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Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of
English

Series Editor
**Donna R. Miller**

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# Translating Text and Context

Translation Studies and Systemic Functional
Linguistics

Vol. I Translation Theory

**Marina Manfredi**

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## PART III – From Theory to Practice

**Foreword to the first three books in the Series (2004)**

**Donna R. Miller**
**Series Editor**

It is with great pleasure that I present the first three e-books of this new series of Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of English, which is contained within the superordinate: Quaderni del Centro di Studi Linguistico-Culturali (CeSLiC), a research center of which I am currently the Director and which operates within the Department of Modern Foreign Languages of the University of Bologna.

The first three volumes of this series:

• M. Freddi, *Functional Grammar: An Introduction for the EFL Student*;

• M. Lipson, *Exploring Functional Grammar*,♦ and

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♦ In 2006, these first two volumes were revised and published in hardcopy by CLUEB of Bologna; on the request of the authors, they were simultaneously taken off line. The third volume remains on line and is also published in hardcopy (Bologna: Asterisco, 2005).

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- D.R. Miller (with the collaboration of A. Maiorani and M. Turci), *Language as Purposeful: Functional Varieties of Texts*.

have as their primary 'consumers' the students of the English Language Studies Program (ELSP) in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature of the University of Bologna, for whom they are the basic course book in each of the three years of the first-level degree course. They are the fruit of from 2 to 4 years of trialling, which was a vital part of an 'ex-60%' research project, financed in part by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, that I first proposed in 2002 and that is now into its third and final year, but which had already been initially set in motion when the reform of the university system was first made known back in 1999.

Without going into undue detail about what the reform meant for language teaching in the Italian universities, I'll just say that in the first-level degree course our task is now twofold: parallel to the many hours of traditional EFL practice with mother-tongue speakers, there are lectures which aim at providing, over the three years, a metalinguistic description of English grammar in a functional, socio-semiotic perspective. The contents of these volumes are thus progressive and

cumulative. In the first year a 'skeleton' of the Hallidayan Functional Grammar model is taught; in the second it is 'fleshed out', and in the third it is 'animated', as it were, put into practice, being made to work as a set of analytical tools for the investigation of the notion of register, or functional varieties of texts. A fourth volume on translation of text-types in this same perspective is also in the planning stages.

This kind of metalinguistic reflection on the nature of the language being taught and on how it works is thus relatively new for Faculties of LLS in the Italian university system. Its justification is essentially the premise put forth by F. Christie (1985/1989) apropos of the L1 learner's education: i.e., that explicit knowledge about language on the learners part is both desirable and useful. It is our conviction that such an insight not only can but should be extended to the L2 learning situation. In short, foreign language learning at the tertiary level should not be merely a question of the further development of students' competence in communicative skills; it should involve learning not only the language, but about the language. Indeed, what scholars define as the 'good' adult language learner has long been known to readily attend to language as system and patterns of choice (Johnson 2001: 153). To design and implement this component of the syllabus and try to create the required synergy with the more practical

work being done by the native speaker collaborators, so as to lead to better and more holistic L2 learning, needed, however, serious reflection and experimentation. Hence the project mentioned above, in which both Lipson and Freddi and other researchers and teachers took part.

Developing what began as sketchy class notes into proper course books that would serve the needs not only of those coming to lessons, but also of those many who, alas, don't was one important aim of the project. Another was monitoring the success of the new dual pedagogical syllabus by means of various quantitative and qualitative studies, the details of which I will not go into here. I will, however, say that the revised curriculum has apparently proved to have a rate of success that I don't dare yet to quantify. Moreover, a significant proportion of the students who have reached the end of their degree course report not only that they have understood what it was we are trying to do, but that they are actually convinced that our having tried to do it is valuable! Some even add that by the end they actually came to enjoy what at the beginning seemed to them a slow form of torture!

But what was it that we were trying to do, and by what means? As already said or at least implied above, we wanted, firstly, to get the students to reflect on the workings of language, tout court, and the specific functions of the English

language, in particular. To do that, we wanted to investigate with them the grammar of English, but we knew we'd have to chip away at the die-hard myths surrounding the study of grammar that see it as a boring, or even elitist, enterprise, one that is basically meaningless. We chose a functional grammar as we are firm believers in the language-culture equation. We chose the Hallidayan model because its lexico-grammatical core is inextricably tied to meaning-making on the part of human beings acting in concrete situational and cultural contexts, and we believe our students must be offered language awareness in this wider and richer perspective.

Our approach in these e-course books is consistently language-learner oriented: we have tried, in short, to keep in mind the fact that our students are L2 learners and take account of their practical learning experiences, and not only that of the complementary EFL component of their English courses. In aiming at helping them develop as learners and more particularly at empowering them through an increasing awareness of the functions of the English language in a variety of more, but also less, dominant socio-cultural contexts, we obviously aimed at working on their intercultural consciousness as well. These considerations dictated the choice for an explicit critical pedagogy that would make the workings of language as visible, and as attainable, as possible

to our students (Cf. Martin 1998: 418-419). At the same time it also dictated the choice of the linguistic framework we've adopted, as it sees language as a vital resource not only for behaving, but also for negotiating and even modifying such behavior, and views the study of language as an exploration of "…some of the most important and pervasive of the processes by which human beings build their world" (Christie 1985/1989: v). It is our hope that we are helping our students to be able not only to participate actively in these processes, but also to act upon them in socially useful ways. Such a hope is conceivably utopistic, but some amount of idealism is eminently fitting to a concept of socially-accountable linguistics conceived as a form of political action (Hasan & Martin (eds.) 1989: 2). It is also surely indispensable when attempting to break what is, in terms of our specific pedagogic setting, wholly new ground. We leave aside the thorny issue of English as global lingua franca, acknowledge merely that it is, and propose that these materials are proving to be effective teaching/learning resources for improving English literacy outcomes in that particular setting (Cf. Rose 1999).

From what has been said, it follows that the linguistic theory we adopt here is, at the same time, a social theory. The same cannot be said of the course that our students take (and that is obligatory in most degree courses in foreign languages

and literature in Italy) in General (and generally formalist) Linguistics. As most of the students in our degree course opt to study English, this series was also conceived as a way to ensure they are provided with another way of looking at what a language is. Undoubtedly, the contrast in frameworks often slips into conflict, but we feel that their being rather uncomfortably caught between sparring approaches is a crucial part of their education – and we are starting to see that it has its positive payoffs too.

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Donna R. Miller

Bologna, 10 November, 2004

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**Foreword to the fourth volume (2008)**

**Donna R. Miller**
**Series Editor**

This *Volume 1: Translation Theory* – the first of a two-volume work by Marina Manfredi, entitled *Translating Text and Context: Translation Studies and Systemic Functional Linguistics* – is the latest, and very welcome, addition to the series of Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of English, within the *Quaderni del Centro di Studi Linguistico-Culturali* (CeSLiC). Translation Studies has recently become a central discipline for the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature of the University of Bologna, in particular since the setting up, and immediate success, of the graduate degree course in *Language, Society and Communication* (LSC) three years ago. The present volume is, indeed, the admirable result of three years of intense experimentation of students' needs and desires on the part of the teacher of the course: Marina Manfredi herself. As the author states in her Introduction, the

> […] book has been conceived as a resource for graduate students of a course in Translation Studies, focused both on

the main theoretical issues of the discipline and on the practical task of translating, in particular from English into Italian. [...] [w]ithin a wide range of different contemporary approaches and methods, the purpose of *Translating Text and Context* is to offer a particular perspective on the theory and practice of translation, that of the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which, we believe, can prove valuable for the study of a phenomenon that we consider "[...] a complex linguistic, socio-cultural and ideological practice" (Hatim & Munday 2004: 330).

Nearly four years ago I wrote that in starting up this Series we were showing our concern with the language-learner, aiming at helping our EFL students develop as learners and, more particularly, at empowering them through an increasing awareness of the functions of the English language in a variety of socio-cultural contexts, and that in so doing we obviously aimed at working on their *intercultural consciousness* as well. What better way to continue that aim than to host a project that brings Functional Grammar and SFL into contact with the pre-eminently intercultural *inter*discipline of translation? Manfredi is not the first translation studies scholar to do this of course, but she is the first we know of to perform a systematic account of who has, how, and why.

Confident that the students of LSC will benefit enormously from this account, which demonstrates impeccably that one needn't turn one's back on a cultural approach to translation in embracing a linguistics one, we await with enthusiasm the completion of *Volume 2: From Theory to Practice*, the outline of which is included in this first volume.

Donna R. Miller

Bologna, 27 February, 2008

We would not translate a personal diary as if it were a scientific article (Halliday 1992: 20).

## *Introduction and Purpose*

This book has been conceived as a resource for graduate students of a course in Translation Studies (henceforth TS), focused both on the main theoretical issues of the discipline and on the practical task of translating, in particular from English into Italian. Nevertheless, its aim is not that of providing students or anyone interested in this field with an overview of the main theories of TS, even though select references and connections will be mentioned where relevant[1]. Rather, within a wide range of different contemporary approaches and methods, the purpose of *Translating Text and Context* is to offer a particular

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[1] For specific contemporary theories of translation just hinted at in this book, students are recommended to refer to Munday, J. (2001), *Introducing Translation Studies*, London/New York: Routledge.

perspective on the theory and practice of translation, that of the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL), which, we believe, can prove valuable for the study of a phenomenon that we consider "[…] a complex linguistic, socio-cultural and ideological practice" (Hatim & Munday 2004: 330).

We do not assume that our translation students, who will inevitably come from different backgrounds, have any thorough familiarity with SFL; therefore we have tried to explain briefly some of the fundamental notions, taking care to refer to the other books of this series (Freddi 2006; Lipson 2006; Miller 2005), where those issues are much more closely examined.

The present book is essentially rooted in the following beliefs:

(1) In translation, there is an essential interplay between theory and practice;

(2) TS is necessarily an *inter*discipline, drawing on many different disciplines, with a linguistic core;

(3) SFL can offer a model for translating language and culture, text and context;

(4) A model of translation can be valid for a wide range of text-types, from popularizing to specialized, and also literary.

Thus, we move from the strong belief that translation theory *is* relevant to translators' problems, and not only for academic purposes, but also to the practice of a professional translator, since it can "[…] offer a set of conceptual tools [that] can be thought of as aids for mental problem-solving" (Chesterman, in Chesterman & Wagner 2002: 7).

Secondly, we recognize that TS is an interdiscipline and do not deny the multiple insights it provides the theory of translation, especially after the so-called "cultural turn" which occurred in TS at the end of the Eighties, to which we will be coming back below, and the many important issues raised by Cultural Studies or Postcolonial Studies, for example. At the same time, we hold that linguistics in particular has much to offer the study of translation. Moreover, we argue that culturally-oriented and linguistically-oriented approaches to translation "[...] are not necessarily mutually exclusive alternatives" (Manfredi 2007: 204). On the contrary, we posit that the inextricable link between language and culture can even be highlighted by a linguistic model that views language as a social phenomenon, indisputably embedded in culture, like that of SFL.

As is typical (see, e.g., Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 181), we will focus our study on written translation and, according to R. Jakobson's typology, on "Interlingual

Translation", or "translation proper" only (Jakobson 1959/2004).

*Translating Text and Context* consists of two distinct yet complementary volumes. The first one is of a theoretical nature, whereas the second one is concerned with the connections between theory and practice and the application of the SFL model to the actual practice of translating. The volumes are divided into four major interconnected parts, i.e., "On Translation", "SFL and TS, TS and SFL", "From Theory to Practice" and "Practice of Translation".

The first Chapter starts with an attempt at answering such basic, but always challenging, questions as: "What is translation?" and "What is Translation Studies?".

Chapter Two describes TS in terms of the way it has evolved into an interdisciplinary field. Then, within this framework, it moves to the assumption that linguistic studies, which offered the first systematic enquiry of the emerging discipline, can still be considered the fundamental core. In particular, we will attempt to propose the SFL approach as a viable and valid contribution to these studies.

In Chapter Three, some key terms and concepts in TS are introduced, such as the notions of 'Equivalence' and of 'The Unit of Translation', the latter strictly connected to the practice of translating.

In Chapter Four, M.A.K. Halliday's own contribution to the theory of translation is presented.

Subsequent chapters focus on some of the key names in the discipline of TS: those who base certain aspects of their theoretical approach on the SFL framework, like J.C. Catford (Chapter Five) and, for select issues, also P. Newmark (Chapter Six). Then, theories proposed by contemporary translation scholars working firmly in an SFL perspective are dealt with, from B. Hatim and I. Mason (Chapter Seven) to J. House (Chapter Eight).

The volume concludes with some final considerations.

In the second volume, Chapter Nine will present some examples of theoretical models which can be applied to the practice of translation, such as those proposed by scholars drawing on SFL, e.g., House (1977; 1997), R.T. Bell (1991), M. Baker (1992) and E. Steiner (1998; 2004).

Chapter Ten will be concerned with a practical application of Functional Grammar (henceforth FG) to translation practice, with the aim of illustrating how the analysis of different lexico-grammatical structures, realizing three kinds of meanings and being activated by certain contexts, can prove useful to the concrete task of translating.

Chapter Eleven will be divided into seven sections, each presenting a selected Source Text (ST), representative of a range of different text-types: Divulgative (both scientific and economic), Tourist, Specialized (both in the field of sociology and politics), Literary (in the areas of postcolonial and children's literature). A pre-translational textual and contextual analysis focusing on the main translation problems will be offered, as well as a guided translation through a discussion of possible strategies. Activities will be based exclusively on authentic texts, and every task will be preceded by a short presentation of the communicative situation and by a translation 'brief', in order to grant the translator a specific purpose within a given socio-cultural environment. Finally, with the patent presuppositions that, 1) translation is a decision-making process and that, 2) different 'adequate' solutions can be accepted, a possible Italian Target Text (TT) will be proposed.

