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TYPE, KIND AND INDIVIDUALITY OF TEXT

Decision making in translation

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1 General preliminary remarks

1.1 **I**NTERLINGUAL TRANSLATION may be defined as a bilingual mediated process of communication, which ordinarily aims at the production of a TL [target language] text that is functionally equivalent to an SL text [source language] (2 media: SL and TL+1 medium: the translator, who becomes a secondary sender; thus translating: secondary communication.)

1.1.1 The use of two natural languages as well as the employment of the medium of the translator necessarily and naturally result in a change of message during the communicative process. The theoretician of communication, Otto Haseloff (1969), has pointed out that an "ideal" communication is rare even when one single language is employed, because the receiver always brings his own knowledge and his own expectations, which are different from those of the sender. H.F.Plett (1975) calls this factor the "communicative difference." In translating, then, such differences are all the more to be expected. At this point I distinguish between "intentional" and "unintentional" changes affecting the translation.

Unintentional changes may arise from the different language structures as well as from differences in translating competence.

> Ex. 1: Je suis allée à la gare (French: information about a female person; no information about the means of travel)
> Ich bin zum Bahnhof gegangen (German: no information about the person; information about the means of travel)
> =Linguistically conditioned communicative difference.

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Ex. 2: La France est veuve (Pompidou at the death of de Gaulle)
Frankreich ist Witwe—Frankreich ist Witwe geworden—
Frankreich ist verwitwet—Frankreich ist verwaist [orphaned][1]
Linguistically conditioned: La France—Witwe [Widow]
"Frankreich" is neuter in German. The image of "widow" is
odd to a person ignorant of French. "Waise" [orphan] is also
neuter; the image of an emotional attachment programmed
differently.

Intentional changes frequently occur in translating, if the aims pursued in the translation are different from those of the original; if, besides the language difference of the TL readers, there is a change in the reading circle, etc. Since this will entail a change of function in the act of communication, there is now no attempt any more to strive for a functional equivalence between the SL and the TL text, but for adequacy of the TL reverbalization in accordance with the "foreign function." It follows that, besides a text typology relevant to translating, a translation typology should be worked out.

1.2 *Communication comprises linguistic and non-linguistic action.*

1.2.1 Written texts and texts put in writing (material for translating purposes) are to be characterized as "one-way communication" (Glinz 1973). This means, on the one hand, that non-linguistic elements contributing to oral communication (gestures, facial expressions, speed of speech, intonation, etc.) are partly verbalized (=alleviation of the text analysis). On the other hand, the text analysis is made more difficult by the limitation of the possibilities of explicit verbalization of such elements as well as by the spatio-temporal separation between addresser and addressee and the lack of feedback during the act of communication; these factors lead, among other reasons, to a variable understanding of a given text.

1.2.2. Action is *intentional behavior in a given situation* (Vermeer 1972). "Intention" means here speech purpose, speech aim, motive leading to language communication (Lewandowski 1973–5:288). Through the intention, verbalized by the author in his text, this text receives a communicative function for the process of communication. In order to be able to establish this intention the translator receives significant assistance if he determines to which text-type and text-variety (relevant for translating) any given text belongs.
   Written texts may have single or plural intentions. Plural intentions may be of be same rank and order. Mostly, however, one intention (and, with it, the text function) is dominant:

Ex. 3: C vor o und u und a spricht man immer wie ein k; soll es wie
ein c erklingen, lässt man die Cedille springen.
(mnemo-technical rhyme:
Intention 1—to convey a rule
Intention 2—to facilitate remembering by giving the text an
artistic form

Intention 3—to "sweeten" the learning process by giving the text a pleasing form)

Counterexample 3a

Ein Wiesel/sass auf einem Kiesel/inmitten Bachgeriesel…
(Christian Morgenstern)
Intention 1—the communication of an objective fact
Intention 2—artistic creation to convey an aesthetic impression

The dominance of intention 2 is established through the text itself: "Das raffinierte Tier/Tat's um des Reimes Willen." Max Knight gives five English versions, and Jiří Levý regards all of them as equivalent (1969:103–4):

A weasel	A ferret	
perched on an easel	nibbling a carrot	
within a patch of teasel	in a garret	etc.

