CHAPTER 6

TRANSLATING (PROCESS)

The first part of the theoretical framework was about translation (the abstract concept that includes the process and the product). This second part is about translating (the process, the activity). Teaching prose translating—the activity, the skill—is the subject of this book, so it is essential to understand how people translate and whether the constraints of translating into a foreign language alter the process. This section takes a descriptive approach to the process of translating, because only by understanding the process can a practical teaching methodology be evolved. Indeed, for some writers the whole purpose of translation theory is "to reach an understanding of the processes undertaken in the act of translation and, not, as is so commonly misunderstood, to provide a set of norms for effecting the perfect translation" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 37).

This seems simpler than it is. How can we understand or describe a process that takes place inside the translator’s head? Do we have any data that are not the finished translation (i.e., the product)? Few translators can do more than describe the physical process: sit at a desk with paper and pencil or word processor and mouse, read the text; write a first-draft translation; consult a dictionary, data base, or expert; revise. They know that something complicated is going on in their heads, but they find it difficult to verbalize.

Some insights into the process have been gained by observing interpreters at work. Danika Seleskovich (1968, 1975, 1976, 1982; Seleskovich and Lederer, 1986) and Marianne Lederer (1973, 1976), at l’École Supérieure d’Interprètes et de Traducteurs de Paris (ESIT), developed la théorie du sens, which is based on what goes on in the process of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. Jean Delisle (1980), at the University of Ottawa, went further and applied this theory to teaching translation of pragmatic texts (defined as those in which the informative function outweighs the expressive function). Amparo Hurtado Albir (1990b) has clarified and developed the description of the translation process based on la théorie du sens.

The ESIT approach fulfils three of the four basic requirements of any theoretical model: empiricism, determinism, and parsimony. Whether or not it fulfils the
requirement of generality has been questioned. Delisle applies the theory only to pragmatic texts. Newmark (1991) has fulminated against the assumption implicit in the ESIT approach that all translation is nothing but communication. However, as was suggested in the previous chapter, Gutt's application of relevance theory to translation may solve this problem by expanding the notion of a communicative translation and thus doing away with the dichotomy between communicative and semantic, dynamic and formal, and so on. Hurtado Albir's definition of faithfulness in translation as fidélité au sens is another contribution in this direction. The dichotomy loses all relevance if analysis begins with the three basic principles of la théorie du sens: (1) le vouloir dire, or communicative intention of the author; (2) the specific mechanisms of the TL; and (3) the TL reader.

Bell (1991) has also written about the translation process, drawing from many different disciplines within the cognitive sciences—artificial intelligence, computer science, psychology, logic, and so on—to do so. Bell's findings do not conflict with those of the Paris School; rather, they seem to confirm them.

**Insights from Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpreting**

Interpreting, both consecutive and simultaneous, provides information about the process that transforms one semiotic entity into another and transmits a message in one linguistic code into another. Seleskovich and Lederer concluded from their experience as interpreters and teachers of interpreting that between the stages of listening (comprehension) and speaking (reformulation), there is a stage of deverbalization. In consecutive interpreting, the speaker breaks his or her SL discourse into fragments (which may be as much as ten minutes in length). At the end of each pause, the interpreter summarizes the contents of the speech in the TL, basing his or her discourse on the notes that he or she has taken. Considerable developments have been made in taking notes for this purpose. Although each interpreter may eventually develop his or her personal system, interpreter training includes lessons in note taking, and very often the symbols used are not part of a linguistic code; the interpreter's notes tend to be ideograms (except for names, dates, and numbers). Seleskovich (1975) analyzed interpreters' reformulations and concluded that they were produced in function not of the words that had been said but of a deverbalized message.

Note taking in consecutive interpreting gives us some clues to the interaction between cognitive and verbal contexts and clearly suggests that the message is deverbalized: the sheer bulk of notes taken does not depend on the number of words spoken, and the notes are not lineal as in shorthand; the quantity of notes diminishes toward the end of the speech, when the interpreter has formulated a macrostructure that helps him or her to understand the speaker and provides "hooks" on which to "hang" detailed information; the notes are often symbolic and include words that were not used in the speech; and different interpreters take a
different set of notes for the same speech and reformulate the same set of notes with different words. The only items that do not change from interpreter to interpreter and are usually written down are words that are essentially referential, such as names and figures.

