

2 Equivalence at word level

If language were simply a nomenclature for a set of universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from one language to another. One would simply replace the French name for a concept with the English name. If language were like this the task of learning a new language would also be much easier than it is. But anyone who has attempted either of these tasks has acquired, alas, a vast amount of direct proof that languages are not nomenclatures, that the concepts . . . of one language may differ radically from those of another. . . . Each language articulates or organizes the world differently. Languages do not simply name existing categories, they articulate their own.

(Culler, 1976: 21–2)

This chapter discusses translation problems arising from lack of equivalence at word level; what does a translator do when there is no word in the target language which expresses the same meaning as the source language word? But before we look at specific types of non-equivalence and the various strategies which can be used for dealing with them, it is important to establish what a **word** is, whether or not it is the main unit of meaning in language, what kinds of meaning it can convey, and how languages differ in the way they choose to express certain meanings but not others.

2.1 THE WORD IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

2.1.1 What is a word?

As translators, we are primarily concerned with communicating the overall meaning of a stretch of language. To achieve this, we need to start by decoding the units and structures which carry that meaning. The smallest unit which

we would expect to possess individual meaning is the **word**. Defined loosely, the **word** is ‘the smallest unit of language that can be used by itself’ (Bolinger and Sears, 1968: 43).¹ For our present purposes, we can define the **written word** with more precision as any sequence of letters with an orthographic space on either side.

Many of us think of the word as the basic meaningful element in a language. This is not strictly accurate. Meaning can be carried by units smaller than the word (see 2.1.3 below). More often, however, it is carried by units much more complex than the single word and by various structures and linguistic devices. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. For the moment, we will content ourselves with single words as a starting point before we move on to more complex linguistic units.

2.1.2 Is there a one-to-one relationship between word and meaning?

If you consider a word such as *rebuild*, you will note that there are two distinct elements of meaning in it: *re* and *build*, i.e. ‘to build again’. The same applies to *disbelieve* which may be paraphrased as ‘not to believe’. Elements of meaning which are represented by several orthographic words in one language, say English, may be represented by one orthographic word in another, and vice versa. For instance, *tennis player* is written as one word in Turkish: *tenisçi*; *if it is cheap* as one word in Japanese: *yasukattara*; but the verb *type* is rendered by three words in Spanish: *pasar a maquina*. This suggests that there is no one-to-one correspondence between orthographic words and elements of meaning within or across languages.

2.1.3. Introducing morphemes

In order to isolate elements of meaning in words and deal with them more effectively, some linguists have suggested the term **morpheme** to describe the minimal formal element of meaning in language, as distinct from **word**, which may or may not contain several elements of meaning. Thus, an important difference between morphemes and words is that a morpheme cannot contain more than one element of meaning and cannot be further analysed.

To take an example from English, *inconceivable* is written as one word but consists of three morphemes: *in*, meaning ‘not’, *conceive* meaning ‘think of or imagine’, and *able* meaning ‘able to be, fit to be’. A suitable paraphrase for *inconceivable* would then be ‘cannot be conceived/ imagined’. Some

morphemes have grammatical functions such as marking plurality (*funds*), gender (*manageress*) and tense (*considered*). Others change the class of the word, for instance from verb to adjective (*like: likeable*), or add a specific element of meaning such as negation to it (*unhappy*). Some words consist of one morpheme: *need, fast*. Morphemes do not always have such clearly defined boundaries, however. We can identify two distinct morphemes in *girls*: *girl + s*, but we cannot do the same with *men*, where the two morphemes ‘man’ and ‘plural’ are, as it were, fused together. An orthographic word may therefore contain more than one formal element of meaning, but the boundaries of such elements are not always clearly marked on the surface.

The above theoretical distinction between words and morphemes attempts, by and large, to account for elements of meaning which are expressed on the surface. It does not, however, attempt to break down each morpheme or word into further components of meaning such as, for instance, ‘male’ + ‘adult’ + ‘human’ for the word *man*. Furthermore, it does not offer a model for analysing different types of meaning in words and utterances. In the following section, we will be looking at ways of analysing lexical meaning which will not specifically draw on the distinction between words and morphemes. It is, nevertheless, important to keep this distinction clearly in mind because it can be useful in translation, particularly in dealing with neologisms in the source language (see 2.3.2.1 (i)).

2.2 LEXICAL MEANING

every word (lexical unit) has . . . something that is individual, that makes it different from any other word. And it is just the lexical meaning which is the most outstanding individual property of the word.