1.3 Language is (among other factors) a temporal phenomenon and thus subject to the conditions of time. This also applies to language in written texts and therefore to these texts themselves, a factor which is significant for translating.

1.3.1 A natural consequence of this fact is, firstly, the necessity of re-translating one and the same SL text, if the TL has changed to such an extent, that the TL version reflecting previous language conditions does not guarantee functional equivalence any more (e.g., Bible translations, the translations of classical authors).

1.3.2 A further consequence of this fact may be the loss of understanding of the original SL text functions, because of a change in the situation, in which the SL text fulfilled its function, and/or because of the impossibility of reconstructing this situation (e.g., Caesar, *Commentarii de bello gallico*—electioneering pamphlet =operative text [see 2.1.1 below]. Torn out of its original social context—now a historical report and also translated as such=informative text; Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*—satire on contemporary social ills=expressive text with an operative secondary function; today only recognizable in this function by the experts specializing in this period; for the ordinary reader (also of the original)—a fantastic adventure tale=expressive text.)

2 The translating process

Phase of analysis. In order to place a functionally equivalent TL text beside an SL text the translator should clarify the functions of the SL text. This may be done in a three-stage-process, which may, in principle, be carried out either by starting from the smallest textual unit and ending with the text as a whole, or by beginning with the text as a whole and ending with the analysis of the smallest textual unit. For practical as well as for text-theoretical considerations, I have

chosen the process of proceeding from the largest to the smallest unit. (In practice, the conscientious translator reads the whole text first to get an impression; from a text-linguistic point of view, the text is nowadays regarded as the primary language sign.) Below, this three-stage process will be presented as a temporal sequence for purely methodological reasons. In practice, the separate stages of analysis dovetail, particularly if the translator is experienced.

2.1 Total function in the framework of written forms of communication

2.1.1 Establishment of the *"text-type"*—a phenomenon going beyond a single linguistic or cultural context, because the following essentially different forms of written communication may be regarded as being present in every speech community with a culture based on the written word and also because every author of a text ought to decide in principle on one of the three forms before beginning to formulate his text.

  Question: Which basic communicative form is realized in the concrete text with the help of written texts?

a.   The communication of content—informative type
b.   The communication of artistically organized content—expressive type
c.   The communication of content with a persuasive character—operative type

Aids in orientation: semantic as well as pragmatic ones (content and knowledge of the world), for instance, "pre-signals", i.e., titles or headlines (novel, law, report of an accident, sonnet, strike call, etc.) or "metapropositional expressions" at the beginning of a text (Grosse 1976) (e.g., "Herewith I authorize…" in the case of a general power of attorney, etc.); medium: professional periodicals, pamphlets, the news section of a newspaper, etc.

  Use of language:

a.   The particular frequency of words and phrases of evaluation (positive for the addresser or for the cause to which he has committed himself; negative for any obstacle to his commitment), the particular frequency of certain rhetorical figures may, among other factors, lead to the conclusion that the text is operative. Decisive question: are we dealing with a speech object capable of making an appeal?
b.   "The feature that speech elements are capable of pointing beyond themselves to a significance of the whole" (Grosse 1976), "the principle of linkage" (rhymes, leit-motifs, parallelisms, rhythm, etc.) and the "transformation of the material of reality" (Mukařovský) may lead to the conclusion that the text belongs to the expressive type.
c.   Should the elements quoted under a. and b. be absent, the conclusion may be that the text is informative.

Thus a "rough grid" has been established for the analysis.