As Seleskovitch (1976) has pointed out, memory and understanding are inseparable; one is a function of the other. What we store in our long-term memory is semantic information or the mnemonic trace of the verbal message. Experiments in cognitive psychology suggest that our verbal memory is very ephemeral; we tend to store concepts rather than words. In "click" experiments, the subject is asked to remember a list of utterances read aloud and interrupted at intervals by a sound. These experiments show that if the "click" is put at the end of a sense unit rather than in the middle, the subject is much more likely to remember the utterances.

Simultaneous interpreting in its present form has been possible only since the Second World War, because it depends on electronic equipment that allows the interpreter to be in a soundproof booth, hear the SL speaker through a pair of headphones, and without a pause reformulate the message in the TL. The process is much more transparent than that in consecutive interpreting or in other forms of translation. All of the elements of the communicative situation are present synchronically in the same room: the speaker, the audience, the topic, the context. Modern booths are fitted with glass so that the interpreters can see the speaker and be seen themselves. Interpreters can work at a speed that would not be possible if they were interpreting words (about 150 words per minute) rather than units of meaning. If they concentrated on the words, their speech would be awkward, slow, opaque; however, they retain not the words but le sens, or the deverbalized meaning, which is defined in the ESIT theory as a cognitive memory.

Seleskovitch (1976: 65) quotes specialists in neuropsychology, in particular J. Barbizet, to support the theory of deverbalization. Research into accidents and strokes affecting the brain in different ways—such as loss of speech but retention of reasoning, or loss of complex reasoning but retention of words—suggests the existence of two types of memory: one lexical and grammatical and the other nonverbal. It seems that linguistic competence and cognitive competence are situated in different parts of the brain and that both are needed to understand a locution. It may also be true that some individuals have more of one than the other, which would explain in part the saying "Interpreters are born, not made." Simultaneous interpreting can be envisaged as unnatural and artificial because the two stages (understanding and reformulation) are syncopated. Not everyone can develop this skill to the same extent, but in a recording of a good professional it is possible to follow the two stages at the same time.

Memory also has an important role to play in understanding, and it is important to distinguish between short-term and long-term memory. Short-term memory retains sensory perceptions just long enough to integrate them into acquired knowledge. Adults can retain seven to eight words for two to three seconds. This
grouping of words in the short-term memory also suggests that word-by-word translation is anti-natural. The words in the short-term memory interact with the long-term cognitive memory, which frees the necessary linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge to create a unit of meaning.

Les unités de sens sont le produit d’une synthèse des quelques mots qui se trouvent dans la mémoire immédiate et des expériences ou des souvenirs cognitifs préexistants qu’ils éveillent; cette fusion laisse une trace cognitive, tandis que la mémoire immédiate accueille et conserve un instant les mots suivants, jusqu’à une nouvelle synthèse et à la création d’une nouvelle unité qui va s’ajouter à celles que contient déjà la mémoire cognitive. (Lederer, 1986: 252)

From the point of view of translation-teaching methodology, the stage of deverbalization is the most important concept to retain from this research into the process of interpreting. In Bell’s (1991: 21) model, the stage of deverbalization is referred to as a stage of language-free semantic representation.

**Differences between Translating and Interpreting**

Translating is based on the written word; interpreting, on the spoken word. Both intervene in an act of communication that has been interrupted due to differences between the codes used by the transmitter and the receiver. However, the interpreter participates in the same communicative context both physically and temporally, whereas the translator is separated from the transmitter and the receiver by both time and space. This distance in time and space makes it more difficult to integrate linguistic and extralinguistic information and transmit the message accurately.

In translating, as in simultaneous interpreting, there are three main stages (understanding, deverbalization, and reformulation), but simultaneous interpreting is an oral activity. It takes place at the speed of normal speech, all the elements of the situation of the SL discourse are present, transmission and reception are synchronized, the words disappear leaving no trace, intonation and gestures are taken into account. Translating is bound to the mechanisms of reading and writing and takes on the characteristics of texts.

Furthermore, the very solidity of the written word tempts the translator to stay with the words rather than the sense. Eugene Nida gave the example of a blind Navajo who was an excellent Bible translator. He was a skilled Braille reader, but he did his best work when someone read out a verse to him and he translated orally. When he was allowed to have his fingers on his Braille Bible, the quality of the translation suffered considerably (Nida, 1992).

