these two functions. Even when a testing function is explicitly acknowledged, we still need to ask, true to functionalist principles: what is the assessment for? (cf. Hatim & Mason, 1997: 199, who discuss various testing scenarios in the context of translation). The type

of TQA which Hönig proposes for student translations, i.e. based on functionalist translation, is most aptly classified as a type of proficiency testing, whereby the purpose of the test is to judge the translator's ability to perform a particular task, in this case, the translation commission which has been assigned.

Task-based assessment has become increasingly common in L2 pedagogy in the communicative approach (to which we return below). The assessment may take the form of a judgement such as 'task completed', 'task partially completed' or 'task not completed'. Discrete skills, such as grammatical proficiency/accuracy or use of a range of vocabulary, are not considered for their own sake, only in relation to their contribution to the completion of the task. Proficiency testing can therefore be understood as a quasi-authentic exercise, simulating 'real-world' conditions in order to establish the suitability of the candidate to perform the specified task. Such tests are not intended to evaluate what might be called the student's competences, the components which make up his or her overall knowledge, but rather to evaluate the extent to which a specified task has been successfully completed or not.

This emphasis on tasks as opposed to discrete skills in L2 pedagogy can be related to developments in which the study of the system of the language began to take a back seat to language use in the design of syllabuses, the methodology of teaching, and language testing. From the mid-1970s onwards, the ascendant approach to modern foreign language teaching in Western Europe has been the so-called 'communicative approach'. Communicatively-based language teaching has two main influences: the sociolinguistic notion of 'communicative competence' (Hymes, 1972) and the philosophical notion of 'speech acts' (Searle, 1972). The notion of 'communicative competence' was proposed by Hymes as a deliberate counterbalance to Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence. Hymes wanted to account for the possibility that our knowledge of language encompasses its variable use in different situations, particularly in social interaction. Hence he included in his notion of 'communicative competence' some of the factors which Chomsky had not considered directly relevant to grammar such as memory limitations, appropriacy and probabilistic considerations, all of which relate to the use of the language system.

Searle's Speech Act Theory also focuses on language use and in particular on the intention of the speaker and the effect of the utterance on the hearer. Syllabuses based on such principles are aptly known as functional syllabuses.

The assessment of learner performance in the communicative approach is, as indicated earlier, largely task based. For example, in the English 16+ examination, the General Certificate of Secondary Education, the examiner is asked to act as a sympathetic native speaker of the foreign languagea not unproblematic notion for a native speaker of the student's L1in judging whether the communication has been successful. The assessment is therefore not form-driven, as in more traditional forms of assessment and syllabus, but task-driven. The parallel in translation assessment is that of functionalism versus the early work in translation studies, which, as Hönig points out, was heavily influenced by contrastive linguistic considerations with a strong emphasis on form and equivalence of structures. Functionalism is clearly rooted in a view of language as use rather than language as system, but this has brought with it problems of

methodology (e.g. concerning the use of often challenging authentic materials) and assessment (viz. the 'sympathetic native speaker').

One of the factors in earlier approaches to language teaching and testing which the communicative approach sought to change was the hidden grammatical agenda of many syllabuses in which apparently meaningful situations were covertly used to practise points of grammar. The functionalist view brought with it a concern with the 'authenticity' of materials and of exercises. What soon emerged, however, was a concern that formal issues were being neglected. Soon, there began to emerge in the literature on communicative language teaching an acknowledgement that form-oriented activities need to precede message-oriented activities if effective communication is to take place (cf. Rogers, 1996, for a summary of this research) reflecting more accurately Hymes' idea that communicative competence implies *inter alia* grammatical competence.

Considering the form-function distinction in relation to the teaching of translation, it seems reasonable to assume that a functionalist approach to translation need not imply that all translation practice be assessed in purely functional terms (i.e. 'authentically') nor that the ultimate goal be confused with pedagogical strategies designed to reach that goal. In other words, we need to distinguish between ends and means, as Hönig himself proposes, in order to ensure that students are sufficiently versatile to complete various tasks, not only efficiently but also with insight. It may be worthwhile considering, for instance, incorporating the device of requiring draft translations which can be annotated and returned for correction by the students themselves with the aim of helping students to judge independently the extent to which the assigned task has been completed (cf. Sewell, 1996:145).

Conclusion

In this contribution, we have selected one particular issue from Hönig's paper for discussion, namely Translation Quality Assessment in relation to the training of translators. Our main theme has been parallel developments in second and foreign language learning and teaching, in particular the notions of error analysis, error evaluation and authenticity. We have argued that the criteria used to assess the quality of translations in a professional context, for which functionalism provides an appropriate and useful framework, cannot be directly applied to the training of translators. Firstly, we took issue with Hönig's presentation of two possible evaluation scenarios as exclusive alternatives, in which 'diagnosis' was preferred to 'therapy'. Secondly, we questioned the validity of Hönig's 'duck'-example on the grounds that the translation choice is not well-motivated even within a functionalist approach. Thirdly, we argued that a direct application of functionalism to the assessment of student translations implies a task-based approach which may be appropriate to proficiency testing, but not necessarily to the formative assessment which characterises on-going tuition. And finally, we suggested that the goal of producing a functionally-aware and responsible translator may not necessarily be achieved by the exclusive practice of functionalist principles.

To sum up: it is not Hönig's case for a functionalist view of translation which we dispute here, but rather how he proposes to realise this in translator training.

as illustrated in the final part of his paper. We are fully in agreement with his view that: 'When training translators quality assessment should not be an end but a means', but would suggest that the pedagogical means to the functional end be interpreted more broadly than in his paper. In fact, we would like to advocate what might be called a functional view of assessment in translator training in which the first question would be: 'What is the translation for?' If it is part of the student's learning experience, then proficiency-type, task-based assessment criteria do not necessarily offer the best or the only way forward.

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Even Horses Shall Have Their Day: A Response to Hans G. Hönig

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From the perspective of a professional literary translator and the director of an MA in the Theory and Practice of Translation which among other things endeavours to train literary translators as theorising translators or translating theorisers, Hans G. Hönig's arguments seem embedded in a tradition of linguistics that depends, in the name of functionalism, on a separation of functions: there are scholars and then there are practitioners. It is also a tradition delineated within a German genealogy rich in error analysis, contrastive linguistics and think-aloud-protocols. On both counts, we linger on a threshold beyond which, to my mind, scholars of translation studies should have long passed. The separation of theory and practice within academic traditions of scholarship is particularly unhelpful in Translation Studies and leads to a hierarchical discourse where scholars think and translators do, where university professors train student translators on the basis of evidence of practice extracted from psycholinguistic penetration into the black box of translators' minds, via behaviourist experimentation derived from Taylorism and management drives for 'efficiency'. If they are translators themselves, they remain silent on their own practice, foresworn to silence by their adherence to superannuated notions of scientific objectivity and to nationalistic and single discipline frameworks which would seem in themselves to be at odds with the intercultural and interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies.

I shall consider some of Hönig's statements from the perspective of the theory and practice of literary translation. The thread of my argument will weave around the idea that literary translation develops through a complex series of interactions between the acts of reading and writing in which the subjectivity of the translator plays a central role: unless that subjectivity is critically accepted there can be little training of literary translators. This is not a wild-card subjectivity doing as it pleases with the source text but a self-conscious subjectivity set in a material process within specific cultural traditions of publishing. It is also something that is partially concretised for the purpose of training novice translators, not by delving into the arcane reaches of grey matter, but through the study of drafts and final texts, the editing and re-writing process captured in manuscripts and galley-proofs which all too frequently are consigned to the dustbin by translators, unaware of the treasures they are ditching. In other words, quality in the training of literary translators is about the development of reading, writing, interpreting and researching. This is encompassed in an equation that moves from writing to meaning back to writing.