2.1.2 *Mixed forms.* If we accept the three text types, the informative, expressive and the operative type, as the basic forms of written communication (intercultural), it should be taken into account that these types are not only realized in their "pure" form, that is, that they do not always appear in their "fully realized form"; and it should also be considered that, for a variety of reasons (change in the conventions of a text variety, or if we have to do with plural intentions) the communicative intention and communicative form cannot be unambiguously adapted to each other. In the first case: texts merely appealing to an affirmative attitude of the addressee without intending to trigger off impulses of behavior, e.g., newspaper articles expressing opinions (no fully realized form of the operative text). In the second case: versified legal texts in the Middle Ages; in order for their content to be acceptable, they had to be presented in verse form=greater dignity of rhymed language! (Mixed form between informative and expressive text type.)

2.1.3 *Additional types?* Bühler's three functions of the linguistic sign, in analogy to which I have isolated the three main text functions, are extended by Roman Jakobson to include the phatic and the poetic functions. Would both of these functions be suitable to isolate text types relevant to the choice of a translating method? Not so, in my opinion! Related to entire texts and not only to single language elements, the phatic function (=the establishment and maintenance of contact) is realized in all three of the basic forms of communication, i.e., the phatic function does not lead to particulars of the text construction.

For instance:

Picture postcard from a holiday: informative text with phatic function
Original birthday poem: expressive text with phatic function
Memory aid in an advertisement slogan: operative text with phatic function

The phatic function does not arise from the text form, but from the use to which the text is put.

Likewise, the poetic function of the language signs is realized in all three of the basic communicative forms:

Soccer reportage:	informative text, partly with poetic language elements, e.g., "der Mann im fahlgrünen Trikot," "Erstaunlich matt war Hölzenbein, fehlerlos Grabowski, eindrucksvoll Neuberger." (rhetorical triple figure)
Lyrical poem:	expressive text—the poetic function determines the whole text
Sales promotion:	(e.g., in verse form) operative text with elements of poetic language "loan structure" (Hantsch 1972)

However, in view of the relevancy for translating purposes, an additional type, a "hyper-type," should be isolated as a super-structure for the three basic types: *the multi-medial text type.* The need for this arises from the fact that the translating material does not only consist of "autonomous" written texts, but also, to a large extent, firstly of verbal texts, which, though put down in writing, are presented orally, and, secondly, of verbal texts, which are only part of a larger whole and are

phrased with a view to, and in consideration of, the "additional information" supplied by a sign system other than that of language (picture+text, music and text, gestures, facial expressions, built-up scenery on the stage, slides and text, etc.).

Thus, when the message is verbalized, the multi-medial type possesses its own regularities, which ought to be taken into account in translating, besides—and above—the regularities of the three basic forms of written communication. Therefore I now put this type above the three basic forms, though, formerly, I placed it beside them. However, we should also consider a suggestion made by a research group of the Philips concern, according to which these extra-linguistic conditions should be regarded as the basis for a typology of media relevant to translating.

2.2 The second stage of the analysis aims at the establishment of the *text variety,* i.e., the classification of a given text according to specifically structured sociocultural patterns of communication belonging to specific language communities. Text variety is still a controversial concept in linguistics. The denotation of text variety as well as that of text type is at present still used for the most variegated textual phenomena. Therefore, I meanwhile define text variety as super-individual acts of speech or writing, which are linked to recurrent actions of communications and in which particular patterns of language and structure have developed because of their recurrence in similar communicative constellations. The *phenomenon* of text variety is not confined to one language. The various kinds of text variety are partly not confined to one language or one culture, but the habits of textualization, the patterns of language and structure often differ from one another to a considerable extent. Hence, the establishment of the text variety is of decisive importance for the translator, so that he may not endanger the functional equivalence of the TL text by naively adopting SL conventions.

Examples:

> Es war einmal: textual opening signal in German for fairy tales
> In the name of the people: for verdicts
> 2×4 lines+2×3 lines: structural pattern for the sonnet
> Directions for use in French and German: According to the specific text variety there is a distribution of structures common to both languages. The passive form and impersonal expressions—conventions in German. The indefinite pronoun "on"+infinitive phrase—convention in French.