Innumerable examples could be given of the failure to transmit the message accurately in translating—“l’infidélité au sens.” A recent television guide in El País
included the blurb for an American sitcom, "The Golden Girls" (Las chicas de oro): "Un terror sagrado visita a Las chicas de oro en forma de un chico de 13 años" (emphasis added). Viewers, expecting black magic at the very least, must have been disappointed by the appearance of a normally naughty boy, a "holy terror." If the translator had bothered to make sense of his or her translation, had had time to see the episode beforehand, or had deverbalized, he or she would not have written nonsense.

Because the writer and the translator do not share the same communicative situation, the translator can work at his or her own rhythm, unless he or she has a deadline to meet. The written text is permanent and outlives the first communicative situation; each reading takes place in a new communicative situation. Therefore, much that is implicit in an oral discourse, through situation, intonation, or gestures, has to be made explicit in a written text. The coherence of written discourse has to be more obvious, thoughtful, and organized. The writer must know the conventions of the written language (graphic, lexical, grammatical, and textual); he or she has time to think of alternative forms of expression.

The translator has to be an expert reader, capable of activating his or her extra-linguistic cognitive memory to interact with and make sense of the text. The interpreter deverbalizes on reception of the message. As the written text is permanent, the reader is not forced to follow the text straight through from beginning to end; he or she may choose to read the conclusion first, to reread certain sections, or to return to the beginning. We do not understand a text when we remember all of the words but when we have made an effort of synthesis, a mental process of understanding that is not verbal. A good translator is not necessarily a good interpreter; he or she may not have a good auditory memory or possess the reflexes necessary to make a rapid synthesis.

THE CYCLE OF INQUIRY

In all aspects of life, we continuously perceive phenomena through sight, sound, smell, and touch. We attempt to understand these phenomena inductively and deductively. In the case of trying to understand the phenomenon of translation, we can start with the end product, a translation, and work backwards (inductively) to understand the process of translating. At the same time, we can work (deductively) from what we know about how our minds work (experience) when translating (the process) to reach an understanding of a translation.

Work in educational psychology suggests that we are most efficient when we combine both the inductive and deductive methods. For example, if we want to know what the minimum unit of translation is, there is good psychological and linguistic evidence to suggest that it is the clause, since the clause (a) tends to be about the right length to be entered on the visuo-spatial scratch-pad in the working memory, and (b) is the focal point of all three macrofunctions of language and the

From this hypothesis, we can then work back inductively to see if there is evidence in the process of translation that, in fact, the clause is the unit of translation. This evidence can be found in the experiments quoted by Bell (Jacobvits, 1970, cited in Bell, 1991: 29), which support the notion of concurrence between cognitive "chunk" boundaries and syntactic boundaries within the clause; boundaries within major structural units (subject, predicate, complement, and so on); and the forms that realize them (phrases, for the most part). Therefore, in reading a passage such as “The United Nations Secretary General reported substantial progress in the peace negotiations in Geneva today,” the cognitive “chunks,” or units of meaning, would probably be:

[the United Nations Secretary General]
[reported]
[substantial progress in the peace negotiations]
[in Geneva]
[today]

At the same time, we can start with this evidence and from it deduce a theory. Understanding is not vertical, nor is it strictly linear. The gradual building-up of composite meaning is known in the field of artificial intelligence as top-down and bottom-up processing. Bell (1991) provides a chart for what he calls the cycle of inquiry, which is followed to reach an understanding of the simplest natural phenomenon. We should bear it in mind when considering how to understand discourse, the translation process, and the learning process. When we perceive a phenomenon, we can attempt to understand it in two ways: by induction, we build a hypothesis, which we then confirm or reject by comparing it with other similar phenomena, or we observe the phenomenon systematically and by deduction propose a theory.