On the surface, in Hans G. Hönig's account and embellishment of the German tradition there are statements which could appeal to the professional literary

translator in search of a theoretical framework. He or she might feel his or her experience echoed by the idea that the purpose or *Skopos* of the text depends 'on the expectations and needs of the target readers', backed by 'intersubjectively valid criteria', that there are no absolute rules in translation but only 'relevant decision-making strategies' based on 'a chain of reflection''the links between the textual item, the immediate context, the larger context, the function of the source text and the *Skopos* of the target text in its target cultural situation'. However, a literary translator will look hard to find an analysis of a whole translation that will even deign to mention the word 'experience' and will be horrified at the thought of translatologists escaping from their academic marginality by 'establishing quality control and assessment' for a practice they apparently do not practise, or for an individual practice they can never mention. After you have stripped off the vocabulary of linguistics, do we have more than platitudes in a self-referential academic discourse? This is not philistine anti-intellectualism or a variety of British anti-theory but a call for a reconfiguring of the relationship between theory and practice in a framework of necessary interaction and equality. I would like to think the only way Translation Studies will be established in the academy is through the cooperation of scholars and practitioners based on the recognition that a large number of translators are both and that there is no hierarchy between theory and practice. This is, of course, a burning and controversial question at least in Germany and the UK. In Germany the theorising university establishment is challenged by the call for a Practice-Based Theory. In the UK the recent government Research Assessment Exercise had little time either for Translation Studies or for Translation as research activities and it is alarming that a number of translation studies scholars seem set against the very notion of translation as scholarly research.

Let us take Translator Quality Assessment. We are all familiar with calls for Total Quality, Quality Control, Quality Guidelines from our professional translator associations and university institutions. We should also be sceptical about some of the claims of the Quality Control industry which often controls quality negatively by erecting layers of bureaucracy founded on simplistic behaviourist managerial concepts, not to say, rampant entrepreneurialism. Assessment of quality in literary translation is rarely simple. And it is true, as Hönig points out, that we need to get beyond the layman's response in terms of 'faithfulness' or 'readability' and 'fluency', though it will take some time to create an educated public that reacts any differently. If we start with some of the examples which he uses as illustrations the complexity will soon become apparent. How can we judge putative readers' responses? How do we judge even our own?

As I read the translation 'the twilight of Germany's managers', I thought of Gods but also of twilight zones and worlds where haze and murk shroud dubious activity, perhaps a word had flown from the page? If we ponder on 'a grey-time porridge' and the rival journalist and scholarly readings, it is possible that an English reader might think it a vivid and unconventional metaphor precisely for monotony and uniformity. After all, the grey days of John Major's Y-fronted administration were famed for their monotony, were always being labelled 'grey'. 'Porridge' may evoke a surging sweet breakfast hotness in midwinter,

childhood memories of Quaker Oats and Scottish mists, it will equally recall the boredom of prison life for which it is a slang term and which was encapsulated in the popular Ronny Barker television series *Porridge*. Some *Financial Times* readers might then have felt the expression apt and the German minister a master of the *mot juste*, the grey-time epithet ensuring the reader knows his metaphorical porridge is sour not sweet. It could be argued that the journalist doesn't defend his choices in this way, but like any writer, he cannot totally control or anticipate his readers' reactions. Nor will his explanation for the reasons behind his translatorly decisions be the whole story, valuable as they are, they can only be partial. The problem with Quality Control is that it wants neatness and clarity where there is only complexity in the interaction between words, translation, culture and individual consciousness. Much more is at stake than a tale of two functions. Hönig's assessment of an English monolingual reception of the translation is based on his informed bilingualism and is, in fact, source-culture based, a supposition based on his subjectivity.

In the example of Jimmy Carter's American prayers we have another interesting case of the inevitable partiality of interpretation where Hans G. Hönig's scholarship rests on an unproven assertion, namely, that it would have been wrong for the interpreter to give his German audience the wrong idea that Bible Belt Americans actually prayed for German unification. The fact he is arguing against a patriotic rag doesn't prove his case either. It may be that Jimmy Carter uses the word 'pray' at the drop of his hat, it may equally well be true that Bible Belters pray at the drop of their hats. It is certainly true that their visceral anti-Communism could have led them to pray for the fall of the Berlin Wall. In such a case, a literary translator would have the time to research the history of this, time the interpreter would not have had. This raises another question, how does Hönig know what was behind the interpreter's split-second decision? Could it have been influenced by the flow of language, aggregates of words, sound-patterns? Or if Hönig is right, hasn't this again more to do with unproven assumptions about prayer and politics in the American Bible Belt by a German interpreter and a German translation scholar?

Could there also be other possibilities with the example from the trainee nurses' course? If the interpreter had used an expression such as 'has problems with her sugar', that would not necessarily have been wide of the mark. Often such a euphemism is used in English conversation by laypersons wishing to avoid the scientific term. It may not be as common an idiomatic expression as *'Zucker haben'* but it surely fulfils the necessary function to satisfy the lecturer-client. That is to say, as with the case of closing-time, which Hönig would like converted into a time reference like 10.30 pm, the translator has to be aware of cultural changes, abreast of the contemporary and the historical. British closing-times aren't what they used to be.

The above alternative evaluations of translations are not meant to deny the validity of Hönig's interpretations which are coherent and provoked by a legitimate reader response. They show the need for an openness to an inevitable plurality of meanings in the sphere of public reader reception. This in turn does not negate the need for evaluation but rather argues for a different kind of evaluation linked to a different view of the translation process and a different

pedagogy of translation. That evaluation should be related to a much closer analysis of the work of professional translators, an analysis in which professional translators should be heavily involved. Trainee translators should have ready access to the draft materials of the process as well as to the end-product and access to discussion with professionals. They should have a sight of the range of influences which influence a translation: interactions, conflict, a high degree of self-criticism, collaboration. What is surprising about so much linguistics-based writing on translation is that the scientific framework is constructed on so much supposition, hypothetical evidence, controlled experiments invalidating the reality of the tasks, and case-studies from student translation classes. The writing is so inward-looking that even examples of text in translation are from the micro-world of linguistics. Yet translation is about research, extending one's knowledge, one's powers of reader and writer interpretation, one's experience of the world. Words spring from a material culture which may be ambiguous and difficult to interpret but is definitely not hypothetical.

It is also about translation of whole books, of long texts where strategies of decision-making have to be sustained over weeks. How do we train students for that reality? Although linguistics-based translator-training has moved from single units to chains of reflection, there is little serious study of long processes. Although there is much emphasis now on clients and users, there is little analysis of actual relations between translators, their authors and their clients beyond the episodic. In fact, the good intentions seem locked still in the translation as a tool for language-teaching mode than into any commercial or industrial context. As in the example of the hypothetical discussion of the birds and bees in translation and the therapeutic-diagnostic distinction in assessment, the context is a student test translation. What have tests got to do with the teaching of professional translation?

Hönig does connect with the real-world context of translation in his discussion not of the process of translation but of the power-relations between translator and originator as he sees them, the crucible where the function of a translation is defined and where 'the quality of the translation can only be assessed in relation to those defined needs'. The one who defines is the master, the originator, the author or the customer. Translators are asked to 'just translate'. Most authors see themselves as riders and their horses are the translators. Firms and corporations have house-styles. He would like to see the situation where translators had the visibility of a preface or a footnote explaining their strategies, how they see the function of the translation, what was the rationale for their decisions, and how they anticipated 'typical' readers responses. So are Translation Studies scholars now the occasional trainers of horses? Steeplechase rather than the flat?