At the end of volume 2 a Glossary will be supplied; this will contain the main terms used in the book, both in the field of TS and, to some extent, in SFL.

Tasks are designed for work in groups or individually. The main standard abbreviations that will be used throughout the two volumes are:

TS: Translation Studies

SFL: Systemic Functional Linguistics

SL: Source Language

TL: Target Language

ST: Source Text

TT: Target Text.

Ideally to be used together with a book providing an overview of the main theories of TS (e.g., Munday 2001), *Translating Text and Context* hopes to meet its goal of offering students the benefits that, we believe, a theoretical approach and a metalinguistic reflection can give to their practice of translation.

# PART I – On Translation

## *1. Preliminaries on Translation*

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

### 1.1 What is Translation?

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

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

If we look for a definition of translation in a general dictionary such as *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, we can find it described as:

- the process of translating words or text from one language into another;
- a written or spoken rendering of the meaning of a word, speech, book, or other text, in another language [...] (Pearsall 1998).

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

If we consider the definition offered by a specialist source like the *Dictionary of Translation Studies* by

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[2] Items highlighted in bold print, if not indicated otherwise, are considered key words/expressions.

Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997), we can find the phenomenon of translation explained as follows:

> An incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways. For example, one may talk of translation as a **process** or a **product**, and identify such sub-types as **literary** translation, **technical** translation, **subtitling** and **machine translation**; moreover, while more typically it just refers to the transfer of **written texts**, the term sometimes also includes interpreting. [...] Furthermore, many writers also extend its reference to take in **related activities** which most would not recognize as translation as such (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 181).

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

(1) Translation as a Process and/or Product;

(2) Sub-types of translation;

(3) Concern with written texts;

(4) Translation *vs* Non-translation.

First of all, we can explicitly divide up the distinction seen above into two main perspectives, those that consider translation either as a 'process' or a 'product'. To this twofold

categorization, Bell (1991: 13) adds a further variable, since he suggests making a distinction between *translating* (the process), *a translation* (the product) and *translation* (i.e., "the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process").

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

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

The reference to machine translation in the quotation above makes clear that today translation is not seen as exclusively a human process and that, at least in certain professional areas, input from information technology has also had an impact, through, for instance, automatic or machine-

assisted translation. Moreover, thanks to advances in new technologies, today we can also incorporate into TS the contribution of corpus linguistics, which allows both theorists and translators analysis of large amounts of electronic texts, be they STs, TTs or so-called 'parallel texts' (the concept of 'parallel texts' will be tackled in the second volume, when dealing with the translation of specialized texts).

What Shuttleworth and Cowie indicate as being the most typical kind of translation – of the written text – is the focus of *Translating Text and Context*, which will concentrate on conventional translation between written languages, and only on '**interlingual** translation', considered by Jakobson, as said in the Introduction, to be the only kind of 'proper translation' (Jakobson 1959/2004). Thus, following the main tendency (see, e.g., Hatim & Munday 2004; Munday 2001, to cite but two), interpreting is excluded as being more properly 'oral translation of a spoken message or text' (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 83).

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

1) "Intralingual", or *rewording*;
2) "Interlingual", or *translation proper*;

3) "Intersemiotic", or *transmutation*

(1959/2004: 139, *emphasis in the original*[3]).


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

The second kind concerns "[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some **other** language" (*ibid.*, *emphasis added*). In this case – the case of *translation proper* – the act of translation is carried out from one language to another.

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

We will thus exclude from our investigation both subtitling and dubbing, which function within a multimodal semiotic, and so would seem to belong more properly to the third category of Jakobson's typology. In limiting ourselves to

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[3] Throughout the volumes, we will avoid the common term 'original' to refer to the text that is being turned into another language and will rather use the more technical and precise term 'Source Text' (ST). We will restrict the term 'original' to a text *not* involved in a translation process.

the examination of the 'traditional' kind of translation, of an exclusively written text translated from one language into another, from a systemic-functional perspective, we will be concentrating on 'verbal' language, i.e. "[...] as opposed to music, dance and other languages of art"[4] (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 20).

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

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

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

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

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

As Shuttleworth and Cowie observe (1997: 181), throughout the history of research into translation, the phenomenon has been variously delimited by formal descriptions, echoing the frameworks of the scholars proposing them.

Thus, at the beginning of the 'scientific' (Newmark 1981/1982) study of translation, when translation was seen merely as a strictly 'linguistic' operation, Catford, for instance, described it in these terms:

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

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

Thirty years later, in Germany, the concept of translation as a form of 'equivalence' is maintained, as we can see from the way in which W. Koller defines it:

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

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

> Translation is the production of a functional[5] target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanding function of the target text (translation skopos) (Nord 1991: 28).

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[5] In the '*skopos* theory' of translation (*Skopostheorie*), 'functional' refers to the 'purpose' of the TT with reference to the target audience.

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

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

Halliday thus proposes distinguishing the activity of 'translation' (as a process) from the product(s) of 'translating', including both 'translation' (concerning written text) and 'interpreting' (regarding spoken text). This of course reflects his notion of 'text', which "[…] may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of" (Halliday in Halliday & Hasan 1985/1989: 10).

## 1.2 What is Translation Studies?

*The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1998) defines 'Translation Studies' as "[t]he academic discipline which concerns itself with the study of translation" (277).

Emerging in the 1970s, developing in the 1980s, and flourishing in the 1990s (Bassnett 1999: 214), TS has evolved enormously in the past twenty years and is now in the process of consolidating.

The term 'Translation Studies' was coined by the scholar J.S. Holmes, an Amsterdam-based lecturer and literary translator, in his well-known paper, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies", originally presented in 1972 to the translation section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen, but published and widely read only as of 1988.

As Baker points out, although initially focusing on literary translation, TS "[…] is now understood to refer to the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation" (1998: 277).

As M. Snell-Hornby affirmed at the end of the Eighties, TS must embrace "[…] the whole spectrum of

language, whether literary, 'ordinary' or 'general language', or language for special purposes" (Snell-Hornby 1988: 3). We agree.

Following Hatim's definition of TS as "[…] the discipline which concerns itself with the theory and practice of translation" (Hatim 2001: 3), in *Translating Text and Context* we deal with both. As said in the Introduction to the present volume, we firmly believe in the interconnections between theory and practice: the practice of translation without a theoretical background tends towards a purely subjective exercise, and a theory of translation without a link to practice is simply an abstraction. As C. Yallop reminds us (1987: 347), one of Halliday's main contributions to linguistics is his desire to build bridges between linguistic theory and professional practice. When dealing with translation, we firmly believe that this need is even stronger. Proficiency in two languages, the source one and the target one, is obviously not sufficient to become a competent translator.

Since Holmes' paper, TS has evolved to such an extent that it has turned into an interdiscipline, interwoven with many other fields.

## 2. Translation Studies: "A House of Many Rooms"

For too long hosted within other fields, being merely considered a sub-discipline of some other domain, TS has gradually evolved into a discipline in its own right, or rather, as said, into an 'interdiscipline', which draws on a wide range of other disciplines and hence could be effectively described as "a house of many rooms" (Hatim 2001: 8).

### 2.1 TS: An Interdiscipline

For a long time dismissed as a second-rate activity, the study of translation has now acquired full academic recognition. As we have seen, in Europe translation was viewed for many decades either as simple linguistic transcoding (studied as a sub-discipline of applied linguistics, and only focusing on specialized translation), or as a literary practice (viewed as a branch of comparative literature and only concerned with the translation of canonical works of art). Even though such categorizations still survive – bringing back certain old and, one had hoped, surmounted issues – today TS occupies its rightful place as an interdiscipline. The

disciplines with which it is correlated are multiple, as Figure 1 clearly shows:



Figure 1: Map of Translation Studies and disciplines interfacing with it (Adapted from Hatim & Munday 2004: 8)
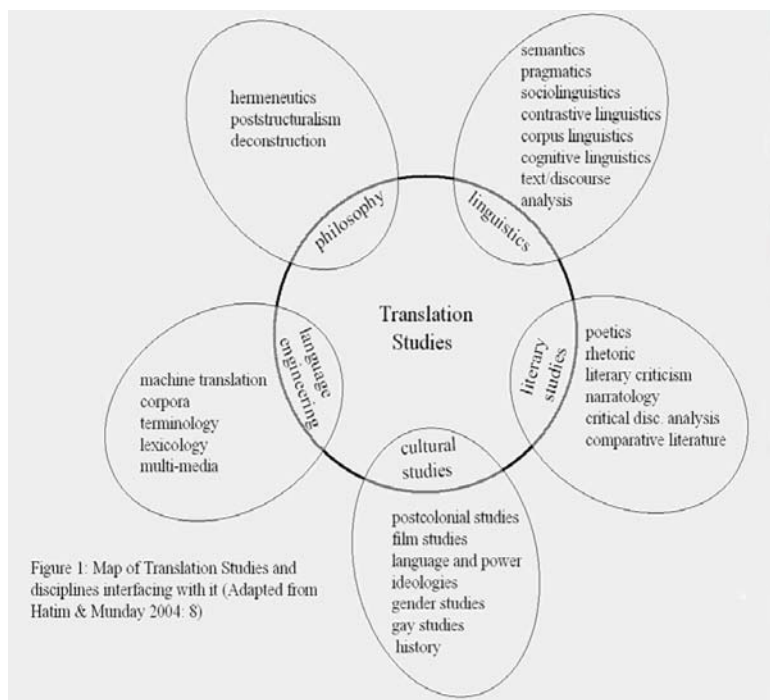
One of the first moves towards interdisciplinarity can be considered Snell-Hornby's "integrated approach", which she called for at the end of the Eighties in her *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (1988/1995). The approach was meant to bridge the gap between linguistic- and literary-oriented methods, aiming at proposing a model which would embrace the whole spectrum of language and cull insights from other disciplines, such as psychology, ethnology, philosophy, as well as cultural history, literary studies,

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sociocultural studies and, for specialized translation, the study of the specific domain involved (medical, legal, etc.).

In spite of some problems inherent in the model (see Munday 2001: 186), it is generally considered to have been an important step towards an interdisciplinary endeavour. Working towards the same goal, she later co-edited *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline* (Snell-Hornby *et al.* 1994).

At the end of the twentieth century, Ulrych and Bollettieri Bosinelli described the burgeoning discipline of TS as follows:

> The term '**multidiscipline**' is the most apt in portraying the present state of translation studies since it underlines both its **independent nature** and its **plurality of perspectives**. Translation studies can in fact be viewed as a "**metadiscipline**" that is able to accommodate diverse disciplines with their specific theoretical and methodological frameworks and thus to comprehend areas focusing, for example, on linguistic aspects of translation, cultural studies aspects, literary aspects and so on (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli 1999: 237).

Their account of TS is akin to Hatim's view that "[t]ranslating is a multi-faceted activity, and there is room for a variety of perspectives" (2001: 10).


## 2.2 TS and Linguistics


Along with the conviction that a multifaceted phenomenon like translation needs to be informed by multidisciplinarity, we strongly believe that, within this perspective, linguistics has much to offer the study of translation. Indeed, we share British linguist and translation theorist P. Fawcett's view that, without a grounding in linguistics, the translator is like "[…] somebody who is working with an incomplete toolkit" (Fawcett 1997: *Foreword*).

Among a multitude of approaches, there are not many scholars who would completely dismiss the ties between linguistics and translation (Taylor 1997: 99). This is because, as C. Taylor elsewhere puts it, "[…] translation is undeniably a linguistic phenomenon, at least in part" (Taylor 1998: 10).

Since linguistics deals with the study of language and how this works, and since the process of translation vitally entails language, the relevance of linguistics to translation

should never be in doubt. But it must immediately be made clear that we are referring in particular to "[…] those branches of linguistics which are concerned with the [...] social aspects of language use" and which locate the ST and TT firmly within their cultural contexts (see Bell 1991: 13).

As Fawcett suggests (1997: 2), the link between linguistics and translation can be twofold. On one hand, the findings of linguistics can be applied to the practice of translation; on the other hand, it is possible to establish a linguistic theory of translation. Bell even argues that translation can be invaluable to linguistics: "[...] as a vehicle for testing theory and for investigating language use" (Bell 1991: xvi)[6].

One of the first to propose that linguistics should affect the study of translation was Jakobson who, in 1959, affirmed:

> Any comparison of two languages implies an examination of their mutual translatability; widespread practice of interlingual communication, particularly translating activities, must be kept under constant scrutiny by **linguistic science** (1959/2004: 139, *emphasis added*).

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[6] See also Gregory (2001).

In 1965, Catford opened his, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, with the following assertion:

> Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language – a general linguistic theory (Catford 1965: 1).

After centuries dominated by a recurring and, according to G. Steiner, 'sterile' (1998: 319) debate over 'literal', 'free' and 'faithful' translation, in the 1950s and 1960s more systematic approaches to the study of translation emerged and they were linguistically-oriented (like for example those of Vinay and Darbelnet, Mounin, Nida, see Munday 2001: 9). Thus linguistics can be said to have "[…] had the advantage of drawing [translation] away from its intuitive approach and of providing it with a scientific foundation" (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli 1999: 229). To borrow Munday's words, "[t]his more systematic and 'scientific' approach in many ways began to mark out the territory of the academic investigation of translation", represented by Nida, and, in Germany, by Wilss, Koller, Kade, Neubert (see Munday 2001: 9-10).