One single example may not always suffice for the establishment of the text variety.

> Ex. 4:   English death notice:
> FRANCIS. On Thursday, March 17, Jenny, beloved wife of Tony Francis and mother of Anthony. Service at St. Mary's Church, Elloughton, 9.50 a.m., Tuesday, March 22, followed by cremation. No letters or flowers, please.

The translation into German would be more or less as follows (the italicized words and expressions characterize conventions observed in German):

Am 17. März *verstarb meine* geliebte Frau, *meine* liebe Mutter
JENNY *FRANCIS*
Elloughton *Im Namen der Angehörigen* (or: in tiefer Trauer)
Tony Francis
mit Anthony
Trauergottesdienst: Dienstag, den 22.3, 9.50 in St. Marien (Elloughton)
Anschliessend *erfolgt* die Feuerbestattung
Von Kondolenzschreiben und Kranzspenden *bitten wir* höflichst *Abstand zu nehmen.*

2.3 Third stage of the analysis: the analysis of style (the analysis of a particular textual surface). Now the *text individual* is placed in the foreground. This analysis is of supreme importance, because the translator's "decisive battle" is fought on the level of the text individual, where strategy and tactics are directed by type and variety.

Let style in this connection be understood to mean the ad hoc selection of linguistic signs and of their possibilities of combination supplied by the language system. The use of language in a given SL text is investigated in order to clarify in detail, firstly, what linguistic means are used to realize specific communicative functions, and, secondly, how the text is constructed. This detailed semantic, syntactic and pragmatic analysis is necessary, because, as is well known, not even in one single language do form and function show a 1:1 relation. The same phenomenon applies to the relation of SL to TL.

2.4 At this point I see, as it were, a "juncture" between the first phase of the process of translation, the phase of analysis, and the second phase of the process of translation, the phase of reverbalization, for it is already here that the translator, at any rate the experienced translator, pays heed to possible contrasts.

The detailed semantic, syntactic and pragmatic analysis is carried out in small stages of analysis, proceeding from the word, the syntagma, the phrase, the sentence, the section (paragraph or chapter) up to the level of the entire text.

The process of reverbalization is a linear one constructing the TL text out of words, syntagmas, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, etc. During this process of reverbalization a decision has to be made for each element of the text whether the linguistic signs and sequences of linguistic signs selected in the TL in coordination with a sign form and sign function can guarantee the functional equivalence for which a translator should strive, by due consideration of text variety and text type.

3 Phase of reverbalization

Relevance of the classification of text type and text variety to the translating process.

Thesis: The text type determines the general method of translating;
The text variety demands consideration for language and text structure conventions.

3.1 Normal cases

If functional equivalence is sought during the process of translation, this means:

a. If the SL text is written to convey contents, these contents should also be conveyed in the TL text.

Mode of translating: *translation according to the sense and meaning* in order to maintain the invariability of the content. To this end it may be necessary that what is conveyed implicitly in the SL text should be explicated in the TL and vice versa. This necessity arises, on the one hand, from structural differences in the two languages involved, and, on the other hand, from differences in the collective pragmatics of the two language communities involved.

> Ex. 5a: Vous vous introduisez par l'étroite ouverture *en vous frottant contre ses bords*…(=explicit)
> Sie *zwängen* sich *durch* die schmale Öffnung (*not* "by rubbing against its walls") (=implicit)
> "durchzwängen" in German contains the image of rubbing against an edge.

> Ex. 5b: (after Klaus Rülker) A report by a French press agency about the presidential elections in France: seulement huit départements français votèrent en majorité pour Poher.
> literal translation: Nur acht aller französischen Departements stimmten in ihrer Mehrheit für Poher.
> equivalent translation: Nur acht *der hundert* französischen Departements stimmten in ihrer Mehrheit für Poher.

b. If the SL text is written in order to convey artistic contents, then the contents in the TL should be conveyed in an analogously artistic organization. Mode of translating: *translating by identification* (not in the sense Goethe uses). The translator identifies with the artistic and creative intention of the SL author in order to maintain the artistic quality of the text.