In order to stir the thinking of postgraduate translation students and wean them away from their often naive conceptions of fidelity, I have a series of translations which I encourage them to read and evaluate at an early stage in a semester-long module, *The Translator as Reader and Writer,* taught on the MA Theory and Practice of Translation at Middlesex University. One of them is Dante's *Inferno.* As preparation for the seminar I give each student a selection of translations of one extract and major reviews of translations of Dante which appeared in *The London Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement* in the

autumn of 1996 by P.N. Furbank and Clive Wilmer respectively. They are both thoughtful reviews of Robert Pinsky's and Steve Ellis' translations, reflecting in very different ways on the tradition of Dante translations. They show conclusively that evaluation depends much more on the world-view of the reader-critic as on the intrinsic merits of the translationsthough this is not to say that meaning is constructed purely by the individual reception.

Furbank focuses on the difficulty of verse translation, the lack of commonality between the Italian hendecasyllabic line and the English iambic pentameter. His review is filled with examples of translations which 'miss the point' and runs close to saying that translation of poetry is impossible. However, he does think that occasionally a translator can get Dante right and he prefers Pinsky because 'he has created a verse-line which catches the rhythmic pulse of Dante's original'. Ellis, on the other hand, went for the colloquial with Yorkshire resonances and, for Furbank, makes 'an ordinary-man tone' where 'the relationship of Dante and Virgil is altogether chatty and chummy'.

Clive Wilmer starts by asking what is it in Dante that appeals to the modern era and concludes that it is the roughness, the plainness, qualities favoured by modern poetry and a sense of universal order for which we may feel nostalgic yet. 'Most painful of all, you must abolish the original form of the poem in order to create an English equivalent'. In that sense Ellis' short free-verse works for Wilmer because it is 'first and foremost, successful English verse' whilst 'the real tragedy is that Pinsky somehow contrives to make the *Inferno* dull'. Furbank does not seem to notice how Pinsky breaks up the narrative through the imposition of stanza formhe praises the original Italian side-by-side with the translation in the volume. Wilmer comments that 'Pinsky's eccentric lineation makes correspondence difficult to trace'. Both reviews are detailed, sensitive to the tradition of Dante translations, serious and scholarly yet the evaluations of the quality of the translations could not be more opposed. They stem from ideas of what is important in Dante and poetry translation, the relationship between form and content, between poetry and society. Wilmer is interested in a communication of vigour, the earthiness Ellis wished to uncover beneath the traditional. Furbank is obsessed with form and opts for the more conventionally poetic inevitably as 'the wrong formal decision at the outset can wreck an entire version'.

I then asked the class of studentsa group of ten from Anglo-Iranian, African, Canadian, Chinese, English, Irish and Spanish backgroundsto comment on the merits of the seven translations of the one extract. All preferred Pinsky or other conventionally versified versions against Ellis, mainly because the latter used the odd four-letter word like 'shit' and this, they thought, was not appropriate in the translation of a Classic and it was still early days on the course. And so we discussed the use of the vernacular, the heterogeneity of Dante's language, the move from dialect to standard, the pedestalling of 'great' literature, the merits of moving away from academic traditions of translation, the historical structuring of taste and expectation, the role of literary reviewers, the rival merits of the *TLS* and the *LRB,* the input of publishers, translation theory, domesticating and foreignising. All that remained was for them to produce their own versions . . .

In conclusion, it is probable that as a teacher of literary translation I share some of the concerns of Hans G. Hönig in terms of moving the discussion of evaluation

on from old concepts of equivalence. However, in terms of power relations in the profession and the academy and priorities in training, it is difficult to accept his insistence and emphasis on the role of psycholinguistics, functionalism and quality assessment rather than on the development of student translatorsand ourselvesas the complex readers and writers that translators need to be.

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Linguistics in Functionland and Through the Front Door: A Response to Hans G. Hönig

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The question of translation quality assessment (TQA) is one of the most wretched in translation studies (by which I mean simply the study of translation/s), and Hönig's detailed outline of the state of the art is worrying, if unsurprising to many of us; having it stated in such blunt terms, however, ought to make us sit up and take notice and attempt to replace our house of cards with something more solid (compare, in this connection, Schäffner, in press).

Hönig's paper suggests, at least to me, a laudable admission that functionalist approaches to TQA have not succeeded in this respect, and that, in view of the intimate relationship between TQA and translation theory, a failure in one, in this case TQA, implies a lack in the other, in this case the approach. If my understanding is correct, then his paper is a refreshingly honest polemic by a proponent of an approach who is willing to address the weaknesses within it, rather than merely championing it for its merits, even though these, in this case are many, in my view.

Hönig's paper begins with a helpful outline of the development of the German approach to translation, before moving into the TQA question. My response begins with a summary of his outline, in order that I may more easily be taken to task for any misunderstanding I may have committed, and for inappropriate reactions. My comments here will relate in the main to the first issue Hönig raises, namely the role of contrastive/comparative linguistics in functionalist translation theory. This issue keeps cropping up in his paper, and I think that unless it is resolved, the functionalist approach to translation theory, didactics and TQA is unlikely to find a way out of the impasse in which (it seems to me that Hönig is suggesting that) it finds itself.

Contrastive linguistics was, in Germany as in Britain, an important element in 'the early phase of translation studies' which adopted it, Hönig points out, 'on the assumption that *normally* one can (and should) imitate syntactical structures and semantic-lexical distributions fairly closely and that it is therefore important to learn about the exceptional cases where this is not possible'. The advantage of the method lies in its systematicity. The disadvantage is that the 'rules for translators' derived from contrastive grammars tend to be based on sample sentences, devoid of context or co-text, which provide only limited guidance for translators faced with the task of recasting texts written at specific times, for specific reasons, and addressed to specific audiences, for other times, perhaps for other reasons, and almost certainly for other audiences. The way out for contrastive studies, Hönig suggests, is to steer clear of rules and exceptions and take on board 'functionalist principles'. My own view is that no approach to

translation can afford to do without contrastive linguistics, but that to be of relevance to translators, contrastive studies need to move well beyond the sentence level, to be corpus based rather than intuition based, and to take full account of context and co-text (Malmkjær, forthcoming a; b). I take context to include the concern of the functionalist approach to translation with the TT function and the needs of its users.

Functionalist principles include Reiß's 'principle of text-function' (my nomenclature) which transfers Bühler's functions of the linguistic sign (size unspecified)representational, expressive, and appellativeto whole texts. For texts, the functions are recast as foci: texts and text parts may be content focused, form-focused or appeal-focused, and the foci are, via the notion of *dominance,* approximately related to generic functionsinformational, poetic, persuasive. This approach remains ST oriented, because it perceives the task of the translator to be the production of TTs which can perform the same function in the Target Culture and Language (TCL), as the ST performed in its SCL.

Vermeer's *Skopos* theory turns attention away from ST and towards TT, as the main emphasis is placed on the needs of the target readers: 'the purpose *(Skopos)* of the translation can no longer be deduced from the source text but depends on the expectations and needs of the target readers', as Hönig explains. Clearly this raises the question of who perceives this needthe readers themselves, the translator, or whoever commissions the translation; and, especially in the case of certain text types, it plunges us into crucial ethical questions about who has the right, expertise or, as Hönig reminds us, the power to determine the needs of others. More pragmatically, it raises the question of specific guidelines: As Hönig puts it 'Is it enough to provide a "framework theory" of translation, should there not (at least for didactic purposes) be a more detailed account of translation relevant decision-making processes?'. Nord seeks to solve the ethical dilemma by introducing the notion of *loyalty,* both to the translation norms which exist in the target culture, and to the intentions of the ST writer; but while, in the best of all possible worlds, this might help solve our ethical problem, it clearly does not come anywhere near to solving the problem of specific guidelines.

It is very difficult to provide guidelines which avoid the prescriptive trap of early contrastively based approaches. Hönig and Kußmaul seek to avoid this trap by focusing on strategic guidance: 'Translation theory . . . must provide support for decision-making strategies, but it cannot and must not establish rules *in lieu* of decision making'. They advocate a *principle of the necessary degree of precision,* and 'what is necessary depends on the function of the translation'.