**Adding the Skopos to the Model of the Translation Process**

The three main stages of the translation process are comprehension, deverbalization, and reformulation. Delisle (1980: 82–5) adds a fourth stage to the translation process: l’analyse justificative. This is the stage of verification at which the translator returns to the original text to check if he or she has really transmitted the sense of the original—what Newmark calls back-translation. Hurtado Albir (1990b: 71) provides a model of these four stages for interpreting and translating in *La notion de fidélité en traduction*. The model provided by Bell for the translation process derives from work in psycholinguistics and artificial intelligence. Instead of comprehension and reformulation, he refers to analysis and synthesis. He also incorporates elements of discourse analysis, so he includes the concepts of field, mode, and tenor.
These models do not account for the purpose of the translation, or the TLT. Emphasis on the *skopos* has been the principal contribution of recent German writers (see Vermeer, 1983; Reiss and Vermeer, 1984; Nord, 1991). It is an essential element in any professional situation and should also be an essential element in the classroom. If the teacher does not define the purpose of the translation, by default the purpose will be to please the teacher. Language teachers now try to avoid giving colourless, purposeless assignments of the type “My Summer Holidays,” or “Autumn.” Gombrich (1969) compares the role of medieval art patrons in the production of a work of art with the role of a grain of sand in an oyster that produces a pearl. The constraints of the orders given by bishops and popes helped to produce the masterpieces of Michelangelo and Leonardo. Translation students need to be told why they are translating a text; they need to be given a *skopos*. The context of the translation is an essential element of the translation process.

The model proposed here (see figure 6.1) is intended to remind students of the different dimensions of discourse that have to be accounted for at each stage of the translation process. A flow chart has not been attempted within each stage, as the process is not linear but bottom-up, top-down, and at each stage there is interaction between macro- and microstructures.

The translation process is the same whether it is from English to Spanish or Spanish to English, B language to A language or A language to B language. The difference is only in the time and effort needed at each stage. Depending on the amount of knowledge in the translator's syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and semiotic memory, more or less time and effort will be required in comprehension or reformulation, analysis or synthesis.

**Comprehension**

Before embarking upon any translation, the translator should analyze the text or discourse thoroughly, since this appears to be the only way of ensuring that the SL original has been wholly and correctly understood (Nord, 1991: 1). The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the origin of the word *text* as the Latin, *textere*: to weave; thus, *textus* is the style or tissue of a literary work—literally, that which is woven, a texture, a web. A written text is constructed according to a pattern (obviously, some are better constructed than others). The words and sentences that make up the text are woven into the web of the text. In certain texts, a skilled reader is needed to grasp the whole pattern.

The metaphor of text as web is an ancient one. Another possible metaphor is a text as a skeleton. Following this metaphor, discourse is a skeleton plus blood, flesh, and guts (ideology, emotions, and soul). Linguistics can provide the tools to analyze texts, but other disciplines are required to analyze discourse. Of course, the distinction between text and discourse is not clear cut, because the text producer
Figure 6.1 Model of Dimensions of Discourse
(writer, reader, or translator) constantly interacts with both. Furthermore, many authors do not maintain this distinction and refer to text as written discourse.

As mentioned above, translation studies have been influenced by developments in related disciplines. One of the most important developments in twentieth-century literary studies has been the re-evaluation of the reader, who is envisaged as taking an active rather than a passive role. For Roland Barthes (1975), the reader is not a consumer of texts but a producer. Julia Kristeva "sees the reader as realising the expansion of the work's process of semiosis" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 79). Since each reader "translates" or "decodes" the text according to a different set of systems, there is no "correct" reading. It has even been maintained that a text does not have a function until it is defined by the recipient (reader/translator of SLT or reader of TLT) in the act of reading. As a product of the author's intention, the text remains provisional until it is received by its reader; in other words, the text as a communicative act is completed by the recipient (Nord, 1991: 16).

This concept is useful, but only up to a point. There is hardly any reason to teach translators to improve their reading skills if there is no agreement over what constitutes a correct reading. Translation-oriented text/discourse analysis must cover all of the relevant text/discourse features and elements within the framework of the purpose for which the translation has been initiated and the translation context. Even within a variational approach to translation that assumes that there is no one perfect version, the translator should be able to justify each and every decision in terms of the context of the translation.

Intertextuality is one of these relevant text features, the importance of which has been emphasized in the work of poststructuralist literary critics. Laurence Venuti's (1992) Rethinking Translation, a collection of essays on literary translations as creations, is concerned with raising the status of the translator, using the arguments of twentieth-century literary criticism (Venuti, 1991). Octavio Paz (1971: 9) has shown how, from an intertextual approach, all SLTs are unique and yet, at the same time, "translations" of other texts, and how all TLTs are "original" creations.