(Zgusta, 1971:67)

The **lexical meaning** of a word or lexical unit may be thought of as the specific value it has in a particular linguistic system and the ‘personality’ it acquires through usage within that system. It is rarely possible to analyse a word, pattern, or structure into distinct components of meaning; the way in which language works is much too complex to allow that. Nevertheless, it is sometimes useful to play down the complexities of language temporarily in order both to appreciate them and to be able to handle them better in the long run. With this aim in mind, we will now briefly discuss a model for

analysing the components of lexical meaning. This model is largely derived from Cruse (1986), but the description of **register** (2.2.3 below) also draws on Halliday (1978). For alternative models of lexical meaning see Zgusta (1971: Chapter 1) and Leech (1974: Chapter 2).

According to Cruse, we can distinguish four main types of meaning in words and utterances (utterances being stretches of written or spoken text): **propositional meaning, expressive meaning, presupposed meaning, and evoked meaning.**

2.2.1 Propositional vs expressive meaning

The **propositional meaning** of a word or an utterance arises from the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world, as conceived by the speakers of the particular language to which the word or utterance belongs. It is this type of meaning which provides the basis on which we can judge an utterance as true or false. For instance, the propositional meaning of *shirt* is 'a piece of clothing worn on the upper part of the body'. It would be inaccurate to use *shirt*, under normal circumstances, to refer to a piece of clothing worn on the foot, such as *socks*. When a translation is described as 'inaccurate', it is often the propositional meaning that is being called into question.

Expressive meaning cannot be judged as true or false. This is because expressive meaning relates to the speaker's² feelings or attitude rather than to what words and utterances refer to. The difference between *Don't complain* and *Don't whinge* does not lie in their propositional meanings but in the expressiveness of *whinge*, which suggests that the speaker finds the action annoying. Two or more words or utterances can therefore have the same propositional meaning but differ in their expressive meanings. This is true not only of words and utterances within the same language, where such words are often referred to as synonyms or near-synonyms, but also for words and utterances from different languages. The difference between *famous* in English and *fameux* in French does not lie in their respective propositional meanings; both items basically mean 'well-known'. It lies in their expressive meanings. *Famous* is neutral in English: it has no inherent evaluative meaning or connotation. *Fameux*, on the other hand, is potentially evaluative and can be readily used in some contexts in a derogatory way (for example, *une femme fameuse* means, roughly, 'a woman of ill repute').

It is worth noting that differences between words in the area of expressive

meaning are not simply a matter of whether an expression of a certain attitude or evaluation is inherently present or absent in the words in question. The same attitude or evaluation may be expressed in two words or utterances in widely differing degrees of forcefulness. Both *unkind* and *cruel*, for instance, are inherently expressive, showing the speaker's disapproval of someone's attitude. However, the element of disapproval in *cruel* is stronger than it is in *unkind*.

The meaning of a word or lexical unit can be both propositional and expressive, e.g. *whinge*, propositional only, e.g. *book*, or expressive only, e.g. *bloody* and various other swear words and emphasers. Words which contribute solely to expressive meaning can be removed from an utterance without affecting its information content. Consider, for instance, the word *simply* in the following text:

Whilst it stimulates your love of action, the MG also cares for your comfort. Hugging you on the bends with sports seats. Spoiling you with luxuries such as electric door mirrors, tinted glass and central locking. And entertaining you with a great music system as well as a *simply* masterful performance.

(*Today's Cars*, Austin Rover brochure; my emphasis)

There are many highly expressive items in the above extract, but the word *simply* in the last sentence has a totally expressive function. Removing it would not alter the information content of the message but would, of course, tone its forcefulness down considerably.

2.2.2 Presupposed meaning

Presupposed meaning arises from co-occurrence restrictions, i.e. restrictions on what other words or expressions we expect to see before or after a particular lexical unit. These restrictions are of two types:

1. **Selectional restrictions:** these are a function of the propositional meaning of a word. We expect a human subject for the adjective *studious* and an inanimate one for *geometrical*. Selectional restrictions are deliberately violated in the case of figurative language but are otherwise strictly observed.
2. **Collocational restrictions:** these are semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word. For instance, laws are *broken* in English, but in Arabic they are 'contradicted'. In English, teeth are *brushed*, but in German and Italian

they are ‘polished’, in Polish they are ‘washed’, and in Russian they are ‘cleaned’. Because they are arbitrary, collocational restrictions tend to show more variation across languages than do selectional restrictions. They are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, section 3.1.