However, Hönig's illustrations of how this principle might work strongly suggest that what is necessary depends far less on the function of a translation than on the linguistic context in which a problematic expression occurs. In his example (2a), what determines the need to emphasise the elitist nature of Eton in the translation (2b) is not the function of the translation, but the fact that the two clauses which make up the example sentence are conjoined by an adverb which expresses a contrastively adversative relation between their propositional contents: More precisely, 'but' indicates that *his sending his son to Eton* is contrary to the expectations set up by *his fighting in Parliament for equality.* The presence of 'but' leads the English reader relatively effortlessly to activate those senses of

'Eton' which most strongly contrast with fighting for equality, namely, as Hönig's suggested translation shows, senses such as SCHOOL, NON-EGALITARIAN, ELITIST. In the case of example (3a), what makes translation (3b) appropriate is that the presence in the sentence of 'could not afford' effortlessly activates the EXPENSIVE sense of 'Eton' for the English reader. It would of course be possible for a German reader to attach the appropriate senses to 'Eton' by means of conscious inference and possibly some research, even if the place/school name had been left to fend for itself in the TT. The translator's explicitations save the TT readers this effort, implying the purpose/function of 'making for easy reading' or 'allowing for ST-reader-like reading'. This of course, as Hönig is keen to establish *(passim),* is also a function; but it is rather a general one, and Hönig's purpose at this point is to make functionalism more didactively applicable by amplifying it with a 'detailed account of translation-relevant decision-making processes'. It seems to me that an account of some of the linguistic considerations which might guide such decision making processes is likely to be a good deal more detailed than an account of translation functions, and that Hönig is well aware of this *(vide* the 'piano' example in which the linguistic analysis is quite explicit).

It will not have escaped the attentive reader that I have just levelled at Hönig's attempt to sharpen up functionalist didactic practice the accusation which he levels at Kußmaul's attempt at applying the functionalist approach to TQA: 'linguistic evaluation on a contrastive basis is re-integrated through the backdoor (sic)'. However, I would add that such considerations ought to be allowed in openly through the front door, since they have a perfectly proper place in any theory of translation and in the application of it. No advances in terms of the overall approach one might adopt, and no amount of terminological inventiveness, will dispel the need to consider linguistic issues in the study of any activity in which language forms an important part; and when the activity is translational, it stands to reason that some of the linguistics will tend to be comparative, as in the case of Kußmaul's work on TQA.

Kußmaul claims that the error committed in the translation from Crystal makes 'the line of thought of the German translation . . . completely illogical'. Hönig's experiment strongly suggests that it is no such thing. How, then, can Kußmaula competent, articulate, educated, native speaker of Germanhave come to the stark conclusion about the German translation? According to Hönig, he has come to it by smuggling contrastive linguistic considerations in under the guise of reader reaction theory; and this theory is faulty, since readers do not react to the error as an error. Let us take a closer look at these two claims.

It is true that the reader whose reaction is being expressed is Kußmaul, though he wishes to generalise his judgement to other TT readers. Kußmaul differs from the typical TT reader in having read and thought deeply about ST as well as TT, and it is difficult to imagine any other reason for his judgement than ST interference, so to speak. Kußmaul's judgement is likely to have been influenced by his previously having followed the flow of thought of ST, and by a subsequent judgement that what has caused the 'illogicality' in TT is the error he identifies on the basis of contrastive linguistic knowledge. The problem is that the average TT reader, who has no access to ST, will not be able to go through this reasoning

process and will not, therefore, react like Kußmaul. It is only *as a proposed equivalent for* ST, that the German version reads 'illogically', so a contrastive linguistic consideration has, indeed, been smuggled in under the guise of a theory of reader reactions.

Now, it is clear that, in large measure, Hönig is greatly aided in laying his charge against Kußmaul by the incautious hyperbole the latter applies to TT: Actually, TT does not read illogically, at least not in English. What it does, when one reads on to the end of the paragraph:

> And it would be naive of an author to expect anyone to work systematically through so many pages of text, notes, and (often) exercises without there being some advance interest or special reason for doing so.

is to make it ambiguous whether author or reader is cast as the agent of the embarking process mentioned in the previous sentence; in the original, in contrast, the agent is unmistakably the reader. So the TT reads *differently* to the ST, but not *illogically,* and the reason Hönig's experimental subjects could find nothing wrong with it is that there *is* nothing wrong with it as a text in and for itself. However, had they been asked to carry out some fairly simple inferencing operations on itanswer comprehension questions and so on, and had these been compared with the answers to the same questions answered by ST readers, then I think the outcome would have been rather different. Hönig says that if a functional translation is one that serves the needs of the recipients, it follows that its quality must 'be assessed in relation to those defined needs'. It is very rarely the case that recipient needs are completely satisfied by TT readability alone. Usually, recipients need to be able to do thingseither with words or, for example, with machinery or with their bodiesas a result of having read the text, so a proper test of TT acceptability as a translation should actively target those needs to engage in action. Usually, tests of this kind are better performed a priori by prospective introspection, often by an expert ('given this text, how might a user handle this explosive substance/get from A to B/park their car on the top of a hill/fare in discussions about Jane Austen's heroines'), than a posteriori, in practice by the less well informed user whose only means of error detection might involve blowing themselves up, rolling down the hill, being led up some quite unwanted garden path, or making a fool of themselves in discussions about Jane Austen.

In some cases, the expert will need only subject knowledge to make his or her judgement about the act-on-ability of the text, but in other cases, s/he will be guided by ST and by comparative/contrastive linguistic knowledge. I do not understand the reluctance to admit to the importance of this type of knowledge. Once the purpose of the TT and the needs of its users have been determined, the fact remains that if the ST is to have any part whatsoever to play in the fulfilment of this purpose and the satisfaction of those needs, then it requires a great deal of comparative/contrastive linguistic competence to determine how, given this ST, a satisfactory TT can be produced. And if ST is to have no part to play, then we are not dealing with translation, but with the writing of text in one language on the basis of information gleaned from a text written in another language. This

is also an important skill, and it is a task that translators are sometimes, perhaps often, asked to undertake. It is not, however, translation.

Of course the competence which I have labelled linguistic includes not only knowledge of words and structures, but of these words and structures as signposts to the concepts that have to be conveyed if the text is to function as required. And of course such competence is not acquired cheaply through the study of grammar and lexis alone, but only through familiarity with a whole range of text and situation types and cultural conventions. But this does not mean that it is not linguistic competence, and I think that we might as well admit that without this type of competence, a translator is not likely to go far. The question is how to promote it in trainees, and I cannot help feeling that it would be more helpful to raise awareness of linguistic issues *as* linguistic, than to disguise them under the cloak of the preferred terminology of a particular approach as functions or states of mind or interpretative clues.

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The Customer as King: A Response to Hans G. Hönig

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Clearly Hans G. Hönig does not suffer fools gladly. I find his tone overbearingly *de haut en bas*. He states that laypersons, irrespective of their level of education, hold dogmatic positions about translation; that (presumably German) university translation training has 'the least homogenous' (co-ordinated, uniform?) criteria and is not based on the typical requirements of clients; he has a withering scorn for popular views typical of a lay person; 'hundreds of critical remarks about translation are made every day [!], and very few are based on more than a supposed knowledge of the source text language', as he says.

For these assertions Hönig offers no evidence. He appears to believe that satisfying the customer should be the translator's sole objective; he does not distinguish between text-categories, literary or non-literary translation, advertisements or manuals of instruction and, not surprisingly, he ignores the translator's educative, aesthetic and truth-seeking role. Add to which he produces a series of clichés: 'evaluation scenarios'; 'the real world of text optimisation'; 'verified empirically' (how else?); 'dive deeply into the depth'; 'products' (for work); 'the public at large'; and a string of dubious 'of course's'.