The first Catalan translation (1953) of Milton's Paradise Lost is an example of this. The translator, Josep Ma. Boix i Selva, was concerned with reproducing the form and function of Milton's poem as faithfully as possible. However, the translation was published just after the Spanish Civil War, and one of the purposes of the translation was to defend the Spanish republican cause, just as Milton had defended the English republic. The introduction to the translation was carefully designed to convince Franco's censors that the poem was harmless by denying Milton's republican, Protestant views. Fortunately, the censor read only the introduction, and so the poem was published. For skilled readers who progressed beyond the introduction, intertextuality made the translator's political implications clear.12 Another

12. Rosa Flotats i Crispi, doctoral dissertation in progress at Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.
example of intertextuality in *Paradise Lost* comes from an English-literature teacher at an English secondary school. He claimed that only Muslim students could make sense of *Paradise Lost* because they knew about heaven and hell from reading the Koran. The other students had little or no knowledge of the Bible, and so they found *Paradise Lost* meaningless.

Pre-translating text/discourse analysis provides not only a full comprehension of the SLT/discourse and an explanation of its linguistic, textual, and discourse structures and their relationship with the system and rules of the SL and the SL culture, but also a reliable basis for every decision that the translator has to make in a particular translation process. Therefore, text/discourse analysis for the translator has to be integrated into a general theory of translation that will serve as a frame of reference.

**UNDERSTANDING AN A-LANGUAGE TEXT**

The fact of translating from the A language does not in any way diminish the importance of the SLT analysis. Trainee translators need to develop their translator-oriented reader expertise in their mother tongue. Problems of meaning in the translation are just as likely to arise from misunderstanding the SLT as from insufficient competence in the TL.

Any reader, or translator, has to possess linguistic competence in the SL. Linguistic competence (syntactic and semantic) is obviously essential, but in isolation it is not sufficient. In order to understand a word, a phrase, or a text, we need to draw on our pragmatic knowledge of the situational, verbal, cognitive, and general socio-historical contexts. This is one of the most important lessons that students learn in the prose-translation class. They assume that because they have native-speaker competence in Spanish, all their problems will arise in the reformulation stage. They sometimes make mistakes in meaning due to insufficient knowledge of their own language and ignorance of the context and intertextuality of the SLT. The mistakes made by Spanish students translating the following text were due to weak reading skills. In some cases, they either did not possess sufficient knowledge of the different contexts or failed to activate their existing knowledge. In other cases, they either had not read enough newspaper articles of this type to grasp the intertextuality or did not draw on their stored knowledge. In either case, pre-translation reading-comprehension exercises could help them to realize the need to develop their knowledge of context through reading and/or to make active use of their own knowledge.

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La amenaza del “frente” sur

El avance del integrismo islámico en el norte de África
acerca a la frontera española la guerra del Golfo

Mi hijo va a la American School de Rabat. Cada día lo traigo y lo llevo al colegio un autobús de aspecto tan inequívocamente americano como la Coca-Cola,
Rambo o el presidente Bush. Dos semanas antes de que se declarara la guerra llegó muy contento a casa.

"Papá, ¿sabes que somos muy populares en el barrio?

Temí lo peor.

"Cuando nuestro bus pasa ante el colegio marroquí del barrio los niños salen a la calle para saludarnos y decírnos cosas, ‘Uuuaaa, USA, USA’, nos gritan".

Era casi lo peor.

Recordé que el pasado 14 de diciembre, cuando estalló la revuelta de Fez y el lujoso hotel Les Meridines fue asaltado por una horda de desheredados, un grupo de turistas—entre ellos varios españoles—se convirtió en blanco de sus iras y, tras amenazarlos y robarlos, acabaron vejándolos y frotándoles pedazos de cebolla por el rostro. Pocas semanas más tarde, Abdelkader Kaduhi, de 53 años de edad, se lió la manta a la cabeza y apuñaló en Casablanca a dos ingenieros franceses, Lucien Bonelli y Michel Veyrie, que se encontraban trabajando en el país en virtud de un convenio de cooperación técnica entre las dos naciones hermanas.

Empecé a tranquilizarme una semana después al leer en la prensa oficial un comunicado de las dos viudas—Un gesto de paz lo habían titulado—afi rmando que se trataba del acto de un desequilibrado y rechazando cualquier manipulación partidista del luctuoso suceso. Acabó de tranquilizarme el director general de África y Oriente Medio del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores español, Jorge Dezcallar, cuando en el transcurso de una conferencia de prensa celebrada en la residencia del embajador español en Rabat, aseguró que "los españoles estamos seguros en Marruecos." (Ferran Sales, “La amenaza del ‘frente’ sur,” El País, Feb. 1991)

The article is about Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa during the Gulf War. The journalist was reporting on the assassination of two French engineers in Casablanca. Few of the Spanish students knew the expression *se lió la manta a la cabeza*. Most of them recognized it as an idomatic expression and found suitable solutions: "went the whole hog," "went even further," "went over the edge," "took courage," "took action." One student translated it literally: "Abdelkader Kaduhi wrapped the blanket round his head and stabbed the two French engineers in the White House." The student's translation of "Casablanca" as "the White House," despite the fact that the text was about North Africa, proved that her real problem was that she was simply translating words; she had not activated her situational, verbal, cognitive, and socio-historical knowledge to interact with the text and make sense of it.