Over the following years, as Ulrych and Bollettieri Bosinelli emphasize, the ties between translation and

linguistics got even stronger, thanks to the development within linguistics of new paradigms which considered "[…] language as a social phenomenon that takes place within specific cultural contexts", like discourse analysis, text linguistics, sociolinguistics and pragmatics (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli 1999: 229). And we argue that Hallidayan linguistics occupies a rightful place among these models.

In spite of all this, on many sides the relevance of linguistics to translation has also been critiqued, or worse, neglected. In 1991, Bell showed his contempt for such a sceptical attitude. He finds it paradoxical that many translation theorists should make little systematic use of the techniques and insights offered by linguistics, but also that many linguists should have little or no interest in the theory of translation. In his view, if translation scholars do not draw heavily on linguistics, they can hardly move beyond a subjective and arbitrary evaluation of the products, i.e. translated texts; they are, in short, doomed to have no concern for the process (Bell 1991: xv ff).

Similarly, Hatim warns against those (not better specified) introductory books on TS which tend to criticize the role of linguistics in the theory of translation and blame it for any, or all, failures in translation. Indeed, he says, their argument seems to focus on abstract, i.e., far from concrete,

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structural and transformational models only, and that these, admittedly, do *not* offer many insights to the practice of translation. Yet, they seem to ignore those branches within linguistics which are not divorced from practice and whose contribution to translation is vital (Hatim 2001: xiv-xv).

However, despite this scepticism, born primarily of a failure to distinguish between a linguistics practised *in vitro* and one that is rooted in the social, a genuine interest in linguistics does continue to thrive in TS. Indeed, even though Snell-Hornby takes her distance from it (Snell-Hornby 2006), recently TS seems to have been characterized by a new 'linguistic turn'.

Denigration of linguistic models has occurred especially since the 1980s, when TS was characterized by the so-called 'cultural turn' (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990). What happened was a shift from linguistically-oriented approaches to culturally-oriented ones. Influenced by cultural studies, TS has put more emphasis on the cultural aspects of translation and even a linguist like Snell-Hornby has defined translation as a "cross-cultural event" (1987), H.J. Vermeer has claimed that a translator should be 'pluricultural' (see Snell-Hornby 1988: 46), while V. Ivir has gone so far as to state that "[...] translating means translating cultures, not languages" (Ivir 1987: 35).

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Nevertheless, we would argue that taking account of culture does *not* necessarily mean having to dismiss any kind of linguistic approach to translation. As we have seen, even from a linguistic point of view, language and culture are inextricably connected (see James 1996; Kramsch 1998, among others). Moreover, as House clearly states (2002: 92-93), if we opt for contextually-oriented linguistic approaches – which see language as a social phenomenon embedded in culture and view the properly understood meaning of any linguistic item as requiring reference to the cultural context – we can tackle translation from *both* a linguistic and cultural perspective. We totally share House's view that it is possible,

> […] while considering translation to be a particular type of culturally determined practice, [to] also hold that it is, at its core, a predominantly linguistic procedure (House 2002: 93).

Thus, as suggested by Garzone (2005: 66-67), in order to enhance the role of culture when translating, it is not at all necessary to reject the fact that translation is primarily a linguistic activity. On the contrary, if we aim at a cultural goal, we will best do so through linguistic procedures. And we

feel that an SFL approach makes a worthwhile contribution towards just this purpose.

## 2.3 Why Systemic Functional Linguistics?

We conceive translation "[…] as a textual practice and translations as meaningful records of communicative events" (Hatim 2001: 10) and we are pleased to locate ourselves within what Hatim calls the 'contextual turn' occurring in linguistics (*ibid.*).

Let us now explain why we are convinced that SFL can prove itself useful to the theory and practice of translation and why we thus propose to explore the theoretical problems of translation through a systemic-functional perspective and to adopt FG as an instrument of text analysis and of the production of a new text in the TL.

As said, we are following the systemic-functional model of grammar as proposed by M.A.K. Halliday, the central figure of SFL (Halliday 1985/1994; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004).

Although folk notions might still at times claim that proficiency in a foreign language – and, we wish to point out, of two languages at least! – along with a couple of

dictionaries are all that one needs to produce a translation, we know that it is not so. As Hatim observes, I.A. Richards once described translation as "[…] very probably [...] the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos" (Richards, in Hatim & Munday 2004: 129). Apart from proficiency in two languages, the source and target ones, translation presupposes much knowledge and know-how – together with the flexibility, and capacity, to draw on a wide range of other disciplines, depending on the text being translated.

Even though the most evident problems that come up when translating may seem to be a matter of words and expressions, translation is *not* only a matter of vocabulary: grammar also plays a large and important role. Indeed, FG prefers to talk in terms of lexico-grammar, which includes both grammar and lexis (Halliday 1978: 39). With reference to its important role in translation, C. Taylor Torsello has this to say:

> [...] grammar should be a part of the education of a translator, and in particular functional grammar since it is concerned with language in texts and with the role grammar plays, in combination with lexicon, in carrying out specific functions and

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realizing specific types of meaning (Taylor Torsello
1996: 88).

After this revealing statement, we might say that we
have just found a quite convincing answer to our question:
why SFL? However, it is better for us to proceed gradually as
we enter the realm of FG; it is best for us to illustrate, step by
step, why we consider it relevant to the study of translation.

The main focus of FG should become clear from the
definition offered by Halliday himself:

It is functional in the sense that it is designed to
account for how the language is **used**. Every text
[...] unfolds in some context of use [...]. A functional
grammar is essentially a 'natural' grammar, in the
sense that everything in it can be explained,
ultimately, by reference to how language is used
(Halliday 1985/1994: xiii, *emphasis in the original*).

FG is not, therefore, concerned with a static or
prescriptive kind of language study, but rather describes
language in actual **use** and centres around **texts** and their
**contexts**. Since it concerns language, and how language is
realized in texts, in consequence it is also fit to deal with the

actual goal of a translator: translating texts (see Taylor Torsello 1996: 91).

But what is **text**? Halliday and Hasan define it as "[…] a unit of language in use" (1976: 1) and Miller as "[…] a fragment of the culture that produces it" (Miller 1993, quoted in Miller 2005: 3). Thanks to these two complementary definitions, we may say that our purpose is clear. We are not interested in a linguistic framework that advocates a static and normative kind of approach to language and text, but rather in one that sees language as dynamic communication and language as "social semiotic" (Halliday 1978). Indeed, SFL concerns itself with how language works, how it is organized and what social functions it serves. In other words, it is a socio-linguistically and contextually-oriented framework, where language is viewed as being embedded in culture, and where meanings can be properly understood only with reference to the cultural environment in which they are realized.

Even simply from your own study of a foreign language, you will realize that language is not a simple matter of vocabulary and grammar, but that it can never be separated from the culture it operates in and is always part of a context. And, if you know the words, but do not recognise and understand the meanings, it is because you do not share the

background knowledge of a different language/culture. Or, if you have problems knowing which lexico-grammar is appropriate for a particular event, then you may have problems with situated communication, since language use will vary according to different contexts. All this is even more evident when dealing with the activity of translation, when you are faced not only with recognising and understanding a different social and cultural source context, but also with being able to reproduce meanings in a totally different environment, the target one. And this is true both for languages that are culturally 'close' and for those that are culturally 'distant'.

In short, a translator deals with two different cultures, the source and the target one, and is often faced with the problem of identifying culture-specificity, which obliges finding a way to convey those features to his or her cultural audience. As a result, we believe that an approach which focuses on language embedded in context can prove itself to be a real help in the act of translating.

When faced with the translation of a text, of any kind, be it literary or specialized, if a translator is able, working Bottom-Up, to go from the lexico-grammatical realizations to the identification of the meanings these realize in the text and also to reconstruct the 'context of situation' and 'of culture'

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which activated such meanings and wordings, then s/he will also be able to translate it accordingly, taking into account both the source and the target contexts. Before moving on, we wish to make clear that, in SFL, by '**context**' we do not refer to the general meaning of 'text around our text', for which we use the term '**co-text**', but we refer to a precise and specific concept that we will now explore further.

It was Malinowski, an anthropologist, who first proposed the notions of 'Context of Situation' (1923) and 'Context of Culture' (1935). And it is interesting for us to observe, as Halliday reminds us, that Malinowski's insights came after his own work on translation problems, in particular those connected with texts from so-called 'exotic', or 'primitive', cultures, gathered during his research in Melanesia (Halliday 1992: 24). The notions were then further developed by Firth (Halliday & Hasan 1985/1989: 8) and then incorporated into the FG model by Halliday.

The common notion of 'context', not unknown to general language studies and various schools of linguistics, is viewed in FG from two different perspectives: firstly, from the point of view of the immediate and specific material and social situation in which the text is being used, and secondly, from the perspective of the general 'belief and value system', or 'cultural paradigm', or 'ideology' (Miller 2005: 2) in which

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it functions and with which it is aligned, or not. Visually, we could represent these two kinds of context as in figure 2:



Figure 2: Text in Context (Adapted from Butt *et al.* 2000: 4)
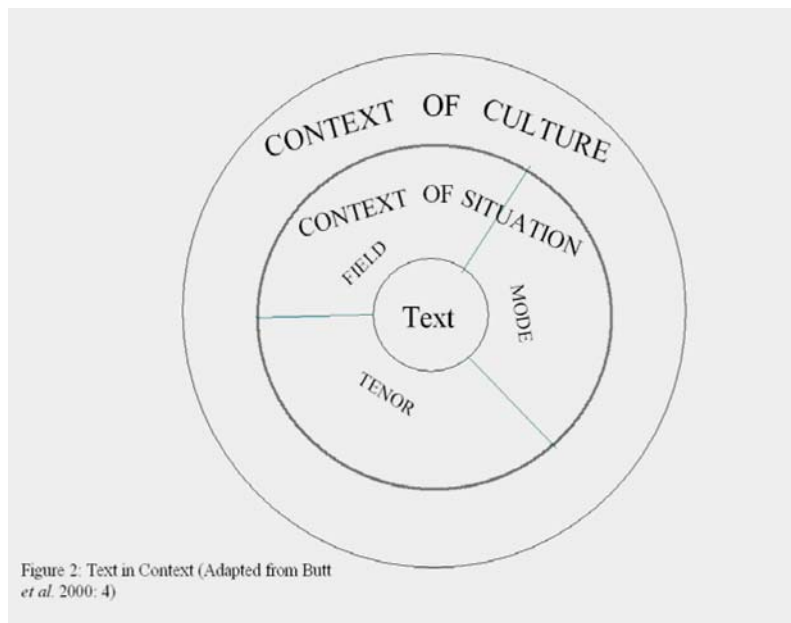
So that "[…] a text always occurs in **two contexts**, one within the other" (Butt *et al.* 2000: 3). Any text is therefore strictly related both to the immediate context enveloping it, i.e. the Context of Situation, and to the 'outer' Context of Culture. In other words, any text is an expression of a specific situation and of a wider social, historical, political, ideological, etc. environment. Culture can be defined as "a set of interrelated semiotic (i.e., meaning) systems" (Miller 2005: 2).

In SFL, the Context of Situation is seen as comprising three components, called 'Field', 'Tenor' and 'Mode'. Let us see briefly what they consist of[7].

'Field' concerns the kind of action taking place and its social nature; 'Tenor' regards the interactive roles involved in the text creation (who is taking part, his or her status and discourse role), and 'Mode' refers to the function of language in the organization of the text.

A thorough and correct understanding of these three variables is fundamental, we believe, for the translator. A translator who is capable of identifying these different dimensions and is able to reproduce them in a different language, the TL, is better able to offer a text which is 'functionally equivalent' to the source one, even though the structures can be different – because languages are different.

The concept of Context of Situation is strictly linked to the notion of '**Register**', defined as a 'functional variety of language' (Halliday in Halliday & Hasan 1985/1989: 38 ff). At the centre is the issue of language variability according to 'use' (Halliday & Hasan 1985/1989). But we will explore this important issue and the questions it raises that specifically relate to translation when presenting the theoretical model of

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[7] For a thorough discussion and illustration of the issue, see the other books of the series, in particular Lipson (2006); Miller (2005).

two translation scholars who draw heavily on SFL: Hatim and Mason (1990, see chapter 7 below). Likewise, the aspect of variation according to 'user' (Halliday & Hasan 1985/1989), a further input offered by SFL to TS, will also be dealt with in reference to the specific problem of rendering *dialect* into a TL, as proposed by translation theorists such as Catford (1965), first, and, again, Hatim and Mason (1990), later (see chapters 5; 7).

Until now we have focused on the extra-textual notion of context. The fact that a text is contextually-motivated, however, does not help us to understand all its layers, in order to be able to produce a translation in a TL. When translating, we are constantly confronted with the issue of **meaning**. Halliday posits that

> Grammar is the central processing unit of language, the powerhouse where meanings are created; it is hardly conceivable that the systems by which these meanings are expressed should have evolved along lines significantly different from the grammar itself (Halliday 1985/1994: 15).

A functional approach to grammar that views "[…] language essentially as a system of meaning potential"

(Halliday 1978: 39), i.e. as "a resource for making meaning" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 23) can be extremely useful for our purposes. As Taylor puts it, "[t]he translator is primarily interested in conveying meaning through the vehicle of language" (Taylor 1990: 70).