In the first part of his paper, Hans G. Hönig gives an overview of traditional and functional approaches in Translation Studies, particularly in Germany. This is a useful introduction. However, I would not agree with all his evaluations. Hönig misunderstands the nature of Vinay and Darbelnet's 'transpositions' and Catford's 'shifts'. They are not descriptions of 'the translation process'; a shift or transposition is one of many procedures where an SL segment changes its grammatical category. There is nothing 'obsolete' (or mandatory) about this procedure; it often offers a variety of choices. Contrastive studies do not provide 'rules' for translators, but they usually, like Vinay and Darbelnet, a superb book, constitute a useful resource.

I would also argue that the functionalist approach in translation was not initiated by Reiß or by Vermeer. Bühler's expressive, informative and imperative functions of language are discussed on pp. 24-27 of Nida and Taber's *Theory and Practice of Translation* (1969), and the writings of the Prague School are functionalist too. Vermeer introduced functionalism as the sole factor in translation ('the end justifies the means'), a kind of brutalism that excludes factors of quality or accuracy, which Nord had to modify with her concept of 'loyalty'. It is absurd to suggest that for Reiß, the preservation of text types becomes the aim of translation. She would concede that translation also has other aims. I wonder if Hönig is seriously suggesting that 'rhymes, imagery and alliteration must be preserved when translating poetry', or is he foisting this 'rule' on to Reiß? Do either of them ever read poetry, let alone love it?

Other disciplines, but hardly brain physiology, were seen as contributing to

translation theory long before Vermeer came on the scene, but no one has explained his ideas more rigidly, in such commercial terms, excluding any moral, aesthetic or humanistic factor.

Hönig rightly stresses the importance of text quality assessment, but he spends more time on its effects (in part two of his paper) and on stating what it is not than on what it is. For instance, he does not even mention the importance of writing agreeably. With fashionable contempt, he jeers at accuracy and fidelity, and unnecessarily points out that a translation cannot be 'culturally neutral', a term he does not define.

The merit of the paper is in its examples. But here too, I do not agree with his argumentation in all cases. I have written elsewhere (Newmark, 1988) that to translate 'Eton College' as 'one of [!] the English elite Schools' or as 'one of the expensive private schools' suggests that the translator is unaware of Eton's importance as a British institution, and underrates or fails to enlighten the likely readership. And why does he translate his *Differenzierungsgrad* (degree of differentiation, cf. House's *cultural filter)* as 'degree of precision'?

I think that in his example on the mistranslation of *'Vorsitzender',* it is a pity the reader is not told that a company has a chairman but a union has a general secretary (not usually a secretary-general). Hönig then takes a swipe at a collection of popular views of translation, such as a belief in accuracy, and a well aimed side-swipe at the cultural translation norms of the 'Translation Studies' proponents. He rightly distinguishes between translation and language learning; but he makes a mess of *'ein grauer Zeitbrei',* which he admits is as odd in German as its literal translation, a 'grey time-porridge'. He is not aware that 'grey' conveys just as much of a sense of monotony and bleakness in English as in German, and 'porridge' suggests an unpleasant mixture. Since this is a quotation from a minister, I think it should be translated closely, not normalised.

Moreover, 'I pray that', particularly from someone from the Bible belt, is more fervent than 'I hope that', and *Die Welt* is right in its criticism that the latter weakens the statement. I do not think its political views have much to do with the case, and 'cultural and linguistic superiority' is also beside the point. Hönig also grossly distorts the position of the British journalist. This journalist neither stresses the sanctity of the original, nor does he buttress any views of cultural or linguistic superiority.

The *'Zucker'* and the two *'Ämter'* examples are helpful as they should expand the reader's knowledge, but 'cultural neutrality' has nothing to do with it. There follow some perceptive remarks on the meaning and limitations of cultural transfer, and Hönig rightly stresses the need to translate standard terms by standard terms, even if the latter are inadequate, which the translator could indicate in a footnote. I do not think it is a case of who is to be the 'rider'. The translator should try to tactfully persuade the author she is improving his text; she should not challenge his power.

Hönig seems to think that any statement is either subjective (bad) or objective (good). I think both evidence and personal evaluation are required in translation theory. And I doubt whether the diagnostic-therapeutic distinction is useful; diagnosis precedes therapy, but not here. However the dialogue between the two lecturers is instructive.

In his quarrel with Kußmaul, Hönig goes into a series of suppositions without instances, and his final hints and advice, though he claims to be an 'expert evaluator' seem hurried, banal and unprofitable to me. At the end he seems to despair of TQA altogether, and no wonder, since he has never defined translation quality.

For Hönig, as for many others, 'traditional' seems to be a dirty word. My impression is that when he rhapsodises about the functionalist approach ('so frustrating for its critics') he is living in a world of his own. Few people believe in 'absolute' translation rules, but one would hope that many translations are more than 'acceptable'. I doubt whether any one has the idea that the quality of a translation can be assessed by back translation, but in many cases, it is a pointer to a mistranslation or a useful revision procedure.

Reading Hönig's repeated generalisations 'in most cases', 'practically everybody', 'most critics of translations', 'everybody felt qualified', I wonder what world of certainty he inhabits. In my view, intuition and imagination are as valuable in translation as 'awareness of what one is doing'; a translator who makes his or her living by being able to prove that his or her translation is better than that of an 'amateur translator' is a strange animal. And what is one to make of the advice: 'Make the text you set fit the scenario and/or use texts that have been translated'?

These comments may be seen as fairly critical, and I am indeed opposed to the idea of the commercial *skopos*. I think that translation is a noble, truth seeking activity, and that it should normally be accurate, which is not usually the same as literal. But despite this criticism, I think Hans G. Hönig's paper is a thought-provoking piece.

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Preparing Professionals: A Response to Hans G. Hönig

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Translation is different from almost any other profession. Unlike accountancy or quantity surveying, it is a matter on which most educated people hold an opinion about how it should be done, which they are sometimes prepared to defend with astonishing passion. Axes are there to be ground, and translators are more often than not guilty until proven innocent (which of course rarely happens). More than in any other field perhaps, lay people consider they have the right to tell practitioners how to do their job, and feel fully justified in interfering on the slightest pretext. Against this background a clear, transparent and effective set of yardsticks for translation quality assessment (TQA) is essential, for the sake of the client's peace of mind, the practitioner's professional standing and the trainee translator's growing self-confidence.

My own interest in TQA stems principally from teaching translation at a British university, and so what I have to say will be coming from this angle. Although I have been involved at both levels, my comments will mainly concern postgraduate professional training programmes, rather than the type of translation courses which are offered by modern language departments in many British universities as part of an undergraduate degree, whereas their rôle is not usually to train students as professional translatorsissues of the type of interest to us at present are frequently not taken into account.

According to Hönig, 'TQA as practised in the university training of translators uses the least homogeneous criteria and seems to be neither integrated into theoretical frameworks nor based on requirements typically made by clients'. For someone in my position such a comment is obviously a serious cause for concern. If trueand my own experience shows it is not completely wide of the markthen the challenge which it represents is one which needs to be risen to.

Also according to Hönig, what is needed is 'informed and professional TQA', if the area is not to become a mere 'playground for amateurs', if trainee translators are to be encouraged to think creatively about the types of strategy which they use, and if TQA is therefore to become a means rather than an end. The most expedient way to achieve this, he argues, is to base the way TQA is implemented on the insights of German functional approaches to translation. His presentation of these ideas provides a further welcome exposé of the large and important body of literature in which they were developed, and which has still perhaps to enter the bloodstream of British Translation Studies to the extent which it deserves. Furthermore, his argument in favour of a move towards assessment criteria which take into account the insights which this approach has generated is certainly compelling.