> Ex. 6: (Ortega y Gasset: *Miseria y Esplendor de la Traducción*)
> Entreveo que es usted una especie de *último abencerraje,* último superviviente de una fauna desaparecida, puesto que es usted capaz, frente a otro hombre, de creer que es el otro y no usted quien tiene razón.
> literal translation: "eine Art letzter Abencerraje" (without content for the German reader)
> content translation: "eine Art Ausnahmefall" (absence of the artistic components: metaphors and literary allusion)
> functionally equivalent translation: "eine Art letzter Ritter ohne Furcht und Tadel"

(One element of the artistic organization in Ortega's essay is the many verbs and nouns alluding to seafaring, either directly or in a figurative sense, in spite of the

fact that the subject has nothing to do with seafaring. This is an indication that he is aware of Jakob Grimm's saying, according to which translating resembles a ship manned to sail the seas, but though it safely carries the goods, it must land at shore with a different soil under a different air. The metaphor is obvious because all the images presented by Ortega on the subject of translation derive from what Schleiermacher, Humboldt and Goethe have said about the problem. Thus, he must have known Grimm's metaphor as well. Hence, the translator is satisfied in choosing as shifted equivalents concepts from seafaring, where there are none in the original, if these are easily available in German. The reason is that at other times, when in the Spanish language the association with "seafaring" is implied, an equivalent German expression is not available: *arribar=ankommen,* instead of *llegar*. This is one of the examples 1 mean when referring to "the analogy of artistic form".)

c. If the SL text is written to convey persuasively structured contents in order to trigger off impulses of behavior, then the contents conveyed in the TL must be capable of triggering off analogous impulses of behavior in the TL reader.

> Ex. 7: Black is beautiful
> This slogan appearing in English in a German sales promotion could not be retained in the translation into English of a whole sales promoting text, if that text is intended for South African buyers.

Mode of translating: *adaptive translating*. The psychological mechanisms of the use of persuasive language should be adapted to the needs of the new language community.

3.2 Since form and function of language signs do not show a relation of 1:1, the same SL sequence may be represented in the TL by any other language sequence depending in which text type and text variety they appear and which function they may have to fulfill there.

> Ex. 8: El niño lloraba bajo *el agua del bautismo*.
> Text variety: social news; text type: informative.
> Das Kind weinte unter dem *Taufwasser*.

> Ex. 9: Marcelino lloraba bajo *el agua del bautismo,* como antes callara al advertir *el sabor de la sal*. (Sánchez-Silva, Marcelino, Pan y vino)
> Text variety: narrative; text type: expressive
> (parallelisms; rhythm-elements of artistic organization:
> retained in the TL)
> Marcelino weinte unter dem *Wasser der Taufe,* wie er zuvor beim *Geschmack des Salzes* geschwiegen hatte.

> Ex. 10: *Souvent femme varie,* bien fol est qui s'y fie.
> a. This saying of Francis I is mentioned in a history book. Text variety: schoolbook; text type: informative.
> *Frauen ändern sich oft,* wer ihnen traut, ist schön dumm.

    b. Mentioned in a drama by Victor Hugo (transl, by Georg Büchner), *Maria Tudor.*
      Text variety: drama; text type: expressive.
      Ein Weib ändert sich jeden Tag, ein Narr ist, wer ihr trauen mag (several semantic shifts, rhyme and rhythm retained),
    c. Item in an advertisement for wine: "Souvent femme varie. Les vins du Postillon ne varient jamais."
      Literary allusion in conjunction with pun-memory aid and the arousal of sympathy in the "connoisseur." The allusion should be re-programmed:
      Text variety: the advertising of products; text type: operative.
      Frauenherzen sind trügerisch. Postillon-Weine betrügen nie.