The three variables of the Context of Situation illustrated above, i.e. 'Field', 'Tenor' and 'Mode', affect our language choices because they are linked to the three main functions of language that language construes, which Halliday calls 'semantic metafunctions', i.e. the 'Ideational', 'Interpersonal' and 'Textual'. Very briefly[8]: the 'Field' of discourse is seen as activating 'Ideational Meanings'; 'Tenor' as determining 'Interpersonal Meanings' and 'Mode' as triggering 'Textual Meanings'. To put it simply, 'Ideational Meanings' are the result of language being used to represent experience, 'Interpersonal', of language which is used for human interaction, and 'Textual', of the need for a text to be a coherent and cohesive whole. Figure 3 gives us an overview of the extra-linguistic and linguistic levels in the process of text-making:

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[8] For a fuller illustration of the metafunctions of language, see the other books of the series, in particular, Freddi (2006); Lipson (2006).

Figure 3: The multi-coding system of language  (Adapted from Butt *et al.* 2000: 7)
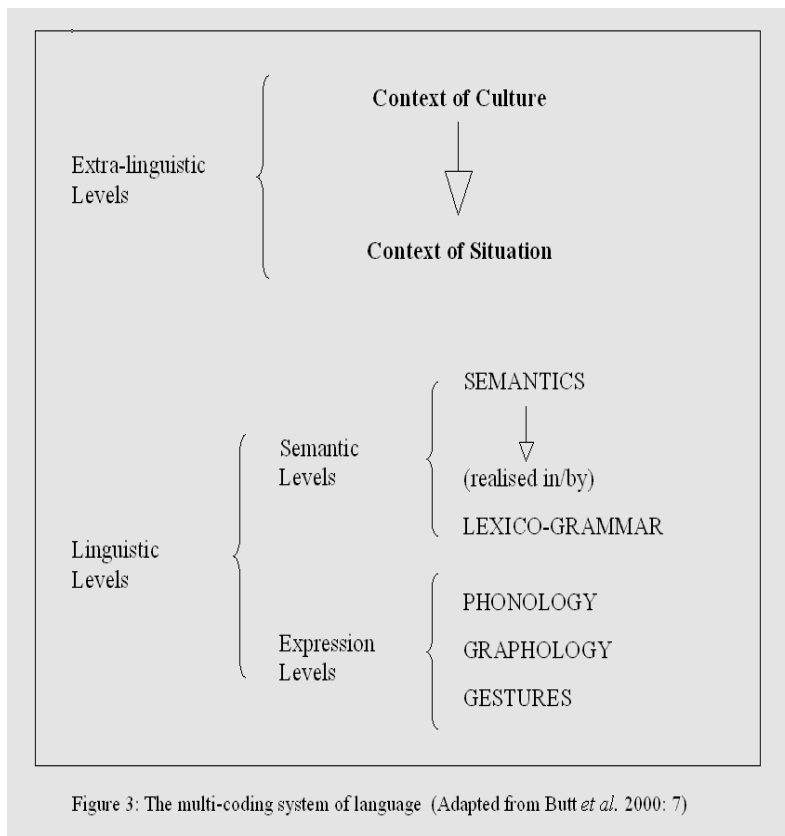
It is our firm conviction that a translator must attempt to translate all three different kinds of meanings, because, as Steiner and Yallop assert, texts are "[…] configurations of multidimensional meanings, rather than [...] containers of *content*" (Steiner & Yallop 2001: 3, *emphasis in the original*).

Even though on the surface it might seem that the essential task of a translator is that of preserving and conveying 'ideational meanings', this is not the whole story, as Halliday clearly points out when dealing with translation

himself (2001: 16). In certain kinds of contexts, for example, matching the relations of social power and distance, or the patterns of speaker evaluation and appraisal (all expressions of interpersonal meanings), as construed in the ST, may be even more vital to a translation than the exact preservation of the propositional content (*ibid.*). At the textual level, the method of topic development can be important for emphasis and to construct the discursive unwinding of the text. A translator, in other words, must in any case work, and simultaneously, at several levels of meaning.

Obviously, in order to identify these different strands of meaning, we need to work with grammar, or lexico-grammar, but always keeping in mind that, in an SFL perspective, lexico-grammar is selected according to the purposes a text is serving; thus it is a question of the choices that a speaker makes from within the total meaning potential of the language, i.e., its systems. As Halliday and C. Matthiessen put it:

> A text is the product of ongoing selection in a very large network of systems [...]. Systemic theory gets its name from the fact that the grammar of a language is represented in the form of system networks, not as an inventory of structures. Of

course, structure is an essential part of the description; but it is interpreted as the outward form taken by systemic choices, not as the defining characteristic of language. A language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 23).

Thus we come to another key concept in SFL: the notion of '**system**' – hence 'systemic'. "Structure is the syntagmatic ordering in language: patterns, or regularities, in what *goes together with* what" (Halliday & Matthiessen: 22, *emphasis in the original*), which corresponds to the paradigmatic ordering in language. In other words, systemic linguistics examines what people actually 'do' with language with reference to what they 'could' do, in terms of choices among systems. Any language offers a speaker or writer a set of alternatives along the paradigmatic axis, and the so-called 'condition of entry' determines systems based on different choices. A writer might opt for a positive or negative polarity, or for a particular kind of Process, material, say, rather than mental, etc. His or her choice will then contribute to the realization of 'Structure'.

But what has all this to do, practically speaking, with the translator?

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Through an analysis of grammatical realization, a translator can identify different kinds of meanings. In order to understand the meaning of a text and reproduce it in another language, a translator needs to divide the text up into translatable units (see section 3.2). If s/he employs FG, s/he will be able to divide the flow of discourse into lexicogrammatical units and hence into "meaningful **chunks**" (Taylor Torsello 1996: 88). That is to say, s/he can start for example with breaking down the English clause into Processes/ participants/ Circumstances, which are the concrete expression of certain ideational meanings which have been activated by a certain Field. In a semantic and functional perspective, the way events are represented by linguistic structures reflects what they represent in the world of experience. As Taylor says (1997: 108), units of meanings are universal, whereas lexicogrammatical structures are various; they can, however, be transferred from one language into another through functional 'chunks'. Rarely will the translator be able to transfer the same linguistic elements from a ST to a TT, while s/he will most probably be able to transfer meaningful chunks.

Let us just offer a simple example taken from a literary text, in particular from a dialogue between a mother and son:

"Are you going to loaf about in the sun?"

"Certain**ly** not", he replied curt**ly**.

"Wander about reckless**ly** and catch fever?..."

(Narayan 1935/1990: 23, *emphasis added*)

According to traditional grammar, we would identify three adverbs suffixed in 'ly' (in bold). We think that, in order to translate the three adverbial groups into Italian, it would be more useful to think of them in terms of Circumstances of Manner, thus focusing on their function, instead of on the class of words they belong to, which could cause an unnecessary focus on the Italian 'equivalent' of English '-ly': *-mente*. A possible translation, which we consider 'functionally equivalent', would then be:

"Stai andando a zonzo sotto il sole?"

"No **di certo**", tagliò **corto** lui.

"A gironzolare **senza riguardi** e buscarti la febbre?..." (Narayan 1997: 31, transl. by M. Manfredi, *emphasis added*).

Translating the adverbial group 'certainly' into the prepositional phrase *di certo* could help to convey the very brief answer given by the character, which the direct

equivalent *certamente* would not. An analogous strategy is the rendering of the verbal + adverbial group 'replied curtly', translated into *tagliò corto*, where the semantic function of Circumstance of Manner is expressed both in the Process (*tagliò*) and in the Circumstance (*corto*). In addition, the translation of the Adverbial Group 'recklessly' into the functionally equivalent Prepositional Phrase *senza riguardi* could even be seen to best preserve the propositional meaning conveyed by the morpheme 'less', in a way that simply aiming at maintaining the class of 'adverb' would not.

Another illustrative example of the usefulness of an FG approach to translation choices, borrowed from Taylor (1993: 100), follows: when the English 'brown bear' must be translated into Italian, in order to decide between the solutions *orso marrone* or *orso bruno*, the translator will have to decide whether the adjective 'brown' functions as an Epithet or a Classifier. In the former case, 'brown' will simply be referring to the colour of the animal and will be best translated into 'marrone', while in the latter case it will classify it according to a zoological distinction and thus will best be rendered as 'bruno'.

Even though we have been moved from Context to Text in our discussion, that is to say, have worked in a Top-Down fashion, we will not follow this line in our practical

applications of the model in the second volume. Although a Top-Down approach, starting with the context in which a text is situated, is valid from a theoretical point of view for many purposes, we think that a translation student who has to translate an actual text should start with that text. After all, as Halliday acknowledges:

> A text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one. But meanings are realized through wordings; and without a theory of wordings – that is, a grammar – there is no way of making explicit one's interpretation of the meaning of a text (Halliday 1985/1994: xvii).

That is to say, text is a meaningful unit, but in order to guide students towards meaning(s), we prefer to start from the bottom, i.e. from the analysis of the lexico-grammatical realizations. We will then look at STs and their possible translation from a micro- to a macro-level. As Taylor observes, the translator's "[…] problems can be said to start with the word and finish with the text" (1990: 71).

It is for this reason that, for the practice of translation, we will adopt a Bottom-Up approach, in keeping with the following steps:

(1) Text-analysis of the lexico-grammar of the ST;

(2) analysis of the three strands of meanings realized by lexico-grammar;

(3) analysis of the context of situation and of culture;

(4) analysis of possible translation strategies aimed at producing a 'functionally equivalent' TT.

We are of course aware that, for the professional and expert translator, these steps can sometimes, even often, be dealt with at the same time.

All of the theoretical issues outlined here will be taken up again and explored further in the second volume, where our aim is that of illustrating how linguistics and the theory of translation can be fruitfully applied to the actual practice of translating.

In the second part of this volume, we will see how SFL has been related to the theory of translation, from the standpoint of both linguistics and of TS. We will start with Halliday's own comments on the theory and practice of translation and will proceed with a series of translation scholars who, working in the framework of translation theory and TS, have appropriated specific SFL notions in

formulating their own views on translation: Catford, Newmark, Hatim and Mason, House[9].

## 3. Some Issues of Translation

### 3.1 Equivalence

The notion of 'equivalence' has definitely represented a key issue throughout the history of TS. A central concept in the theories of most scholars working within a linguistic paradigm, it has been particularly criticized by theorists invoking a cultural frame of reference.

House notes that in point of fact the idea of 'equivalence' is also reflected in our everyday understanding of the term 'translation': non-linguistically trained persons mostly think of it as a text which is some sort of 'reproduction' of another text, originally written in another language (House 2001: 247).

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[9] In the second volume, where our focus is on moving "From Theory to Practice", we will be concretely illustrating diverse translation models informed by SFL, and seeing how they can be practically applied to the process of translation (e.g., House 1997; Bell 1991; Baker 1992; Steiner 2004). Indeed, we consider them particularly useful to our purpose: demonstrating to students how theoretical notions, both in the field of Linguistics and of Translation Studies, can be strategically and effectively applied to the real practice of translation.

Basically, 'equivalence' is "[a] term used by many writers to describe the nature and the extent of the relationships which exist between SL and TL texts" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 49); usually, the relationship "[...] allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST in the first place" (Kenny 1998: 77). Nevertheless, the concept remains controversial and opinions vary radically as to its exact meaning.

It is not the goal of this study to investigate these differences in detail, but it seems necessary to offer at least an overview of the heated debate carried out in TS with reference to this plainly central concept.

After centuries dominated by the argument over 'literal' and 'free' translation, the 1950s and 1960s saw the focus shifting to the key issue of 'equivalence', conceived as a sort of *tertium comparationis* between a ST and a TT (Munday 2001: 49; Snell-Hornby 1988: 15).

As Munday reminds us (2001: 36), Jakobson dealt with "[…] the thorny problem of equivalence" with his famous definition of "equivalence in difference" (Jakobson 1959/2004: 139). According to Jakobson, due to inevitable differences between languages, there could never be a "[…] full equivalence between code-units" (*ibid.*).

Ever since Jakobson's approach to the question of equivalence, it has become a recurrent theme of TS (Munday 2001: 37). For many years the concept was considered essential to any definition of translation and, as Snell-Hornby observes (1988: 15), all definitions of translation could be considered variations on this theme: Catford's and Koller's are illustrative examples of the mainstream trend (see section 1.1 above).

Similarly, Nida and Taber (1969) defined the phenomenon of translation in these terms:

> Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (Nida & Taber 1969: 12).

Catford too clearly advocated a theory of translation based on equivalence (for his specific theory, see 5 below):

> The central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence (1965: 21).

The distinction between two different kinds of equivalence postulated by Nida was to prove influential: that is, 'formal' vs. 'dynamic equivalence', the former aiming at matching as closely as possible the elements of the SL, the latter at producing, for the target reader, an 'equivalent effect', very similar to the one afforded the source audience[10] (Nida 1964).

Up to the end of the 1970s, as Snell-Hornby reports (1988: 15), most linguistically-oriented theories were centred around the concept of equivalence (e.g., Kade 1968; Reiß 1971; Wilss 1977). Subsequently, attempts were made to develop typologies of equivalence. For instance, in Germany, Koller (1979), who made a distinction between *Korrespondenz* (the similarity between language systems) and *Äquivalenz* (the equivalence relation between ST-TT pairs and contexts), proposed to distinguish between five kinds of equivalence: 'Denotative', 'Connotative', 'Text-normative', 'Pragmatic' and 'Formal' (see Munday 2001: 47).

In the 1980s, the concept reappeared in a new light, 'resuscitated', as it were, by Neubert (1984), who put forward his idea of 'text-bound equivalence' (see Snell-Hornby 1988: 22).

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[10] For an investigation of Nida's theory, see Munday (2001), chapter 3.

On the other hand, Reiß and Vermeer (1984) rejected the concept of translation as aiming at being an equivalent version, while Hermans described it as a 'troubled notion' (Hermans in Shuttleworth & Cowie: 49).