Of course, no one would argue with the need to get away from judging a

translation simply in terms of how closely it sticks to the original. Maxims like 'as literal as possible and as free as necessary' have served a useful purpose for a long time, if only by reflecting the general shape which our particular culture tends to take it for granted that most translations will assume. While this particular rule of thumb should not perhaps be jettisoned completely, much ground-breaking work done in Translation Studies over the last couple of decades offers us a way forward which really is based on 'empirical data from the translator's workbench', to quote Hönig, and which really does provide translators with a framework for their decision-making.

One of the main inadequacies of the maxim quoted above is the simple fact that the most striking way to distinguish between a group of translations is not generally according to how literal or free each of them happens to be. It is after all only an occasional translation which one would want to label with either of these designations, all things being equal. Ratherbased on my own admittedly limited observationit seems to be factors such as the following that tend to give a translation its particular flavour:

- the amount of knowledge that readers are assumed to posess;
- how inventive the translator is (or conversely, to what extent he or she relies on equivalents suggested by a dictionary);
- how well the translation reads;
- to what extent items are transplanted into the target culture;
- how much extra information is added, and the nature of such interpolation.

(These are examples only.) One might of course want to argue that such features are themselves aspects of a translation's literalness or freeness. Yet while this is true to some extent, these various indicators could point in different directions in any one translation; furthermore, some (such as the first and even maybe the third) are arguably neutral from this point of view. On the other hand, what they do certainly reflect is the extent to which the translation has been tailor-made to fit the communicative circumstances for which it has been produced.

So where does this leave us? An old system based exclusively on fidelity to ST or, even worse, on the assessor's own particular preferences or prejudices, is clearly inadequate; a more flexible system which focuses on strategies rather than absolute rules and which recognises various degrees of acceptability is indeed called for. But does this mean that we should move across to a type of TQA based purely on functional criteria, as Hönig so powerfully advocates?

The system which Hönig proposes uses what he terms a *diagnostic* orientation, or one in which the only features which are deemed to be errors are those which are 'perceived as such by a relevant user of the translation'. Such an orientation stresses the communicative nature of translation and the importance of its fulfilling the function for which it is intended, and also underplays inaccuracies which do not detract from the user's understanding of or confidence in TT. As such it is the opposite of what he labels a *therapeutic* orientation, which interprets mistakes in terms of what they reveal of the translator's (in) competence. Hönig's position is based on three main arguments. The first of these is that no translationnot even one produced in accordance with the traditional maxim discussed aboveis truly non-functional. The second is that fidelity or equivalence does

not provide an adequate basis for TQA; consequently, ST is no longer treated as sacred, and the translator assumes responsibility for the successful outcome of the communication which he or she is facilitating. Finally, such an approach will provide trainee translators with the incentive to develop greater sensitivity to the strategies they use.

While a project of this nature is clearly admirable, I see a potential problem with this approach. Hönig is right to point to the confusion which sometimes arises in the present situation when he remarks that in half the evaluation scenarios which he describes, including that found in universities, 'it is unclear whether assessment is carried out on the basis of source text orientation or target text orientation', and that in these scenarios 'we also find a mixture of therapeutic and diagnostic criteria'. While agreeing with the main thrust of this statement, I consider that what is deplorable about this situation is the *lack of clarity,* rather than the fact that a combination of therapeutic and diagnostic criteria are used.

From the examples which he discusses it is very clear that Hönig favours an eventual complete transition to diagnostic criteria. However, he also considers that this will only really be possible when reliable methods of measuring reader reaction have been worked out. What he recommends in the meantime is an approach based on openness, flexibility and proximity to professional norms, clearly grounded in a 'viable, general translation theory'. What I argue is that such an approach may itself provide us with a suitable framework for TQA.

As it is formulated, the notion of the diagnostic orientation at least potentially subsumes that of its therapeutic rival. The 'relevant user' can in theory take on any guise, including that of a client who only has a limited knowledge of TT, but who nonetheless likes to check the accuracy of translations for himself. If an assignment which envisages such a potentially fault-finding client is given to students, then the logical conclusion is that a diagnostic approach will, in this instance, have to resemble a therapeutic one in all but name. This would give rise to a situation in which successive assignments might have radically different assessment criteria attached to them in order to reflect the full range of students' possible future dealings with clients. But such chopping and changing between TQA criteria which reflect different clients' imagined preferences, tastes and prejudices would I fear be potentially confusing for students.

Hönig discusses the very real danger of discouraging conscientious students: two students could have their translations judged as being of the same quality, even though one might have arrived at a 'faithful', elegant versionoften having sweated blood in the processwhile the other might through carelessness or ignorance have produced a translation which contains inaccuracies, yet which still provides the client with an acceptable, usable translation. A particular instance where this might be an issue is the *'ants'/'Enten'* (mis)translation which he discusses, where a translation based on a misunderstanding of ST is adjudged to be acceptable since it does not interfere with the TT user's ability to understand the text. However, as Hönig points out there are problems with this translation which are to do with the relative prototypicality of the language of ants and ducks, which means that 'Enten' might not after all be quite so acceptable as it at first seemed, even using a purely diagnostic set of criteria. This could of course simply be a reflection of the particular example selected, but I

have a sneaking suspicion that similar objections could be found in a large numberdare I say the greater number?of other similar 'mistakes'. After all, each item in ST contains a plexus of possible connotations and allusions, and no one will be able to predict which of these will be perceived as important by the majority of readers, and which will leave the greatest hole if it is not adequately rendered.

Yet even leaving such instances to one side, it seems to me that it would after all be fairer to our students to use a combination of diagnostic and therapeutic criteria when assessing their work. What is more, I feel that this will continue to be the case even if at some stage in the future we discover a reliable method of predicting typical readers' responses. While I agree with Hönig that the type of TQA used must be in harmony with a 'viable, general translation theory', in line with Holmes (e.g. 1988: 95) I feel that a translation theory which is purely functional is not a general theory. Indeed, a translation theory as Holmes conceives it would consist of at least four sub-theories, which besides that of translation *function* would also include translation *process, product* and *didactics* (1988: 95). Nor should such a theory be exclusively oriented to either the target or the source pole. For this reason I would argue that we should be trying to foster a kind of 'multidirectional responsibility' among our students, who should learn to balance the demands of, for example, the TL readers, the client, the norms of TL, their own professional self-esteem, the ST author and, yes, ST itself. Sure, ST should be dethroned from its present dominant position; but do we also want to defenestrate it into the bargain? t is my opinion that only by including a wide spectrum of criteria will we enable students to think creatively about translation strategies, while at the same time providing the solution to the dilemma concerning possible demotivation.

It does of course need to be stressed that the inclusion of diagnostic criteria does have distinct advantages. For example, it encourages a flexible, imaginative approach to problem solving and provides a means of coming to terms with translation's much-discussed 'paradoxical' nature. Another advantage, which has not been discussed above, is that it would provide an excellent framework for assessing translations by students working out of their first language, since it would permit us to take account of the particular function which texts produced by such translators generally serve (cf. McAlester, 1992, for an interesting discussion of this matter).

Similarly, the advantages of Hönig's 'interim measures' are clear. With potential clients' reactions being something of a lottery, the implementation of such measures would be a means of raising students' awareness of the multi-aspectual nature of the translation process and the juggling act which it inevitably represents. As a result of this students would also find themselves in a stronger position when forced to justify themselves to a stroppy client. All of this would of course be a very positive development. However, we would be being unfair to our students if we did not also stress the importance of backing up a flexible functional approach with demonstrable accuracy, all other things being equal. This surely is one of the main ways in which our students can

minimise the chances of receiving criticism, and in which they can defend themselves when it does inevitably come.