The *situational context* comprises all elements of the situation in which the discourse was transmitted or the speech act took place: location, people, events.

The *verbal context* comprises all the words in the text and how they are grouped. Only the verbal context in *se lió la manta a la cabeza* signals this as an
idomatic expression: *se lió* cannot be translated as “he rolled himself a cigarette” as in *se lió un cigarrillo* or “he had an affair with his secretary” as in *se lió con la secretaria*. The verbal context gives us the clues necessary to work through the polysemy of words in order to find the right meaning.

The *cognitive context* comprises all of the information gathered from the text during the reading. The article begins with the journalist recounting his son’s experiences going to the American school in Rabat and how the Moroccan children jeered at the American school bus. Abdelkadar went the whole hog a few weeks after a crowd attacked a group of European tourists in a luxury hotel in Fez on December 14. The tourists were threatened, robbed, and even had their faces rubbed with onions! Unpleasant as it must have been, there was obviously a qualitative difference between this and the assassination.

The *general socio-historical context* comprises all the events, codes, and social relationships necessary for understanding the text. Although this article is written in a rather amusing, ironic tone, it expresses serious concern for the safety of Spaniards living in Morocco, which is comprehensible only in the context of the fundamentalists’ reaction against the “allies” of the United States during the Gulf War.

When readers process a text successfully, all of their extralinguistic knowledge of context is activated. This activation is still beyond the scope of computers. Therefore, machine translation is effective only with texts that keep within a very limited and controlled context. However, I do regard machine-translation programs with greater respect after a little experiment that took place just before the outbreak of the Gulf War. We were trying out a new translation program, and a colleague typed out a sentence that was very much in our minds at that time: “Mr. Bush is going to start the Third World War.” The computer translated: “Sr. arbusto va a empezar la guerra del tercer mundo” (Mr. bush is going to start the war of the Third World).

**Reformulation**

Language does not give names to pre-existing things and concepts so much as it articulates the world of our experience. The images of art, we suspect, do the same. But this difference of styles or languages need not stand in the way of correct answers and descriptions. The world may be approached from a different angle and the information given may yet be the same. (Gombrich, 1977: 7)

Once the translator, as expert reader, has grasped the sense of his or her text and stored it as semantic representation, he or she is ready to begin the job of writing. In this stage, as in the first, the different levels of context (verbal, cognitive, situational, and general) play an important role. The translator has to take into account a new communicative situation: the purpose for which the text is being translated; the readers of the translation; their social and cultural situation; the extent to which
their knowledge sets include the contexts of the original; the linguistic, social, and cultural assumptions they share with the SLT readers.

**The Context of Situation and Reformulation**

The anthropologist B. Malinowski (1923, 1935) first worked out his theory of context to solve a translation problem: how to present the culture of the Melanesian peoples in the Trobriand Islands of the Western Pacific to English-speaking readers. He studied their culture through texts (oral tradition, narration of ceremonies, fishing expeditions, and so on). The distance between their culture and the English-speaking world before the Second World War was immense. (This was before the advent of modern communication techniques and the mass media.)

If he had opted for a free, reader-oriented translation, the texts would have been intelligible but would not have provided information about the SL culture, which was the purpose of his research. A literal, text-oriented translation would have preserved the original at the price of making it totally unintelligible to the English reader. His solution was a translation with commentary to situationalize the text by relating it to its verbal and nonverbal environment. He included every possible aspect of the culture surrounding the production and reception of the text and called it the context of situation.