Particularly critical among non-linguistically oriented scholars, however, was Snell-Hornby, who totally rejected the notion of equivalence as resting "[…] on a shaky basis: it presupposes a degree of symmetry between languages" (1988: 16).

Actually, as Kenny points out, criticism was essentially limited to a concept of equivalence between language *systems*, and thus to "[...] incompatibilities between the worlds inhabited by speakers of different languages and on the structural dissimilarities between languages" (Kenny 1998: 78-79). Once the focus of attention was moved to actual texts, with their co-text, with both seen as being embedded in a context, the notion became less problematic (*ibid.*: 79).

Baker herself centred her whole course-book, *In Other Words* (1992), around the concept of equivalence, but considering it at different levels: of the word, phrase, grammar (meaning syntax), text and pragmatics. At the same time, she recognized that it "[...] is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors and is therefore always relative" (Baker 1992: 6). Similarly, Ivir defended the concept of

equivalence as relative and not absolute, being strictly connected to the context of situation of the text (1996: 44).

In the past fifteen years or so, scholars working within an SFL perspective have revitalized the notion of equivalence as a relative concept being underpinned by the idea of 'function'. Bell, for example, supported a functional equivalence according to the purpose of the translation (Bell 1991: 7). House adopted the concept in her model, both "[...] as a concept constitutive of translation" and as "[...] the fundamental criterion of translation quality" (House 2001: 247). Aware that equivalence cannot have to do simply with formal similarities, she called for a 'functional, pragmatic equivalence' (House 1997).

Halliday, who based his definition of translation on the notion of equivalence (see 1.1 above), has more recently reassessed the centrality of equivalence in translation quality and proposed a categorization according to three parameters, i.e. 'Stratification', 'Metafunction' and 'Rank' (Halliday 2001: 15). These aspects will be examined in chapter 4 below).

On the concept of 'functional equivalence', Steiner has argued against a need for stringent register feature equivalence:

For something to count as a translation, it need not have the same register features as its source text, but register features which function similarly to those of the original in their context of culture (Steiner in Halliday 2001: 18, *Note*).

Yallop has gone even further and has tackled the dilemma of equivalence from a very different perspective. Given that, he says, everything in the world is unique, from material objects to texts, all we can do is to construe "equivalence out of difference": if two things are identical, it will be within limits, "for relevant purposes" and "in a particular *functional* context" (Yallop 2001: 229ff, *emphasis added*). He provides the example of an adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* into the Australian language, Pitjantjatjara, where he attempts to fit correspondences and "[...] similarities into relationships that we are willing to accept as equivalent for the occasion and purpose" (*ibid*.: 231).

## 3.2 The Unit of Translation

The point is that 'meaning' is realized in the language of the source text and must be realized subsequently in the language of the target text, and it

makes no more sense to suggest that translators can ignore linguistic units than it would to suggest that car drivers can ignore the steering mechanism when turning corners (Malmkjær 1998: 287).

The previous discussion on the concept of 'equivalence' is strictly linked to another crucial notion in the study of translation: the 'unit of translation'. If we accept that a translation should aim at some sort of 'equivalence', even though contextual and functional, are there any linguistic elements that absolutely must be taken into consideration during the translation process? And, if so, which are they?

As for the first question, we can answer that a division of the ST to be translated (or of a translated TT) into linguistic (and semantic) units, before analysis, can be illuminating for the very process of translation.

Let us first define the notion of 'translation unit'. By 'unit of translation', we refer to "[…] the linguistic level at which ST is recodified in TL" (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 192). To put it simply, we mean the linguistic level used by the translator in his or her act of translating. Translation theorists have proposed different kinds of unit.

In the earlier stages of the debate on 'equivalence', opinions differed as to what exactly was to be equivalent.

Words? Or longer units? If we go back to the age-old translation strategies 'literal' *vs* 'free', the former was most evidently centred on the individual word, while the latter focused on a longer stretch of language (Hatim & Munday 2004: 17). Progressively, among translation scholars there emerged the concept of the 'translation unit'.

If we consider how words are organized within a dictionary, we will think of the **word** as the main unit of translation, since each entry is treated for the most part in isolation. However, across languages, translation is not usually fixed to an individual word. In the 1950s, Vinay and Darbelnet rejected the word as a unit of translation and alternatively proposed the concept of 'lexicological unit' or 'unit of thought', linked to semantics (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958, in *ibid.*: 18).

In general, throughout the 1970s, especially within linguistic frames of reference, equivalence was aimed at obtaining between translation units, which were seen as cohesive segments "[…] lying between the level of the word and the sentence" (Snell-Hornby 1988: 16). However, with the rise and development of text-linguistics, the unit of translation was sought at higher levels, such as that of the **text** (Hatim 2001: 33).

In the 1980s, Newmark indicated the **sentence** as the best unit of translation (for a closer treatment, see chapter 6 below).

In the 1990s, while S. Bassnett argued that the text should be the unit of translation, especially when dealing with literary prose texts (1980/2002: 117), Snell-Hornby went even further, contending that the notion of **culture** was to be taken as the unit of translation (Hatim & Munday 2004: 24).

In an SFL perspective, we basically adopt the **clause** as a unit of translation. Halliday regards it as a sensible unit to deal with, because it is at clause level that language represents events and is "[…] perhaps the most fundamental category in the whole of linguistics" (1985: 67). Together with Matthiessen, he asserts that "[...] the clause is the primary channel of grammatical energy" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 31). Indeed, the two functionalist scholars maintain that

> The clause is the central processing unit in the lexicogrammar – in the specific sense that it is in the clause that meanings of different kinds are mapped into an integrated grammatical structure (*ibid.*: 10).

Nevertheless, the unit of translation could also be treated more flexibly. As Newmark remarks, "[...] all lengths

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of language can, at different moments and also simultaneously, be used as units of translation in the course of the translation activity" (1988: 66-67).

When dealing with written translation, especially when translating literary texts, we too will refer to the sentence as a unit of translation[11]. As Hatim and Munday point out (2004: 24), with legal texts for example, as well as with some literary texts, sentence length plays a stylistic and functional role. Taylor too assumes that "[...] perhaps it is only really at the level of the **sentence** that translation equivalence can be found with any degree of certainty" (Taylor 1993: 89). Think of Hemingway, for example, and his legendary pithy sentences (Hatim & Munday 2004: 24). On the other hand, advertisements or poetry can sometimes be best translated at the level of text, or even of culture, or of intertextual relationships (*ibid.*).

As K. Malmkjær points out, close attention to fixed-size units during the translation process – or the analysis of TTs – does not exclude the translator's also seeing the text as a whole, or as part of a culture. We wish to stress once more, therefore, that our approach will start from the bottom, with

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[11] In SFL, 'sentence' refers to a graphological unit, so typical of written texts: it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 6).

the analysis of lexicogrammar in text, but will then move to the top, to consider the Context of Situation and then of Culture in which our text, of any kind, is functioning. Letting Malmkjær speak for us:

> Selective attention does not mean attention to units in isolation from the rest of the linguistic, cultural, or textual world in which the units are situated (Malmkjær 1998: 288).

# PART II – SFL and TS, TS and SFL

## *4. M.A.K. Halliday and Translation*

In this chapter we will not focus on M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional model; that, as we have already indicated, readers can go into and explore in the other books of this series. Rather, what we wish to offer here is an outline of Halliday's own view on translation, as this emerges in particular from some articles where he offers his insights on the phenomenon. As we know, Halliday is not a translation scholar, but a linguist, or as he is fond of defining himself, a 'grammarian', one who, however, has also shown interest in "[...] some aspects of linguistics which relate closely to the theory and practice of translation" (1992: 15).

We will focus in particular on three articles that Halliday wrote at different times. Back in the 1960s, he approached the topic of translation in the paper, "Linguistics and machine translation" (1966) [1960]. About thirty years later, at the beginning of the 1990s, his article "Language theory and translation practice" was hosted in the newly published Italian journal, *Rivista internazionale di tecnica della traduzione* (1992). At the beginning of the new millennium, he appeared as the first contributing author of the

volume, *Exploring Translation and Multilingual Text Production: Beyond Content*, edited by Steiner and Yallop (2001), with the chapter, "Towards a theory of good translation"[12]. Let us now look at the main issues raised by Halliday in these contributions.

Halliday's interest in translation thus goes back to the 1960s, the early days of experiments on, and enthusiasm for, machine translation. With "Linguistics and machine translation", he proposed a model for computer-assisted translation. Later he commented that, as far as he knew, that approach had never been adopted (Halliday 2001: 16). However, what is relevant to our topic of translation is that there he defined translation equivalence with respect to the concept of 'rank' (*ibid.*). In the article, he put forward the idea that

> It might be of interest to set up a linguistic model of the translation process, starting not from any preconceived notions from outside the field of language study, but on the basis of linguistic concepts such as are relevant to the description of

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[12] Regarding Halliday's position on 'Equivalence' in specific Registers, set out in Halliday, M.A.K., "Comparison and translation", in Halliday, M.A.K., A. McIntosh & P. Strevens (1964), see our forthcoming volume 2, Chapter 11.

languages as modes of activity in their own right (Halliday 1966: 137).

Thus, as a linguist, he aimed at exploiting linguistics in order to construct an analytical model of the translation **process**.

In his study, based on examples from Russian and Chinese, Halliday's discussion centred around grammatical hierarchies: in particular, he was looking for rank-bound correspondences. His idea was to list a set of equivalents at the lowest level of the rank scale (i.e., the morpheme), ranged in order of probability, then to modify the choice by moving upwards, to the context[13] of the next higher unit, that is the word, then the group and phrase, and finally the clause. In other words, the context of any morpheme would have been the word in which it occurred, likewise, the word would have been put in a group, and so on.

With reference to his proposal for machine translation, his model was thus concerned with lexicogrammar only. He suggested that the process of translation proceeded by three 'stages':

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[13] Halliday uses the term 'context' in this paper, but he is clearly talking about 'co-text'.

(1) selection of the 'most probable translation equivalent' for each item at each rank;

(2) reconsideration in the light of the lexicogrammatical features of the unit above;

(3) final reconsideration in the light of the lexicogrammatical features of the TL.

He specified that these 'stages' were not meant as steps to be taken necessarily one after another, but rather only as abstractions which could be useful to understanding the process of translation (Halliday 1966: 144).

It is, we think, noteworthy that the first issue (n. 0) of the translation journal, *Rivista internazionale di tecnica della traduzione*, published by the School for Translators and Interpreters of Trieste University (1992), included an article warmly solicited from Halliday on "Language theory and translation practice". The paper is rich with insights which we would examine by degrees.

At the beginning, Halliday makes the reason for his title, which avoids the expression 'translation theory', clear. As a linguist, he means to offer a *language* theory that could be useful for the practice of translation, through an analytical model of the translation process, i.e., of what happens when translating. In his view, the kind of linguistic theory which

could serve this purpose is not a traditional formal grammar, one which offers prescriptive rules, but rather must be a functional grammar, conceived as an "explanation of potentiality". All this is strictly connected to his notion of 'choice', which involves what is possible to mean, and, within this, what is more likely to be meant (Halliday 1992: 15).

He immediately states that "[i]t is obviously a key feature of translation as a **process** that it is concerned with **meaning**", in other words, "[t]ranslation is a meaning-making activity, and we would not consider any activity to be translation if it did not result in the creation of meaning" (*ibid.*). Naturally, he acknowledges that the production of a meaningful text is also the goal of any kind of discourse. What distinguishes translation from any other kind of discourse activity, he points out, is that it is not only a "creation of meaning", but rather a "**guided creation of meaning**" (*ibid.*).

For Halliday, a language theory which is relevant to translation thus has to be "[…] a theory of meaning as choice" and, to be this, "[...] it must embody a **functional semantics**" (*ibid.*). And, by 'functional', he specifies, he does not mean a vague sense of 'use', but rather '**metafunction**', i.e. "[…] function as the fundamental organizing concept around which all human language has evolved" (*ibid.*) – which brings us to a

key point: "[...] a linguistics for translation must be concerned with **functional semantics**" (*ibid.*: 16).

Halliday immediately makes clear that he does *not* mean to imply that he is *not* interested in formal patterns. Indeed he is, but he insists that these become relevant only through a functional semantics. If we recall the inextricable connection between wording and meaning posited in FG, this only makes sense.

Of course, he adds, '**semantic equivalence**' between languages and texts cannot be absolute. It can only be 'contingent', or 'with respect': i.e., "[…] with respect to the **function** of the given item within some **context** or other" (*ibid.*). And this takes us to the notion of context (co-text, see note n. 13 above).

At this point, the key concepts of 'meaning', 'function' and 'context' build up Halliday's own view of the concept of '**equivalence**': "[i]f meaning is function in context, [...] then equivalence of meaning is equivalence of function in context" (1992: 16). This means that the translator, when engaged in his or her activity of translating, "[...] is taking decisions all the time about what is the relevant context within which this functional equivalence is being established" (*ibid.*).

Any translator knows that if s/he is supposed to translate an SL 'item'[14] into a TL one, it will have a range of potential equivalents in the TL, and these will be not "free variants"; they will be "contextually conditioned" (*ibid*.). This does *not* imply that a translator must opt for one solution only, that s/he has *no* choice: it only means that if s/he chooses one option instead of another, then the meaning of that choice will inevitably differ, according to the kind of context s/he is dealing with. At that point s/he will have to decide what the relevant context which conditions his/her choice is, in order to translate the given 'item' in the most relevant way.

But you may well now ask: what kind of context are we talking about?