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Complexity, Contrastive Linguistics and Translator Training: Comments on Responses

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There seems to be a fair amount of subjectivity in the way my paper was read and understood, as becomes obvious in the responses. I will not comment on all of them and not in detail, but at the beginning of my comments I would like to quote from some of them:

> Hönig's paper suggests (. . .) a laudable admission that functionalist approaches in TQA have not succeeded in this respect, and that, in view of the intimate relationship between TQA and translation theory, a failure in one, in this case TQA, implies a lack in the other, in this case the approach. (. . .) his paper is a refreshingly honest polemic by a proponent of an approach who is willing to address the weaknesses within it, rather than merely championing it for its merits, even though these, in this case, are many, in my view.
> (Malmkjær)

Shuttleworth, however, fails to see that I am, indeed, 'willing to address the weaknesses' (of functionalism) when he writes:

> But does this mean that we should move across to a type of TQA *based purely on functional criteria,* as Hönig so powerfully advocates? (my emphasis)

Bush obviously sees me as a dogmatic functionalist and an out-of-touch theoretician:

> Hönig's arguments seem embedded in a tradition of linguistics that depends in the name of functionalism on a separation of functions: there are scholars and then there are practitioners. (. . .) it is difficult to accept his insistence and emphasis on the role of psycholinguistics, functionalism and quality assessment rather than on the development of student translatorsand ourselvesas the complex readers and writers that translators need to be.

These conflicting views of my paper are probably caused by the positions the authors hold: Peter Bush's seems to be that of the expert practitioner who has an insider's knowledge of the complexity of translation processes and the subjectivity of quality assessment and who is unwilling to accept that scholarly research based on linguistic concepts is able to unravel this intricate web. Kirsten Malmkjær, however, seems to be of the opposite persuasion. Her claim is to 'let contrastive linguistics in by the front door'a legitimate claim, considering that she works at the Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics and probably considers translatology to be a branch of Applied Linguistics.

Seen from a higher level of abstraction Bush's position is that of the literary translator who wants more subjectivity and complexity admitted (probably thinking that linguistic tools are too blunt for that task), whereas Malmkjær wants more objectivity by integrating (contrastive) linguistics better into translator training in general and TQA in particular. I shall deal with both positions in turn which will afford me a welcome opportunity to put my paper into the framework of what I understand by a *constructive* attitude to translation (cf. Hönig, 1997). I shall extend this to make a few remarks about translator training in general, taking up some of the very pertinent remarks by Shuttleworth.

Complexity and Contrastive Studies

Why are so many people dissatisfied with translations? Why are so many translators frustrated by their work? For two essential reasons:

(1) Most translators are not really aware of what they are doing (and for whom).

(2) Most translators are not allowed to develop the self-confidence necessary to do their work well.

In many cases neither sidetranslators and usersis willing to accept, let alone understand, that translation processes are very complex from a psycholinguistic and a sociolinguistic point of view. And rarely is it recognised by either side that a good translation is the result of a co-operative effort and a constructive attitude. Laypersons and, alas, many translators have been deceived by illusions of symmetry which superficially seem to define the relatedness of source and target texts. Quite often metaphors like that of the navigator who successfully negotiates the narrow and dangerous straits which separate the shores of two cultures and languages are used (quite recently so (1993) in the *Festschrift für Katharina Reiß,* entitled *Traducere Navem).*

In order to translate *constructively* we need to look not at the horizontal connection which seems to relate source to target texts, but rather at the vertical construction which is necessary to erect a solid foundation on which this horizontal transfer of words, thoughts and cultural scenes becomes possible. When we look at translation the constructive way we are not so much interested in the asphalt surface of the bridge which allows vehicles to transport goods from A to B but rather in the constructive elements of the bridge, its foundations, pillars and pylons which support the horizontal connecting road.

It needs an expert, however, to construct such a complicated supporting structurean expert who knows about the properties of the material he works with. Translators are rarely seen as experts of this kind by their clients and other users of translations. Often the only expertise that the public appreciates is that of knowing a foreign language well. Accordingly, the status of a translator is often linked to the language he works with: If it is Vietnamese or Swahili, people are impressed, if it is English, at least in Germany, many clients and users think that with a little time and practice they could do a translator's job themselves.

The most important properties of the material translators work with, language, are sometimes misunderstood: Language is not just an instrument which 'translates' our thoughts (or scenes) into words, nor can we 'back-translate' words into objective world knowledge. And meaning is not the result of a

unidirectional decoding process which 'translates' words into meaning, but it is established in a complex, bi-directional process. The processes of understanding are highly complex, quite fuzzy, and necessarily subjective. Linguistic signs do not represent any object, they are a means to integrate world knowledge into our minds. Billions of people have done exactly that in our linguistic community, so to a large extent we adopt the traditional ways of integrating world knowledge when we use our mother tongues. We still talk of the 'rising sun' although we know better. So language is largely a traditional system of integrating world knowledge and representative of the ways the world was understood at given times. In other words: language is part of our culture.

But not only that. It is also our personal means of acquiring world knowledge and therefore representative of our individual world views. The language we use in both textual comprehension and production is the result of the way we have acquired our personal world knowledge and deal with it linguistically. So that whenever we use parts of our linguistic inventory we can only employ it in that collectively and individually subjective way. In other wordsand to sum up: There is no way a translator (or any other communicator) can guarantee that his/her text will be understood correctly. Understanding is basically a process by which the data offered are integrated into a highly complex, collectively and individually structured system of knowledge, expectations and presuppositions.

What I have said so far is probably not so far from Peter Bush's position. But most likely we differ in the conclusions we draw from this. I would like to explain mine by discussing two text excerpts translators had problems with. Doing this I shall also address the question of the extent to which contrastive analyses could have helped to solve the problems. The first example illustrates the subjectivity of understanding processes:

> The Place Drug Addicts Call Home
>
> *Financial Times'* reporter Robert Graham visits Europe's largest live-in drug treatment centre and finds controversy surrounds it.
>
> From a distance San Patrignano looks just another prosperous farming community on the rolling hills behind the shores of the Adriatic round Rimini. Close up, it is obviously no ordinary rural outpost. The entrance is barred by a removable barrier. A gatehouse monitors those going in and out.
>
> Waiting at the gate are eight men, with hollow eyes and unkempt clothes. Beside them, sleeping bags and blankets are airing on a wire fence. All are drug addicts. They are sleeping rough hoping to be admitted, or readmitted, to San Patrignano, Europe's biggest residential drug treatment centre.
> *(Financial Times,* 23/4/1995)

This is an excerpt from an exam paperthe text was to be translated into German. Seven students translated 'monitors those going in and out' in such a way that they conveyed the idea that actual remote-control monitors were used to control movements in and out of the camp. Five out of these seven went one step further and proceeded to translate 'wire fence' by using *'Stacheldraht'* (barbed wire). Quite clearly the *scene* they created for themselves was one of a

prison camp: barbed wire, monitoring by remote control camerasBig Brother is watching you (or, indeed, to take up one of Peter Bush's associations with my Norbert Blüm example: *Porridge).* This is, of course, not at all the scene depicted 'objectively' in the text. Yet when I asked those five students whether they had understood this passage they answered in the affirmative.

The author of the text certainly did not want to bring in associations of a prison camp, yet the lexical-semantic system of the English language gave him no choice but to use the lexeme 'monitor' which is polysemic andviewed from the system of the German languageambiguous. To describe this ambiguity in contrastive terms would certainly have helped, but the problem is, that these students saw no problem. The same is true for confusing 'barbed wire' with 'wire fence'. I am sure that if I had asked these students out of context what the difference between these two terms were they would have come up with the right answer. And if the task had been to provide an out-of-context German equivalent for 'wire fence' they would have said *'Drahtzaun'* or *'Zaun'.* What led them astray was not a single word or expression but their failure to picture the depicted scene through the eyes of the author.