3.3 Problematic cases

If the three basic forms of communication are not realized in their "pure" form (cf. mixed forms, 2.1.2), then the principles of translating for the three basic types serve as aids for a decision in cases of conflict. In principle, the mode of translating for the entire text applies to all text elements, even if they do not belong to the same type as the dominant type.

    If, for instance, elements of poetic language are used when content is conveyed (informative type)—the so-called loan structures (Hantsch 1972)—the translation ought to strive for an analogously poetic form for those elements. However, if this is not possible in the TL without loss of the unity of content and artistic form, then the retention of content is dominant in informative texts and is to be preferred to the maintenance of an artistic form.

      Ex. 11: Nun gibt es freilich moderne Nomaden, für die ein Caravan nur
          der zweitschönste *Wahn* ist *(Süddeutsche Zeitung,* Streiflicht).
          Text variety: newspaper item; text type: informative.

We have here an item referring to an opinion poll among owners of camping places as regards the behavior of German holiday makers. The "Streiflichter" [a newspaper column] in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* [a newspaper] are often distinguished by an abundance of entertaining puns and other kinds of play with language. At the same time, however, the subject is invariably a topical state of affairs, and the main function of the text is the communication of content. In translation puns and other kinds of play with language will have to be ignored to a great extent so as to keep the content invariant.

    If, however, artistically structured contents in a text of the expressive type have to be conveyed and if, during this process, the artistic organization might be harmed by the retention of the same content elements, then the rule applies for expressive texts that the contents may be changed.

Ex. 12: …une pâquerette, ou une primevère, ou un coucou, ou un bouton
d'or…(Samuel Becket)
literally: …ein Gänse*blümchen,* oder ein Himmels*schlüssel chen,*
oder eine *Schlüsselblume* oder eine Butter*blume*… (invariance
of content)
Elmar Tophoven: …ein Tausendschönchen, eine Primel, eine
Schlüsselblume, eine Butterrose…

Finally, if, in conveying contents with a persuasive form intended to trigger off
impulses of behavior, the unchanged adoption of elements of content or (loaned)
elements of artistic structure from the SL texts does not have an operative
effect, these elements may be replaced by other elements fulfilling the desired
function.

Ex. 13: Füchse fahren Fir es tone-Phoenix
Foxes use Firestone-Phoenix (falsification of association, loss of
alliteration; important elements of the operative use of language)
Pros prefer Firestone-Phoenix (change of content to retain positive
association and alliteration)

If operative text elements appear in different text types, then the adapting method
of translating also applies to these single elements as long as this is possible
without any harm to either the content to be conveyed (in the case of the
informative type) or to the artistic organization as a whole (in the case of the
expressive text).

3.4 Special cases

If there is a difference between the original text function and the function of the
translation, the text typology relevant to translation as well as the establishment
of the given text variety are of no significance at all for the question what mode
of translating should be adopted to attain functional equivalence. In that case a
typology of translation should replace the text typology in order to supply
suitable criteria for the mode of translating. As has been mentioned above, in
changes of function the aim of the translating process is not anymore the
attainment of a functionally TL text, but a TL text possessing a form which is
adequate to the "foreign function." The criteria are not to be derived from the
question "to what end and for whom has the text been *written?*," but from the
question "to what end and for whom is the text *translated*?"

E.g.,   a "grammar translation"
– Aim of the translation: to examine whether the pupil is
acquainted with vocabulary and grammatical structures of the
foreign language; translated for the teacher. Regardless of which

text type is realized by the SL text, only vocabulary and grammar are considered.

E.g.,   interlinear versions
– Aim of the translation: the reproduction of the SL text for research purposes; translated for the student ignorant of the SL.

E.g.,   summaries of content
– Aim of the translation: communication of contents relevant for a certain further use; translated upon somebody's order.

Note

1   Translator's remarks in square brackets.