The simplest case of an equivalent context (or context of equivalence) can be considered a word, as you can find it in a dictionary. But, as the full meaning of any word is, of course, only *in use*, no dictionary, not even a good one, can hope to exhaust all the factors to be taken in consideration in order to choose a most appropriate translation! As Halliday notes, linguistics can offer a theory of context, but not of translation equivalence (*ibid.*).

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[14] By 'item' Halliday means not necessarily a word, but also a morpheme or a phrase.

A first model of context that linguistics can offer the translator, he explains, derives from the functional notion of 'constituency' (*ibid.*: 17). In SFL, and as Halliday had explained with reference to his proposal for machine translation, 'constituency' represents the part-whole relationship in grammar, according to which larger units are made up of smaller ones, along a hierarchy: the 'rank scale' (Halliday 1985/1994: 3ff).

Following this model, one could move up one or more levels in the scale, although sometimes, as he says, we do not need to go beyond the immediate grammatical environment, that is the context (co-text, once again, see note n. 13 above) of wording. Nevertheless, Halliday points out, this modelling is not the whole story. Besides merely extending the grammatical environment, there are also other aspects of context that must be taken into account (Halliday 1992: 20).

Firstly, even remaining within the level of lexicogrammar, metafunctional variation must be built in. As we have already seen in section 2.3, a piece of discourse represents a mapping of three simultaneous structures realizing three different strands of meaning (i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual). When faced with the translation of a text, as we have already mentioned, Halliday recommends examining all of them (*ibid.*), including, for example, the

"[…] writer's construction of his or her own subjectivity and that of the audience, of attitude to and distance from the subject-matter and so on" (*ibid.*), that is, what he calls interpersonal meanings.

As the epigraph with which we began this volume demonstrates, we would appropriate Halliday's words and make them our maxim as translators: "[...] *we would not translate a personal diary as if it were a scientific article*" (*ibid.*, *emphasis added*). But all this is leading us out of grammar and into the level of **discourse semantics**. And indeed, "[...] we have to move outside the text altogether to engage with the **context of situation**" (*ibid.*: 21), or that of **culture** (*ibid.*: 23). What Halliday is calling for then is a 'first order' and a 'second order' context (*ibid.: 25*), both of which the translator has to take into account.

At this point he takes us back to the key concept of his article, i.e., translation as a 'guided creation of meaning'. Through what? Through the construction of the context of situation on the basis of the results of the analysis of the text. This context of situation will then be essential to – will 'guide' – the creation of the new, translated, text.

Halliday concludes this important article by summarizing what we see as being the fundamental process of translation with the following words:

In each case, we are putting some particular item in the text under focus of attention, asking why it is as it is, how it might have been different, and what effect such other choices might have made (*ibid.*: 25).

In his "Towards a theory of good translation" (2001), he focuses in particular on the concept of translation equivalence, which, he argues, is "[t]he central organizing concept" of translation (Halliday 2001: 15). But, we might ask, with respect to what?

In answer, he proposes a **typology of equivalences** (*ibid.*), in terms of a systemic functional theory, which centres on three 'vectors':

(1) 'Stratification';
(2) 'Metafunction';
(3) 'Rank'.

These are detailed in figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Parameters of language (Based on Halliday 2001)
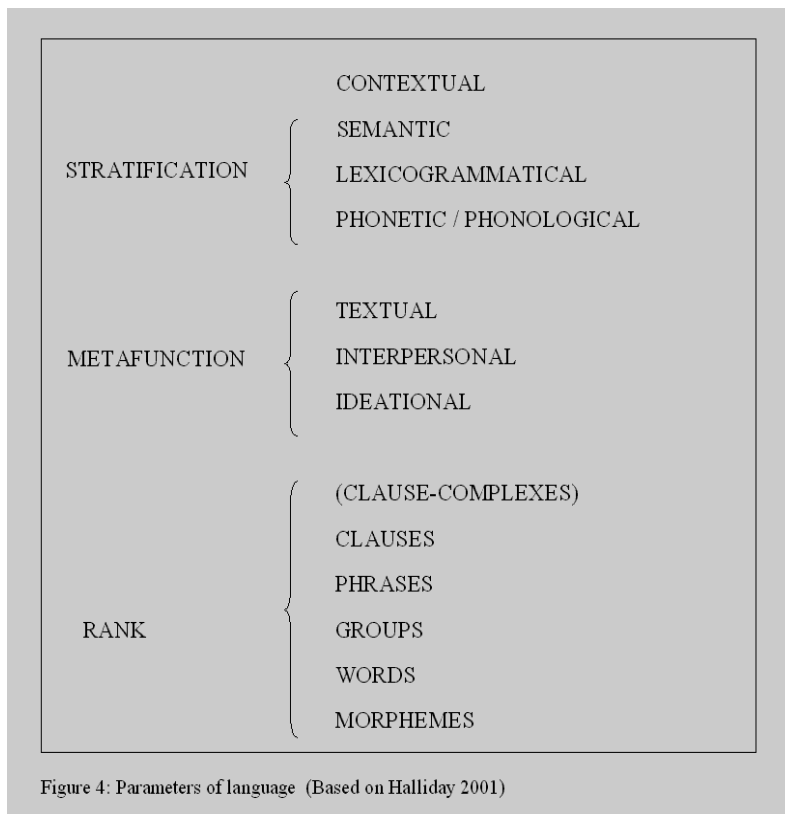
(1) 'Stratification', he explains, concerns "[…] the organization of language in **ordered** strata" (Halliday 2001: 15), which means the phonetic/ phonological, lexicogrammatical, semantic and, outside of language 'proper', contextual levels of the multi-coding system of language, each of which becomes accessible to us through the stratum above it.

(2) 'Metafunction', a term we have already been introduced to above, regards the organization of the strata

concerning **content**, that is, concerning lexicogrammar as realizing semantics, the (meta)functional components, i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual (*ibid.*).

(3) Finally, 'Rank', as we have already seen, deals with "[…] the organization of the **formal** strata" (*ibid.*), i.e. phonology and lexicogrammar, in a hierarchy (remembering that, in the grammar of English, it is made up of: clause complexes, clauses, phrases, groups, words and morphemes). This, as pointed out above, corresponds to the model adopted by Halliday when working on machine translation.

Halliday stresses that, as far as 'stratification' is concerned, "[...] equivalence at different strata carries differential values" (*ibid.*). Generally, he says, the 'value' is related to the highest stratum: for instance, semantic equivalence is usually granted more value than lexicogrammatical, and contextual perhaps more than anything else. However, he adds, these values need to be considered relative, since they will vary according to the specific translation task at hand.

Likewise, equivalence at different ranks will also carry different values; the highest value will tend to be assigned to the higher formal level: e.g., the clause. That is, in a sense, to say, "[...] words can vary provided the clauses are kept

constant" (*ibid.*: 17). However, again, particular circumstances can mean that equivalence at lower ranks may have a higher value (*ibid.*: 16). When, in stratal terms, equivalence is sought at the highest level, i.e. that of context, the ST will have "[…] equivalent function [....] in the context of situation" (*ibid.*). We will be seeing concretely how all this works in volume 2 when applying the model.

As for the third vector, that is, 'metafunction', Halliday warns that the case is different, insomuch as there is no hierarchical relationship among the three metafunctions, at least in the system of language (*ibid.*). As regards translation in particular, he comments, it is true that the ideational metafunction is typically thought to carry the highest value, simply because translation equivalence is often defined in ideational terms, to such a degree that, if a TT does not match the ST ideationally, it is not even considered a translation. However, this is not all that counts. Criticisms are often made of a TT that is equivalent to a ST from an ideational point of view but *not* interpersonally, or textually, or both. In this case, Halliday says that we cannot assign a scale of value, unless we posit that "[...] high value may be accorded to equivalence in the interpersonal or textual realms – but usually only when the ideational equivalence can be taken for granted" (*ibid*.: 17).

He concludes the paper by stating, rightly we think, what the actual value of a translation relies on:

> A "good" translation is a text which is a translation (i.e. is equivalent) in respect of those linguistic features which are most valued in the given translation context (*ibid.*).

## 5. J.C. Catford and SFL

One of the first theorists to appear in many surveys of TS (see, e.g., Hatim 2001; Munday 2001) is J.C. Catford, a British linguist and translation theorist who, in the 1960s, proposed a linguistic theory of translation where he acknowledged his debt to Firth and Halliday, both of whom he knew.

In his well-known book, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965), he became the first translation theorist to base a linguistic model on aspects of Halliday's early work on Scale and Category Grammar (such as Halliday 1961). Indeed, he too considered language as working *functionally* on a range of different levels (i.e. phonology, graphology,

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grammar, lexis) and ranks (i.e. sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme).

Even though translation scholar Snell-Hornby later dismissed Catford's work as "[…] now generally considered dated and of mere historical interest" (Snell-Hornby 1988: 14-15), other scholars (like, e.g., Hatim 2001; Hatim & Mason 1990; Taylor 1993) showed that they recognized the value of his contribution to the theory of translation and his insights into some linguistic aspects which had not yet been taken properly into account.

Taylor (1993: 88) suggests that possibly Catford's most important insights begin with his idea of **'unit'**, i.e. "[…] a stretch of language activity which is the carrier of a pattern of some kind" (1965: 5), and continue with his own application of Halliday's notion of the hierarchical structure of units, in descending order: sentences, clauses, groups and words. Many languages are ranked in the same hierarchical way but, Taylor adds (1993: 88), it was Catford who first understood how the ranks at which translation equivalence occur are constantly shifting, from 'word for word' to 'group for group'. Furthermore, by suggesting that, when translation equivalence problems are generalized, they can provide translation rules that are applicable to other texts within the same variety or

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register (Catford 1965: 94), Catford was moving towards the important conclusion that "[f]or translation equivalence to occur, [...] both SL and TL texts must be relatable to the *functionally* relevant features of the situation" (*ibid.*, *emphasis in the original*).

As Hatim and Munday point out (2004: 29), Catford seems to have been the first to use the term 'shift' in translation. What are **'shifts'**? They are basically small linguistic changes that occur between ST and TT (*ibid.*). In his model, Catford distinguished between two kinds of translation shifts: 'level shifts' (occurring between the levels of grammar and lexis) and 'category shifts' (unbounded and rank-bounded). He then moved outside the text to such higher-order concepts as 'variety' and 'register' (Taylor 1993: 89).

As mentioned previously, Catford sees translation as a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in a different language. However, as Fawcett notes (1997: 54-55), according to Catford we do not 'transfer' meaning between languages, but we rather *replace* a SL meaning by a TL meaning – one that can function in the same or a comparable way in that situation.

According to Catford, as we have already seen, one of the central tasks of translation theory is that of defining a theory of translation that is based on equivalence (Catford

1965: 21), which he takes to be the basis upon which SL textual material is *replaced* by TL textual material. In Catford's model, this can be achieved through either '**formal correspondence**' or '**textual equivalence**'.

A formal correspondence is defined by Catford as "[…] any TL category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the 'economy' of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL" (*ibid.*: 27). Thus, a noun such as *fenêtre* may be said generally to occupy a similar place in the French language system as the noun 'window' does in English – and as *finestra* does in Italian. Formal correspondence, therefore, implies a comparison between the language systems but not of specific ST-TT pairs.

When 'formal equivalence' is not possible, Catford suggests to aim for 'textual equivalence', which can be carried out through the translation 'shifts' we spoke of above (*ibid.*: 73). A textual equivalent is defined as "[…] any TL text or portion of text which is observed [...] to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text" (*ibid.*: 27). In simple terms, 'translation shifts' are "[…] departures from 'formal correspondence' in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (*ibid.*: 73).

Catford's book was sharply, and widely, criticized in the field of TS as being too highly theoretical and as putting forward what was essentially a 'static' model. The main criticism lay in the nature of his examples, which were said to be for the most part abstract, idealized and decontextualized (Agorni 2005: 15), and never related to whole texts (Munday 2001: 62). Venuti, for example, attacked his theory for being chiefly focused on the levels of word and sentence, and as using manufactured, i.e., unauthentic, examples (2000/2004: 327). Hatim also observes that, according to many critics, Catford saw equivalence as a phenomenon which is essentially quantifiable and thus was also criticized for what was called his 'statistical touch' (Hatim 2001: 16).

Newmark questioned specifically the ultimate usefulness of Catford's listings of, for instance, sets of words that are grammatically singular in one language and plural in another. In his estimation, by illustrating issues from contrastive linguistics he may have been giving helpful tips to students needing to translate, but he certainly was not offering a valuable contribution to translation theory (Newmark 1981/1982: 19).

Fawcett remarks that even Catford himself was not unaware that his definition of textual equivalence could pose problems: the concept of 'sameness of situation' (1997: 55),

for example, is a thorny one, especially in those cases when very different cultures are involved. Nonetheless, together with other scholars, like Munday (2001) and Hatim (2001), he points out Catford's contribution to TS which remains, in Fawcett's words "[…] one of the very few original attempts to give a systematic description of translation from a linguistic point of view" (Fawcett in Hatim 2001: 17). That alone bears witness to the merit of his work

Moreover, as Fawcett notes, although certain scholars (see, e.g., Larose 1989; Hatim 2001) would censure him for decontextualizing the translation process, the accusation is not wholly a valid one. That is to say, Catford does make reference to context and even "[...] uses the concept of social contextual function to suggest solutions to dialect translation" (Fawcett 1997: 56). And Hatim himself admits that "[…] a glance at how Catford [...] uses the concept of social-contextual function in discussing **dialect translation**" reveals that he is no stranger to a linguistics of **context** (Hatim 2001: 17).