So what can one do in translation didactics to preempt these hasty scenic associations which tend to stick against all reasoning and reason? I do not think that contrastive descriptions of segments or semantic fields will be of much use. It is far more important for the trainee to learn to adopt a macrostrategic approach, i.e. to stop and reflect before s/he starts translating. That means, above all, that s/he asks him- or herself whether s/he possesses the domain knowledge necessary to translate the text andif that is not the caseto know which tools to use in order to fill these diagnosed knowledge deficits.

In this example, for instance, it is important to understand why the author wrote the article for the *Financial Times,* which is, after all, not exactly known for this kind of topic. He certainly would not have written it if all he had to report was what everybody knows about therapies for drug addicts. If that is so, there must be a news value in the article andvery important for readers' expectationsreaders cannot assume that their preconceived ideas about therapy will be vindicated. There are indeed clear linguistic signals as to what is new: 'Home' suggests a friendly surroundingquite the opposite of the prison camp imagined by some students, and 'controversy' stresses the unconventional nature of the therapy. Taking up these clues would most probably already be sufficient to get away from one's stereotyped expectations of a prison camp atmosphere and help to get a more objective view. An analysis of the semantic features of 'home' and 'controversy' would certainly have been helpful, but such analyses are only carried out by students once they are aware that they have a problem. Text linguistics, particularly concepts like *themerheme, cohesion* and *coherence* provide powerful tools to become more problem-conscious and support a macrostrategic approach.

My second example illustrates problems caused by the juxtaposition of language systems:

> (1) Translator training of some kind has almost certainly existed at key moments in expansive empires, mostly in the form of group work on actual translations.

> (2) The great European colonisations were also associated with rudimentary translator training based on the capture and training of natives.
>
> (3) Much of the real diversity of translator training is suppressed in European theoretical discourses and through organisations like CIUTI, a club formed by some 23 prestigious translator training institutions all in Western Europe and North America.
> (Anthony Pym, *Ausbildungssituation in aller Welt (Überblick). Handbuch Translation,* Tübingen: Stauffenburg, in print).

These are excerpts from an article written by Anthony Pym to be published in *Handbuch Translation.* Consequently, his article had to be translated into German, and excerpts (1)-(3) pose a problem for the translator: In (1), quite obviously Pym deals with the translation of written texts, so 'translator training' refers to *'Übersetzern'* (translators) as opposed to *'Dolmetschern'* (interpreters). In (2), however, we can infer from the co-text (and our world-knowledge) that 'the natives' did not only render their services as *'Übersetzer',* but certainlyif not more soas *'Dolmetscher'.* In (3) the translation of 'translator training' very much depends on whether one is familiar with the acronym CIUTI or not. Knowing that only institutions offering interpreter training (of a defined standard) may apply to become members of this organisation, it is advisable for the translator to make this clear by translating '(diversity of) translator training' differently from '(prestigous) translator training', i.e. *'Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherausbildung'* (training of translators and interpreters) and *'dolmetscherausbildende Institutionen'* (interpreter training institutions).

A contrastive study will, of course, reveal that 'translator (training)' is (sometimes) used generically, comprising both, translators and interpreters, whereas German *'Übersetzer'* is used in opposition to *'Dolmetscher'.* The term *'Translator(en)',* however, which does comprise both translators and interpreters, is only used in (certain sectors of) scholarly research and should therefore be avoided in a *Handbuch* which tries to address not only all scholars of translatology but also users and practitioners of translation.

It is axiomatic today in translatology that we do not translate language systems but texts, and we also know that texts are more then the sum total of their linguistically defined components. Contrastive linguistics has traditionally addressed problems of *langue* by comparing various clusters of constituents like prepositions or 'semantic lexematic fields'. The value of such investigations for translation theory is, however, small if they are based on context-independent sentences or words only.

> It should be the task of contrastive linguistics to provide methods and the task of lexicography to provide material for this problem area (i.e. collocations). The biggest problem, however, is that a translator without sufficient linguistic sensitivity will not notice these things at all.
> (Kußmaul, 1995:17)

Quirk *et al.* (1985), within the framework of descriptive grammar, provide a more useful approach based on 'interlingual' concepts like *negation* and *irmation, contrastive focus* or *pre- and postmodification* in nominal phrases. These are valuable insights, but translators must be aware of the fact that contrastive grammar (even

of this type) cannot and does not claim to offer ready-made solutions for translation problems. It is, however, a very important tool for heightening translators' awareness in order to perceive and define problems. The same is true of componential lexical analysis within the framework of 'semantic fields' if it is carried out in the way proposed by the Leisi school. This means that lexicographical definitions are critically assessed (not just adopted), that definitions and differentiations are based on a corpus of competent informers' answers and/or relevant texts.

I fully agree with Malmkjær when she stresses the need to consider linguistic issues in the study of any activity in which language forms an important part. In TQA, however, the results of such contrastive investigations cannot serve as a norm which applies to all possible evaluation scenarios. That was the point I was trying to make with my 'Eton' example Malmkjær discusses at some length. In short, *linguistic considerations* do indeed support decision making strategies and students must therefore have a thorough training in applying them (that is where I disagree with Peter Bush), but they do notand cannot'*guide* such decision making processes' (that is where I disagree with Kirsten Malmkjær).

Subjectivity and translator training

Translatorslike any other communicatorscannot guarantee understanding. All translators can do is to produce comprehensible texts. And in order to do that they have to employ a comprehensive strategy: They have to develop a clear idea of how the translated text relates to its readers' expectations, and they have to be aware of the fact that their own understanding of the source text is necessarily subjective. And they have to accept that they are held responsible for producing a comprehensible text. In other words: translator training must sharpen self-awareness while at the same time building up students' self-confidence.

This has important consequences for the training of translators. All the empirical studies carried out in the field of *thinking aloud protocols* (Krings, 1986; Kiraly, 1995; Kußmaul, 1995; Hönig, 1995) suggest that semi-professional as well as professional translators are apt to get confused in their decision-making for two reasons: (1) They do not trust their own intuition, and (2) They are constantly looking for *le mot juste,* the one word (syntagma, idiom etc.) which 'guarantees understanding'. In short: They are bashfully self-conscious and not really aware of what they are doing.

The most pragmatic argument in favour of a university degree course for professional translators is that the status of a university graduate is essential for translators to be accepted as competent partners in a constructive dialogue between them and their clients. This does not mean, however, that any university course will do. Academic institutions training translators have to provide evidence that the aim of their courses is not just (foreign) language acquisition, but to teach genuine translatory competence. This means that courses must be firmly basedas, indeed, all university courses should beon the considerable procedural and methodological knowledge which has been accumulated over the last years in translatological literature. This does not mean, of course, that language acquisition courses should be banned altogether. They are useful as

long as there is a definite demarcation line between courses teaching language skills and those imparting translatory competence.

It is sometimes claimed by practising amateur translators and laypersons commissioning and/or using translations that courses in translatology lead straight into an ivory tower and are of no practical use. The opposite is true: translating has always beenand is increasinglya very complex, if not complicated, task and only those professionals who inherently understand this complexity will be able to handle it. In response to that facile argument it must also be mentioned that good translators are the worst enemies of mediocre and bad ones. As it is in the interest of the latter group to enhance the layperson's prejudice against proper and research-based teaching of translation courses, it must be accepted by qualified, professional translators (and any student wishing to become one) that nobody is a born translator and expertsas in any other fieldhave to acquire their competence and skills.

And there is yet another dimension to the central issue of self-confidence. Over the last 20 years translatology has established itself as an academic discipline in its own right. Having gained their independence from theoretical and applied linguistics and from philology, translation scholars can afford to return to practical translation work. Indeed, they should, because scholarly investigations have so far had very little impact on the work of translators as it is practised every day. Nor has it been able to change much in the way translations and translators' work is being perceived and assessed by the public at large. Constructive translating will only be possible, however, if both sides are aware of the parts they have to play. Academic institutions training professional translators must not shrink from their responsibility to also educate users of translationseven if this does mean leaving the ivory tower.

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