The difference between selectional and collocational restrictions is not always as clear cut as the examples given above might imply. For example, in the following English translation of a German leaflet which accompanies Baumler products (men’s suits), it is difficult to decide whether the awkwardness of the wording is a result of violating selectional or collocational restrictions:

Dear Sir

I am very pleased that you have selected one of our garments. You have made a wise choice, as suits, jackets and trousers emanating from our Company are amongst the finest products Europe has to offer.

Ideas, qualities, and feelings typically *emanate* (misspelt as *eminate* in the above text) from a source, but objects such as *trousers* and *jackets* do not, at least not in English. The awkwardness of the wording can be explained in terms of selectional or collocational restrictions, depending on whether or not one sees the restriction involved as a function of the prepositional meaning of *emanate*.

2.2.3 Evoked meaning

Evoked meaning arises from **dialect** and **register** variation. A **dialect** is a variety of language which has currency within a specific community or group of speakers. It may be classified on one of the following bases:

1. Geographical (e.g. a Scottish dialect, or American as opposed to British English: cf. the difference between *lift* and *elevator*);
2. Temporal (e.g. words and structures used by members of different age groups within a community, or words used at different periods in the history of a language: cf. *verily* and *really*);
3. Social (words and structures used by members of different social classes: cf. *scent* and *perfume*, *napkin* and *serviette*).

Register is a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate to a specific situation. Register variation arises from variations in the following:

1. **Field of discourse:** This is an abstract term for ‘what is going on’ that is relevant to the speaker’s choice of linguistic items. Different linguistic choices are made by different speakers depending on what kind of action other than the immediate action of speaking they see themselves as participating in. For example, linguistic choices will vary according to whether the speaker is taking part in a football match or discussing football; making love or discussing love; making a political speech or discussing politics; performing an operation or discussing medicine.
2. **Tenor of discourse:** An abstract term for the relationships between the people taking part in the discourse. Again, the language people use varies depending on such interpersonal relationships as mother/ child, doctor/ patient, or superior/inferior in status. A patient is unlikely to use swear words in addressing a doctor and a mother is unlikely to start a request to her child with *I wonder if you could . . .* Getting the tenor of discourse right in translation can be quite difficult. It depends on whether one sees a certain level of formality as ‘right’ from the perspective of the source culture or the target culture. For example, an American teenager may adopt a highly informal tenor with his/her parents by, among other things, using their first names instead of *Mum/Mother* and *Dad/Father*. This level of informality would be highly inappropriate in most other cultures. A translator has to choose between changing the tenor to suit the expectations of the target reader and transferring the informal tenor to give a flavour of the type of relationship that teenagers have with their parents in American society. What the translator opts for on any given occasion will of course depend on what s/he perceives to be the overall purpose of the translation.
3. **Mode of discourse:** An abstract term for the role that the language is playing (speech, essay, lecture, instructions) and for its medium of transmission (spoken, written).³ Linguistic choices are influenced by these dimensions. For example, a word such as *re* is perfectly appropriate in a business letter but is rarely, if ever, used in spoken English.

Different groups within each culture have different expectations about what kind of language is appropriate to particular situations. The amusement and embarrassment often engendered by children’s remarks to perfect strangers testifies to this; more seriously, people unused to highly ritualized situations like committee meetings and job interviews may find it difficult to make

their points, and may even be ridiculed because their language appears inappropriate to other participants. A translator must ensure that his/her product does not meet with a similar reaction. S/he must ensure that the translation matches the register expectations of its prospective receivers, unless, of course, the purpose of the translation is to give a flavour of the source culture.

Of all the types of lexical meaning explained above, the only one which relates to the truth or falsehood of an utterance and which can consequently be challenged by a reader or hearer is propositional meaning. All other types of lexical meaning contribute to the overall meaning of an utterance or a text in subtle and complex ways and are often much more difficult to analyse. To reiterate, it is rarely possible in practice to separate the various types of meaning in a word or utterance. Likewise, it is rarely possible to define even the basic propositional meaning of a word or utterance with absolute certainty. This is because the nature of language is such that, in the majority of cases, words have 'blurred edges'; their meanings are, to a large extent, negotiable and are only realized in specific contexts. The very notion of 'types of meaning' is theoretically suspect. Yet, I believe that the distinctions drawn above can be useful for the translator since one of the most difficult tasks that a translator is constantly faced with is that, notwithstanding the 'fuzziness' inherent in language, s/he must attempt to perceive the meanings of words and utterances very precisely in order to render them into another language. This forces us as translators to go far beyond what the average reader has to do in order to reach an adequate understanding of a text.