The distance separating Spanish from English at the end of the twentieth century is not nearly so great: the languages are related, and the two cultures have much in common. A commentated translation is rarely needed, except in the case of some historical documents or "sacred" texts. Nevertheless, the translator can never forget the context of situation. Hatim and Mason believe that translators "have long been aware of the role of situational factors (source, status, client, use to be made of translation)" (1990: 38), but that linguistics has been slow to catch up. Today, under the influence of Malinowski and many others, "description of communicative events is now fairly widely recognized as the proper goal of linguistic analysis." As Gregory points out,

The difference between situational and other kinds of linguistic description has been greatly exaggerated. Much of the absence . . . of development of contextual and situational statement has been due to what might be termed a remarkable failure of nerve, a fear as to what is a describable relevant situational feature, a situational "fact." (Gregory, 1967: 178)

**Functional EFL and Prose Translating**

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has been a booming industry for at least the last twenty years and has been quick to apply situational linguistic description to language teaching. In Spain, for example, the demand for English classes makes the sale of textbooks big business. All of the English-language textbooks in the shops at the moment are based on communicative, functional notions. Nearly all students at the university level have learned English using this type of textbook.
This is an obvious advantage for translation teachers, particularly those teaching translation from Spanish to English: the students have already been “educated” in the notion of appropriateness.

If they have taken Cambridge First Certificate or Proficiency exams, they will have been trained to respond to situations. For example:

You have gone to the dry-cleaner’s to collect your suit and find that it has shrunk. What would you say?

You have been invited to a party and do not want to go but you don’t want to be rude. What would you say?

You have been stopped by a traffic policeman who is going to give you a ticket for driving down a one-way street. You try to persuade him not to.

**REGISTER AND REFORMULATION**

In order to respond correctly to these situations, the student has to make choices from the three basic categories of register: field or domain, mode, and tenor.

*Field of discourse* should not be confused with subject matter or topic. Political discourse is one field, but the subject matter of political discourse may be, for instance, defence, sovereignty, pensions, taxes, or education. Different languages develop different fields of discourse in different ways. For example, the scientific discourse of English is very marked. This may lead to problems of the sort commented on in the previous chapter when translating academic texts from Spanish to English. The English field of law, based on common law and the traditions of the English courts, is very different from the Spanish field based on Roman law and a different legal system. The most difficult translation I ever attempted was of a legal textbook in Spanish on the concept of time in law, based on the work of a German philosopher (yet another field).

*Mode of discourse* refers to the medium used, basically speech or writing (see figure 6.2). Gregory and Carrol (1978: 47) illustrate the different variations of mode in the following way:

If the President of the United States addresses the United Nations, his field of discourse will be political and the mode will be a text written to be read as speech. His speechwriters will have to take into account the channels through which this speech will reach different audiences: direct to the members of the General Assembly, and via television, radio, and newspapers to the public. The differences that we have established between interpreters and translators are largely questions of mode.

There are many translators in Spain working on dubbing and subtitling for cinema and television, and this is a professional option for translation students. In

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13. Crystal and Davy (1969) refer to *province*, which emphasizes the occupational, professional, and specialized character of fields (for example, a religious sermon).
TRANSLATING (PROCESS)

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Figure 6.2 Variations of Mode

dubbing, the translator is limited by the time of the original speech and has to take into account certain phonological features that are very evident if the spectators can see the mouths of the actors—for example, the labials [b], [m], and [p]. Subtitling is restricted by questions of space on the screen and may have to reproduce aspects of speech such as the slurred speech of a drunkard. Dubbing into the foreign language is not really a viable professional option for prose translators. However, it is certainly a valuable learning activity for the insights it gives to mode switching and deverbalization.

Tenor of discourse reflects the relationship between speaker and audience, writer and reader. Traditionally, this has been described as a continuum from frozen to intimate. Bell (1991: 186) distinguishes four overlapping and interacting levels of tenor: formality, politeness, impersonality, and accessibility.

Formality signals a more distant relationship between writer and reader. The greater care given to the structuring of the message also shows the degree of “importance” of the text. Formality is expressed in different ways. English is particularly rich in lexical alternatives due to the historical development of the language. The lexical alternative of Greek, Latin, or French origin is frequently used when a more formal tenor is required, and that of Germanic origin is used in more informal situations. This means that more formal texts may be easier to translate from the point
of view of vocabulary for Spanish students. Of course, they have to be aware of “false friends,” but, as Newmark maintains, there are more “close friends” than “false friends,” particularly when a formal tenor is used. For example:

Los mismos jefes de Estado y los de los 12 países neutrales europeos ratificarán una Carta Europea, especie de Constitución del Viejo Continente, que incluye las libertades y derechos humanos fundamentales que deben prevalecer en “la nueva era de democracia, paz y libertad”, y a continuación establece un código de conducta para las nuevas relaciones entre vecinos europeos. (El País, 18 Sept. 1990)

The same heads of state and the 12 neutral European countries will ratify a European Charter, a kind of European constitution, which includes the fundamental human rights and liberties that should prevail in “the new era of democracy, peace, and freedom” and establishes a code of conduct for the new relations between European neighbours.