And indeed he is not. In his *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965), Catford devoted a chapter (n. 13) to the topic of "Language varieties in translation". He defined a 'language variety' as "[…] a sub-set of formal and/or substantial features which correlates with a particular type of

socio-situational feature" (Catford 1965: 84) and argued that in **dialect** translation "[...] the criterion [...] is the 'human' or 'social' geographical one [...] rather than a purely locational criterion" (*ibid.*: 86-87).

Catford distinguished varieties which he dubbed 'more or less *permanent*', with reference to a given performer (or group) and other ones that for him were 'more or less *transient*', i.e. that "[...] change with changes in the immediate situation of utterance" (*ibid.*: 84, *emphasis in the original*). Within the first group, he then identified 'Idiolect' and 'Dialect', sub-dividing the latter category into the following types: (proper) or geographical, temporal and social. By 'Register', Catford means a "[...] variety related to the wider social rôle being played by the performer at the moment of utterance: e.g., 'scientific', 'religious', 'civil-service', etc." (*ibid.*: 85). By 'Style', on the other hand, he indicates a "[...] variety related to the number and nature of addressees and the performer's relation to them: e.g. 'formal', 'colloquial', 'intimate'" (*ibid.*). Catford includes in what he called 'transient' varieties also the notion of 'mode', related, in his view, to the medium of utterance, i.e. 'spoken' or 'written', what Halliday considers the 'medium' of the message. Halliday of course would subsequently theorize register as language variation according to use, and dialect as variation

according to user: his or her geographical and social provenance (1978: 35). Style, in a literary sense, he would see as a question of de-automatised grammar (Halliday 1982). However, in the 1960s, Catford's contribution to a typology of language varieties, when applied to translation, could be considered as being quite instructive:

> The concept of a 'whole language' is so vast and heterogeneous that it is not operationally useful for many linguistic purposes, descriptive, comparative and pedagogical. It is, therefore, desirable to have a framework of categories for the classification of 'sub-languages', or *varieties* within a total language (Catford 1965: 83, *emphasis in the original*).

And it will be from this same quotation that, twenty-five years later, Hatim and Mason will start their own investigation into language varieties (see chapter 7).

## 6. Peter Newmark and SFL

In the UK, translation scholar Peter Newmark referred to Catford in his early research, then was influenced by

Fillmore and case grammar, and eventually turned his attention to SFL (Taylor 1993: 89-90).

In his 1987 paper, "The use of systemic linguistics in translation analysis and criticism"[15], Newmark praised Halliday's work, declaring that since the appearance of his "Categories of the theory of grammar" (1961), a functional approach to linguistic phenomena had appeared to him to be useful to translation analysis, surely more than Chomsky's, Bloomfield's or the Montague Grammarians' theories (Newmark 1987: 293). He expressed his admiration for Hallidayan linguistics, opening the article with the following remark:

> Since the translator is concerned exclusively and continuously with meaning, it is not surprising that Hallidayan linguistics, which sees language primarily as a meaning potential, should offer itself as a serviceable tool for determining the constituent parts of a source language text and its network of relations with its translation (*ibid.*).

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[15] The paper was first included in the volume *Language Topics: Essays in honour of Michael Halliday*, edited by R. Steele and T. Threadgold (1987). A revised version was then integrated into Newmark's own monograph *About Translation* (1991) and became Chapter 5, entitled "The Use of Systemic Linguistics in Translation".

In particular, Newmark's closeness to Halliday is reflected in his approach to constituents, as well as to two specific aspects of grammatical analysis which, in his view, can offer valuable insights to both the translation analyst and the translator: Grammatical Metaphor and Cohesion.

Going back to Halliday's **hierarchical approach** (i.e, a 'rank scale' made up of morphemes, words, groups and clauses), Newmark found that "[...] systemic grammar enables us to demonstrate the flexibility and multiplicity of grammatical variations" (1987: 294). On the basis of this, for instance, a SL nominal group may translate into a TL nominal group, but it may also be 'rank-shifted' – upward into a clause or downward into a word. Even though Newmark argued that 'literal translation' should be the first option of the translator (1981/1982: 39), he also admitted that there could be contextual reasons for preferring another solution. In his view, most 'linguistic shifts' (Catford 1965) or 'transpositions' (as Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) call variations from a grammatical point of view) could be described in this way.

Newmark simply extended Halliday's descriptive hierarchy into: text, paragraph, sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme. In agreement with Halliday, Newmark asserted that, from an abstract point of view, none of these are more

'important' than another, even though in practice, "[…] the text is the ultimate court of appeal, the sentence is the basic unit of *translating* (not of translation), and most of the problems are centred in the lexical units, if not the words" (Newmark 1987: 294, *emphasis in the original*). Thus, while Halliday's focus is on the clause as a representation of meaning in a communicative context, Newmark identified the **sentence** as the 'natural' **unit of translation**. As Taylor observes, his 'constituent boundaries' seem, therefore, to be marked by punctuation (1997: 113).

Newmark stated that 'transpositions' and rearrangements may often occur, but that a sentence would *not* normally be divided unless there was good reason (1988: 165). He is careful to insist that any 'rearrangements' or 'recasting' must respect 'Functional Sentence Perspective' (Firbas 1992), what Halliday, following the Prague School of Linguists, calls the clause's Thematic Structure (1994: 40).

In addition, he introduced the issue of text 'authority', holding that "[…] the more authoritative the text, the smaller the unit of translation" (Newmark 1988: 66), and made clear his agreement with Haas (1962) that "[t]he unit of translation should be as short as possible and as long as is necessary" (Haas in Newmark 1987: 295). As Taylor suggests (1997: 113), Newmark's fundamental choice of the sentence as a

basic unit of translation could be said to be linked to his admiration for the chapter on Cohesion in Halliday's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985). He is, of course, not alone.

As a matter of fact, with reference to *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985), Newmark drew our attention to two chapters in particular, i.e. "Beyond the clause: metaphorical modes of expression" and "Around the clause: cohesion and discourse", since, he argued, these are very much related to the very nature of translation.

As regards the first of these two chapters, which deals specifically with the concept of 'grammatical metaphor', Newmark went so far as to state that "[a]s I see it, this chapter could form a useful part of any translator's training course where English is the source or target language" (1987: 295).

According to Halliday, a 'grammatical metaphor' is a "[…] variation in the expression of a given meaning" with reference to the more 'congruent' realization', i.e, 'non-metaphorical' (Halliday 1985/1994: 342)[16]. Congruent does not mean 'better'; nor does it mean 'more frequent'. It simply means less metaphorical, and, perhaps, a more typical and

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[16] For more illustration of Grammatical Metaphor, see Freddi (2006); Lipson (2006), in this series.

also historically prior way of saying things. In the final analysis, it is an instance of language in which "[…] the speaker or writer has chosen to say things differently" (1994: 343). A typical example is represented by the phenomenon of 'Nominalization', connected with what Newmark (1987: 294) calls a "[…] non-physical figurative use of verbs".

According to Newmark, when translating metaphors translators always have a choice (*ibid*.). He argues that the numerous examples of metaphorical forms and 'congruent' rewordings included in Halliday's valuable chapter could sensitize a translator to the need for 'recasting' (*ibid*.: 295).

An example from Halliday and his own rewording are provided:

(1) The argument to the contrary is basically an appeal to the lack of synonymy in mental language (Halliday 1985: 331).

(1a) In order to argue that [this] is not so [he] simply points out that there are no synonyms in mental language (*ibid.*)

Newmark comments that the second, more 'congruent' version could well be a 'normal' translation of the same sentence into French or German.

The removal of verb-nouns such as 'argument', 'contrary', 'appeal' and 'lack', especially when translating informative texts, is a common 'shift' (Catford 1965) or 'transposition' (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958), as Scarpa also points out (see Scarpa 2001: 139-140).

Thus according to Newmark, Halliday's advice to the linguist seeking to 'de-metaphorise' grammatical metaphors, i.e. to unscramble as far as is needed (Halliday 1994: 352-53), could even be more pertinent for a translator faced with such tasks.

In the same chapter, Halliday offers a further example of a grammatical metaphor, which, as Taylor notes, "[…] is superbly economic in English" (Taylor 1993: 94):

(2) The fifth day saw them at the summit (Halliday 1994: 346).

This is congruently reworded by Halliday as:

 (2a) They arrived at the summit on the fifth day (*ibid.*).

Newmark proposes a translation of the example above into French, where the 'incongruent' form, i.e, the

grammatical metaphor, has been turned into a more 'congruent' one:

> (2b) C'est au cinquième jour qu'ils sont arrivés au sommet (Newmark 1987: 295)

Taylor proposes a congruent solution in Italian which "[…] could be arguably more concise", adding that such a result is *not* however so common when translating into this language (1993: 94):

> (2c) Al quinto giorno sono arrivati al vertice (*ibid.*).

The other chapter of Halliday's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985), which Newmark recommended as useful for translators, is that on Cohesion. He stressed the relevance of the chapter with the following words:

> The topic of cohesion, which may have first appeared in Hasan (1968), was expanded in Halliday and Hasan (1976), and revised in Halliday (1985), has always appeared to me the most useful constituent of discourse analysis or text linguistics applicable to translation (Newmark 1987: 295).

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Although Halliday's account of cohesion is wide, including both structural (Thematic and Informational structure) and non-structural elements (reference, ellipsis/substitution, lexical relations and inter-sentential conjunction), Newmark was interested in particular in the examination of the use of connectives and, more to the point, in the phenomenon of 'missing' connectives between sentences, which obliges the translator to interpret the logical connection. Connectors and prepositions cover a wide range of meanings and may thus often cause ambiguity (translating from English, 'yet' and 'as' are classic examples). Their meaning and function will clearly depend on the co-text they operate in. Newmark argued that, at least in the case of an 'informative' or 'social' text (i.e., as opposed to the expressive one), Halliday's treatment could offer translators a useful tool to guide them towards "deciding how far to intervene" (Newmark 1987: 295).

Finally, Newmark's focus on the importance of grammar in translation should be remarked. In his *Approaches to Translation* (1981/1982), in discussing the concept of "synonyms in grammar", or what may be more easily glossed as grammatical equivalences, he states that they are "[…] often closer and more numerous than in lexis" (1981/1982:

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101). Basically what he is warning against is a carefree overuse of lexical synonyms. As he notes: "[…] any replacements by lexical synonyms [...] are further from the sense than the grammatical synonyms. This then becomes a plea for more grammatical dexterity and flexibility, and against lexical licence, in translation practice" (*ibid.*: 102). If we wish to relate this concept to Italian, we can think of the possibility of tackling the problem of translating Circumstances of Manner from English into Italian through a lexicogrammatical analysis of the ST following a SFL approach (see section 2.3 above and volume 2, where the issue will be be seen at work through the actual practice of translation).

Newmark's appreciation of Halliday's work can be ultimately confirmed by his comment regarding his notion of **register**, a familiarity with which was recommended, as an "[…] invaluable [tool] both in analyzing a text, in criticizing a translation, and in training translators" (Newmark 1987: 303)[17]. Again, we cannot but agree.

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[17] Newmark's comments on the translation of 'restricted registers' (Halliday 1973) will be given in volume 2 (chapter 11), when discussing the practical translation of different kinds of 'Registers'.

## 7. Basil Hatim, Ian Mason and SFL

In the 1990s, translation scholars Basil Hatim and Ian Mason acknowledged Halliday's and, generally speaking, SFL's contribution to TS as follows :

> [...] a new approach developed by Michael Halliday and his colleagues in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s provided translation studies with an alternative view which approached language as text (Hatim & Mason 1990: 36).

Working within a linguistic framework, they employ a Hallidayan model of language to analyse translation as communication within a sociocultural context. In particular, they offer influential insights on the issues of Register, Dialect and Ideology as applied to translation.

Their aim was to develop a theory of translation centred upon the role played by those 'situational factors' that, they note, translators themselves had in fact been aware of for a long time (Hatim & Mason 1990: 38). Employing a social theory of language and viewing texts as expressions of communicative events, they were particularly sensible to the issue of variation in language use, which they explored in relation to translation. They examined texts as expressions of

such variation, according to two dimensions, that is, following Halliday's distinction between 'Dialect' and 'Register'. Indeed, as we noted in discussing Catford's sub-divisions of the category of dialect, for Halliday language varies 'according to the user' and 'according to the use' (see Halliday 1978: 35, and also, in Halliday & Hasan 1985/1989: 41). Hatim and Mason represent the distinction as you can see in Figure 5:

| LANGUAGE VARIATION | |
|---|---|
| USE | USER |
| Registers, etc. | Dialects, etc. |
| 1. field of discourse | 1. geographical |
| 2. mode of discourse | 2. temporal |
| 3. tenor of discourse | 3. social |
| | 4. (non-) standard |
| | 5. idiolectal |

Figure 5: The use-user distinction (Adapted from Hatim & Mason 1990: 46)

In their *Discourse and the Translator* (1990), Hatim and Mason deal with both kind of varieties, presenting illustrative examples connected with the activity of translation. As they clearly illustrate (Hatim & Mason 1990: 39), **User-related varieties**, that is, 'dialects', are linked to

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'who the speaker or writer is'. According to the user, language can vary with respect to diverse aspects, including: geographical, temporal, social, (non-) standard or idiolectal factors (*ibid.*). Each of these features can inevitably pose problems for a translator having to tackle with it, not least because the linguistic aspect will be inextricably linked with sociocultural considerations and thus his or her decisions will have inevitable cultural implications.