2.3 THE PROBLEM OF NON-EQUIVALENCE

Based on the above discussion, we can now begin to outline some of the more common types of non-equivalence which often pose difficulties for the translator and some attested strategies for dealing with them. First, a word of warning. The choice of a suitable equivalent in a given context depends on a wide variety of factors. Some of these factors may be strictly linguistic (see, for instance, the discussion of collocations and idioms in Chapter 3). Other factors may be extra-linguistic (see Chapter 7). It is virtually impossible to offer absolute guidelines for dealing with the various types of non-equivalence which exist among languages. The most that can be done in this

and the following chapters is to suggest strategies which may be used to deal with non-equivalence ‘in some contexts’. The choice of a suitable equivalent will always depend not only on the linguistic system or systems being handled by the translator, but also on the way both the writer of the source text and the producer of the target text, i.e. the translator, choose to manipulate the linguistic systems in question.

2.3.1 Semantic fields and lexical sets – the segmentation of experience

The words of a language often reflect not so much the reality of the world, but the interests of the people who speak it.

(Palmer, 1976: 21)

It is sometimes useful to view the vocabulary of a language as a set of words referring to a series of conceptual fields. These fields reflect the divisions and sub-divisions ‘imposed’ by a given linguistic community on the continuum of experience.⁴ In linguistics, the divisions are called **semantic fields**. Fields are abstract concepts. An example of a semantic field would be the field of SPEECH, or PLANTS, or VEHICLES. A large number of semantic fields are common to all or most languages. Most, if not all, languages will have fields of DISTANCE, SIZE, SHAPE, TIME, EMOTION, BELIEFS, ACADEMIC SUBJECTS, and NATURAL PHENOMENA. The actual words and expressions under each field are sometimes called **lexical sets**.⁵ Each semantic field will normally have several sub-divisions or lexical sets under it, and each sub-division will have further sub-divisions and lexical sets. So, the field of SPEECH in English has a sub-division of VERBS OF SPEECH which includes general verbs such as *speak* and *say* and more specific ones such as *mumble*, *murmur*, *mutter*, and *whisper*. It seems reasonable to suggest that the more detailed a semantic field is in a given language, the more different it is likely to be from related semantic fields in other languages. There generally tends to be more agreement among languages on the larger headings of semantic fields and less agreement as the sub-fields become more finely differentiated. Most languages are likely to have equivalents for the more general verbs of speech such as *say* and *speak*, but many may not have equivalents for the more specific ones. Languages understandably tend to make only those distinctions in meaning which are relevant to their particular environment, be it physical, historical, political, religious, cultural, economic, legal, technological, social, or otherwise.

Before we discuss how an understanding of the nature and organization of semantic fields might be useful in translation, let me first spell out the

limitations of semantic fields as a concept. The idea of semantic fields is, in many cases, inapplicable and is an over-simplification of the way language actually works. A large number of words in any language defy being classified under any heading (Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Lehrer, 1974). Words like *just*, *nevertheless*, and *only*, to name but a few, cannot be easily filed under any particular semantic field. The idea of semantic fields works well enough for words and expressions which have fairly well-defined propositional meanings, but not for all, or even most of the words and expressions in a language.

Limitations aside, there are two main areas in which an understanding of semantic fields and lexical sets can be useful to a translator:

- a. appreciating the ‘value’ that a word has in a given system; and
- b. developing strategies for dealing with non-equivalence.

(a) Understanding the difference in the structure of semantic fields in the source and target languages allows a translator to assess the value of a given item in a lexical set. If you know what other items are available in a lexical set and how they contrast with the item chosen by a writer or speaker, you can appreciate the significance of the writer’s or speaker’s choice. You can understand not only what something is, but also what it is not. This is best illustrated by an example.

In the field of TEMPERATURE, English has four main divisions: *cold*, *cool*, *hot* and *warm*. This contrasts with Modern Arabic, which has four different divisions: *baarid* (‘cold/cool’), *haar* (‘hot: of the weather’), *saakhin* (‘hot: of objects’), and *daafi* (‘warm’). Note that, in contrast with English, Arabic (a) does not distinguish between *cold* and *cool*, and (b) distinguishes between the hotness of the weather and the hotness of other things. The fact that English does not make the latter distinction does not mean that you can always use *hot* to describe the temperature of something, even metaphorically (cf. *hot temper*, but not * *hot feelings*). There are restrictions on the cooccurrence of words in any language (see discussion of collocation: Chapter 3, section 3.1). Now consider the following examples from the COBUILD corpus of English:⁶

1. The air was cold and the wind was like a flat blade of ice.
2. Outside the air was still cool.

Bearing in mind the differences in the structure of the English and Arabic fields, one can appreciate, on the one hand, the difference in meaning between

cold and *cool* in the above examples and, on the other, the potential difficulty in making such a distinction clear when translating into Arabic.