Translation student X

This version, which relies very heavily on “close friends,” is perfectly adequate because it is a formal text. Students have to learn to recognize switches in levels of formality, but when the level is maintained in the SLT they must avoid mismatches. This example comes from Alan Duff’s (1981) charming book The Third Language about the problems facing English native speakers when they translate into English (most of his examples are taken from French): “However we learn from Sorokin and Hart the lesson that a plethora of information is available and can be dug out from our libraries” (p. 7).

Formality is also marked syntactically. One technique in English is pre-modification, or left-branching. This is a technique that Spanish students recognize as very English; they use it correctly in formal texts but they do not recognize it as a formal marker and tend to overuse it in less formal texts. In the first text below, which is about international relations, it is acceptable, but in the second, which is a more “literary” article about the homeless in New York collecting tins for cash, it is not.

1. Washington se muestra pesimista sobre la mediación que inicia Pérez de Cuéllar

Pérez de Cuéllar, el veterano diplomático peruano de 70 años ... el acuerdo de alto de fuego entre Irán e Irak ...

(El País, 29 Aug. 1990)

The 70-year-old veteran Peruvian diplomat, Pérez de Cuéllar ... the Iran-Iraq cease-fire agreement ...

Translation student Y

2. Nueva York, el mayor basurero del mundo

Este es el sonido de los mendigos de fin de siglo ... 

Duermen, como Walter, en frente de tiendas abiertas las 24 horas. (El País, 3 Sept. 1991)

This is the end of the century beggars sound ...

Like Walter, they sleep in front of 24 hour open shops.

Translation student Z
The massively heavy left-branching noun phrases found in some English formal discourse are so difficult to decode that the reader is forced to pay considerable time and attention to the text, which is one of the goals of the writer.

Politeness reflects the social distance between the writer and the reader. There are two main dimensions: power relations between social groups and power relations between individuals, connected with status, seniority, and authority. Spanish has many ways of expressing politeness, but the most obvious is the address system (usted versus tú). The use of used in Spain is changing. During the democratic transition, it was much less common. Today it is used more frequently in certain formal situations, but other uses seem to have died out. For example, children do not address their parents as usted. English has only “you,” and politeness has to be expressed by the use of titles and of lexical and syntactic markers. Spanish visitors to England are often surprised by the frequency with which they hear “Excuse me” and “Sorry,” and they find the commonly used polite request forms amusing (for example, “Would you mind opening the window?”).

Impersonality refers to whether the writer’s or reader’s presence is made explicit in the text or whether the first- or second-person is used. Typical examples can be found in academic, bureaucratic, and legal texts (for example, “it” as subject, passive constructions, abstract nouns.) Impersonality is highly valued in Spanish formal writing.

Accessibility reflects the assumptions that the writer has made about the extent to which the reader shares his or her knowledge of the universe of the discourse. If a physicist is writing for other physicists, there are certain basic laws implicit in the text, and he or she can use the specific terminology of the field. This text would be inaccessible to the general public. If the physicist is writing for a newspaper, he or she will have to resort to explicature for readers who do not share his or her knowledge of concepts, methodology, and terminology. The translator has to consider how TLT readers differ from the readers of the SLT and whether elements that are implicit in the original have to be made explicit.

Field, mode, and tenor refer to variation in language use. The translator also has to take dialectal—geographical, temporal, social, (non-)standard, idiolect—variations into account.

All of these variables, which may be expressed in macrostructures or microstructures, are interdependent. Together they help us to define and identify registers. A certain level of formality (tenor) influences and is influenced by a particular level of technicality (field) in an appropriate channel of communication (mode).

14. This macro/micro interdependence is often described as simultaneous bottom-up and top-down analysis by translation theorists such as Bell (1991) and Hatim and Mason (1990).
CONCLUSION

This description of the translation process is the first step in defining a teaching methodology to help translation students discover the principles that have to be observed for correct development of the translation process. The next chapter looks at a translation (text) and how all of the previously mentioned factors intervene—how the translation process is never linear but always cascaded—and how they are all interrelated and interdependent.