Let us offer an illustrative example concerning a much-debated theme in TS, that is the translation of geographical dialects. We premise that, as Hatim and Mason unequivocally state, "[a]n awareness of **geographical variation**, and of the ideological and political implications that it may have, is […] essential for translators" (1990: 40). They report a particular case which occurred in the field of TV drama translation, where the problem of rendering accents is particularly manifest, as it also is in the theatre. In Scotland, a controversy had been provoked by the adoption of a Scottish accent to convey the speech of Russian peasants (*ibid.*). Clearly, linking Scots pronunciation to lower social class Russians was not exactly appreciated by the local population.

In general, as Hatim and Mason clearly demonstrate, translating geographical accents into a TL is always problematic and 'dialectal equivalence' is almost 'impossible'

to achieve (*ibid.*: 41). Which dialect in the TL should be chosen, if any? If the translator renders a ST dialect into a standard variety, s/he will be taking the risk of losing the effect of the ST. If s/he translates a SL dialect into a selected TL one, the risk will be that of causing unintended effects (or resentment!) with respect to the target audience. A further option would be that of aiming at a sort of 'functional' equivalence instead, modifying the standard itself, without necessarily adopting a particular regional variety: in this case a marked effect through different means would also be reproduced in the TT (*ibid.*: 43). Similar problems will be faced by a translator tackling other kinds of dialects, such as 'social' or 'non-standard' ones, with all of their sociocultural implications.

The second dimension of language variation which Hatim and Mason theorize with reference to translation concerns **use-related varieties**, i.e., 'registers' (see *ibid.*: 45). As Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964) had already pointed out back in the 1960s, language varies as its context varies and there is a relationship between a given situation and the linguistic choices which will be made within it. 'Register' is the term adopted to indicate this kind of variety 'according to use'. Registers are defined according to their differences in lexicogrammar. Such differences are likely to be found in

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discursive activities as unlike each other as, for example, a sports commentary and a church service (Hatim & Mason 1990: 46). As we have already seen with relation to the Hallidayan model of the context of situation (see 2.3 above), three main categories of register variation can be distinguished, that is: the Field of discourse, its Tenor and its Mode. Any discrepancy between any of these three contextual variables will make for diverse lexicogrammatical choices being made. From a translator's point of view, Hatim and Mason suggest (1990: 46), it is important to establish the conventions of the situation-use in the TL, to see if the linguistic choices being made are appropriate to that 'use'. But it is vital to consider *all* register variables; and with reference to this crucial point, Halliday comments:

> […] they determine the register collectively, not piecemeal. There is not a great deal that one can predict about the language that will be used if one knows *only* the field of discourse or *only* the tenor or the mode. But if we know all three, we can predict quite a lot (1978: 223, *emphasis in the original*).

Hatim and Mason's register analysis also encompassed their investigation into the **hybrid nature of texts**, based on

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the assumption that, although texts are basically hybrid in their rhetorical purposes, one particular function always tends to predominate over the others (1990: 146-147)[18]. When faced with the multifunctional nature of texts, translators need to examine whether any shift might be substantially tipping the scales towards one function or another (see Hatim 2001: 118).

In a wider perspective, Hatim and Mason also brought cultural considerations into their linguistic perspective, relating linguistic choices to ideology, their definition of which, following scholars who work in a Hallidayan framework (e.g., Miller 2005: 3), is a very broad one, having nothing to do with particular *-isms*. In their view, 'ideology' embodies "[...] the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 144). They interestingly distinguish between 'the ideology of translating' and 'the translation of ideology'. The former refers to the kind of orientation followed by a translator when operating within a specific sociocultural context, while the latter concerns the extent of 'mediation' (i.e, intervention) carried out by a translator of what might be thought of as being ideologically 'sensitive'

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[18] The idea of communicative 'functions' never being mutually exclusive goes back as least as far as Jakobson (1960), as does the notion of a 'primary' function dominating.

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texts (*ibid.*: 147).

In particular, they adopt a linguistic approach based on register analysis for the express purpose of getting insights into the all-important and interrelated cultural, social and ideological aspects of translation. For example, their invaluable investigation of a historical text concerning Mexican peoples (*ibid.*: 153-59), in which they probe the less than 'neutral' lexicogrammatical choices made by the translator of the text – especially with reference to the experiential meanings enacted through transitivity and the textual ones constructed in and by cohesion – skilfully reveals the ideological assumptions which were the undeniable result of those choices, so often 'hidden' from the untrained eye.

## 8. Juliane House and SFL

German linguist and translation theorist Juliane House developed a functional model of translation (first in 1977/1981). It was primarily based on Hallidayan systemic-functional theory (Halliday 1985), but also drew on register linguistics (following, e.g., Biber 1988; Biber & Finegan 1994), discourse analysis and text linguistics (e.g. Edmondson & House 1981). Her functional-pragmatic model for

evaluating translations first proposed in the mid-seventies was then revised in the late nineties (House 1997).

We totally agree with Hatim that House's systemic-functional translation evaluation model has not only "[...] shed light (often for the first time) on a number of important theoretical issues" (Hatim 2001: 96), but has also "[...] provided translation [...] **practitioners and researchers** with a **useful set of tools**" (*ibid. emphasis added*). For this reason we have decided to 'confine' ourselves here to briefly outlining some of the fundamental notions at the base of her theory of translation, in order to reserve a deeper illustration of her remarkable model to the second volume, where we will make an attempt at applying some of the theoretical assumptions and distinctions proposed by House to the analysis and translation of concrete texts.

House stated that SFL is not only useful, but also the 'best' approach to apply to translation[19]. House's systemic-functional translation evaluation model offers an analysis of texts in terms of three levels, that is 'Language', 'Register'

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[19] Personal communication, on occasion of the Conference *Lexical Complexity in Translation*, held at Pisa University on March 20th-21st, 2006.

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and 'Genre' (House 2002: 97). It starts from a textual description of the text under scrutiny along the three contextual variables of Field, Tenor and Mode. As a second step, the text is linked to other texts through the identification of its 'Genre', which in House's view corresponds to "[…] a socially established category characterized in terms of the texts' communicative purpose" (Baumgarten *et al.* 2004: 89). As mentioned above, her model is essentially based on Halliday's, although presenting some differences[20]. For example, the three contextual components, Field, Tenor and Mode, are slightly refashioned, according to her translation goal.

In House's view, Field refers to "the nature of the social action" (2002: 97), with degrees of 'generality', 'specificity' or 'granularity' in lexical items (see House 2006: 345). With respect to Halliday, House's model, since concerned with translation, presents more detailed taxonomies, even concerning vocabulary. Tenor, in her model, consists of four components: 'Stance' (concerns the writer's attitudes towards the subject matter, the participants and the addressees); 'Social Role Relationship' (concerning roles of both writer and addressee); 'Social Attitude'

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[20] A detailed analysis of the model is beyond the scope of this book hence will be only briefly outlined.

(regarding the social distance and the level of formality between writer and addressee); 'Participation' (regarding the degree of emotional 'charge'). The variable of Mode, including, as in Halliday, the component of medium for example, is also a bit more, and differently, articulated (see House *forthcoming*).

House (1977; 1997) distinguished between two different types of translation: 'Overt' translation and 'Covert' translation. She herself (House 2006: 347) acknowledged that these terms could be related to F. Schleiermacher's (1813) distinction between *verfremdende und einbürgernde Übersetzungen* ('alienating' and 'integrating' translations), a distinction which has been widely imitated – and here we think, for example, of Newmark's distinction between 'semantic' and 'communicative' translation or to L. Venuti's 'foreignizing' and 'domesticating' translation strategies, just to quote a few examples in the history of TS[21]. However, she states that her overt-covert distinction distinguishes itself from the others because "[…] it is integrated into a coherent theory of translation, within which the origin and function of these terms are consistently explicated and contextually motivated" (House 2006: 347). Indeed, the choice of which kind of

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[21] For an overview on these translation strategies and methods, see Munday (2001).

translation to perform is, she says, dependent on the context.

An 'Overt' translation, as its name suggests, is 'overtly' a translation and is not supposed to act as though it were a 'second original'; hence the target readers are 'overtly' *not* being directly addressed (*ibid.*). In an overt translation, the ST is strictly tied to the culture in which it is rooted, and perhaps even to a specific occasion, and, at the same time, it has an independent value in its source culture. In other words, a text which calls for an 'overt' translation is both culture-bound and potentially of general human interest, so 'timeless', as it were, and offering a message that can be seen as a generalization on some aspect of human existence. STs which call for an overt translation are, for example, works of art such as literary texts, that may transcend any specific historical meaning, or aesthetic creations with distinct historical meanings, or political speeches and religious sermons. It is for this reason that, according to House, these texts can be more easily transferred across space, time and culture, despite being marked by potentially problematic culture-specific elements.

A 'covert' translation, on the other hand, is a translation which presents itself and functions as a second original, one that may conceivably have been written in its own right (*ibid.*). For House, texts which lend themselves to this second type of translation are not particularly tied to their

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source culture context, they are not so culture-specific, but they are, potentially, of equivalent importance for members of different cultures. As examples House offers tourist information booklets and computer manuals. However, she warns that the TL communities may have different expectations regarding communicative conventions and textual norms; in such cases the translator may have to apply a 'cultural filter', adapting the text to these expectations, and aiming at giving the target reader the impression that the text is an original and not a translation at all.

While House sees an 'overt' translation as being embedded in a new speech event within the target culture, it also and at the same time co-activates the ST, together with the discourse world of the TT. By contrast, in a covert translation the translator tries to re-create an equivalent speech event, i.e. s/he would reproduce the function(s) that the ST has in the target context. Whereas, according to House, an 'overt' translation could be described as a 'language mention', 'covert' translation could be likened to the notion of 'language use' (House 2006: 347).

According to House's analytical model, especially in the case of 'overt' translation, equivalence can be passably achieved at the levels of Language/Text, Register and Genre, but not at that of Function. As a matter of fact, she claims, an

'overt' translation will never achieve 'functional equivalence',
but only a "second-level functional equivalence" (House
1997: 112). And she clarifies this central concept in her theory
as follows:

> [...] an original text and its *overt* translation are to be
> equivalent at the level of LANGUAGE/TEXT and
> REGISTER (with its various dimensions) as well as
> GENRE. At the level of the INDIVIDUAL
> TEXTUAL FUNCTION, functional equivalence is
> still possible but it is of a different nature: it can be
> described as enabling access to the function the
> original text has (had) in its discourse world or
> frame. As this access is realized in the target
> linguaculture [*sic*] via the translation text, a switch
> in the discourse world and the frame becomes
> necessary, i.e., the translation is differently framed,
> it operates in its own frame and discourse world, and
> can thus reach at best what I have called "second-
> level functional equivalence" (*ibid.*, *emphasis in the
> original*).

By contrast, a 'covert' translation aims at being
'functionally equivalent', at the expense, if necessary, of
Language/Text and of Register. For such reasons, a covert

translation can also be deceptive.

House's method aims at a sort of 're-contextualization', in view of her notion of a translated text as being

> [...] a text which is doubly contextually bound: on the one hand to its contextually embedded source text and on the other to the (potential) recipient's communicative-contextual conditions (House 2006: 344).

Our treatment of House has been but a thumbnail sketch of the theoretical and methodological richness of her work. As said, however, we will be coming back to that work in volume 2 repeatedly when dealing with applications of theory to translation practice.

### Some Concluding Remarks

We would like to conclude by tracing a sort of diachronic pathway of the linkage between SFL and TS which we have attempted to demonstrate throughout this volume of our book.

In the mid-nineties, E. Ventola closed an article in which she had employed an SFL approach to the study of translation, by expressing the fervant hope that "[...] functional linguists, translation theorists and translators can look forward to having serious 'powwows' to plan how the theory best meets the practice" (Ventola 1995: 103). At the start of the new millennium, C. Taylor and A. Baldry were commenting, to their chagrin, that, even though "[…] a number of articles have been written on the subject […] [i]nterest in the role that systemic-functional linguistics might play in translation studies has never been feverish" (Taylor & Baldry 2001: 277). In the summer of 2007, Matthiessen presented a paper at the ISFC 2007 entitled "Multilinguality: Translation – a 'feverish' phase in SFL?" (http://www.humaniora.sdu.dk/isfc2007/matthiessen.htm). Even though our own research had started much earlier on its own route through enthusiasm, and difficulties, on the topic, we immediately realized that our 'fever' had come of age.

Yet, as we have tried to say more than once throughout this volume, this does not mean that we totally exclude ourselves from the cultural wave (or fever?) that has been exerting its influence on many fields within the human sciences and had, with the 'cultural turn' in TS, occurred in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, as we have tried to make clear,

our aim is to bring together that turn with a linguistic approach that locates texts in the social and cultural context in which they operate: the SFL approach. Thanks to this perspective, we firmly believe, the parallels between what are only apparently different views might become more clearly observable, even to the skeptics.

And in order to be consistent with our beliefs in the need for interdisciplinarity and dialogue within TS, we wish to conclude with a comment offered by a translation scholar much quoted throughout the volume, although not always in complete agreement: M. Snell-Hornby. Although we are not displeased to find ourselves in what she considers one of the 'U-turns' which has occurred in TS, that is, a return to linguistics (2006: 150-151), we concur with her view on translation and TS, expressed in the following words:

> [...] Translation Studies opens up new perspectives from which other disciplines – or more especially the world around – might well benefit. It is concerned, not with languages, objects, or cultures as such, but with communication across cultures, which does not merely consist of the sum of all factors involved. And what is not yet adequately recognized is how translation (studies) could help us communicate better – a deficit that sometimes has

disastrous results (*ibid.*: 166).

Indeed, we could not agree more. And we hope that our students – who we trust will carry on, with their own 'feverish' enthusiasm with "[…] one of the most central and most challenging processes in which language is involved, that of translation" (Steiner 2004: 44) – will also agree. But to a great extent, that is up to us.

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