(b) Semantic fields are arranged hierarchically, going from the more general to the more specific. The general word is usually referred to as **superordinate** and the specific word as **hyponym**. In the field of VEHICLES, *vehicle* is a superordinate and *bus, car, truck, coach*, etc. are all hyponyms of *vehicle*. It stands to reason that any propositional meaning carried by a superordinate or general word is, by necessity, part of the meaning of each of its hyponyms, but not vice versa. If something is a bus, then it must be a vehicle, but not the other way round. We can sometimes manipulate this feature of semantic fields when we are faced with semantic gaps in the target language. Translators often deal with semantic gaps by modifying a superordinate word or by means of circumlocutions based on modifying superordinates. More on this in the following section.

To sum up, while not always straightforward or applicable, the notion of semantic fields can provide the translator with useful strategies for dealing with non-equivalence in some contexts. It is also useful in heightening our awareness of similarities and differences between any two languages and of the significance of any choice made by a speaker in a given context. One important thing to bear in mind when dealing with semantic fields is that they are not fixed. Semantic fields are always changing, with new words and expressions being introduced into the language and others being dropped as they become less relevant to the needs of a linguistic community.

For a more extensive discussion of semantic fields, see Lehrer (1974).

2.3.2 Non-equivalence at word level and some common strategies for dealing with it

Non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text. The type and level of difficulty posed can vary tremendously depending on the nature of non-equivalence. Different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies, some very straightforward, others more involved and difficult to handle. Since, in addition to the nature of non-equivalence, the context and purpose of translation will often rule out some strategies and favour others, I will keep the discussion of types of non-equivalence separate from the discussion

of strategies used by professional translators. It is neither possible nor helpful to attempt to relate specific types of non-equivalence to specific strategies, but I will comment on the advantages or disadvantages of certain strategies wherever possible.

2.3.2.1 Common problems of non-equivalence

The following are some common types of non-equivalence at word level, with examples from various languages:

(a) Culture-specific concepts

The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as 'culture-specific'. An example of an abstract English concept which is notoriously difficult to translate into other languages is that expressed by the word *privacy*. This is a very 'English' concept which is rarely understood by people from other cultures. *Speaker* (of the House of Commons) has no equivalent in many languages, such as Russian, Chinese, and Arabic among others. It is often translated into Russian as 'Chairman', which does not reflect the role of the Speaker of the House of Commons as an independent person who maintains authority and order in Parliament. An example of a concrete concept is *airing cupboard* in English which, again, is unknown to speakers of most languages.

(b) The source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language

The source-language word may express a concept which is known in the target culture but simply not lexicalized, that is not 'allocated' a target-language word to express it. The word *savoury* has no equivalent in many languages, although it expresses a concept which is easy to understand. The adjective *standard* (meaning 'ordinary, not extra', as in *standard range of products*) also expresses a concept which is very accessible and readily understood by most people, yet Arabic has no equivalent for it. *Landslide* has no ready equivalent in many languages, although it simply means 'overwhelming majority'.

(c) The source-language word is semantically complex

The source-language word may be semantically complex. This is a fairly common problem in translation. Words do not have to be morphologically complex to be semantically complex (Bolinger and Sears, 1968). In other words, a single word which consists of a single morpheme can sometimes express a more complex set of meanings than a whole sentence. Languages automatically develop very concise forms for referring to complex concepts if the concepts become important enough to be talked about often. Bolinger and Sears suggest that 'If we should ever need to talk regularly and frequently about independently operated sawmills from which striking workers are locked out on Thursday when the temperature is between 500° and 600°F, we would find a concise way to do it' (ibid.: 114). We do not usually realize how semantically complex a word is until we have to translate it into a language which does not have an equivalent for it. An example of such a semantically complex word is *arruação*, a Brazilian word which means 'clearing the ground under coffee trees of rubbish and piling it in the middle of the row in order to aid in the recovery of beans dropped during harvesting' (*ITI News*, 1988: 57).⁷

(d) The source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning

The target language may make more or fewer distinctions in meaning than the source language. What one language regards as an important distinction in meaning another language may not perceive as relevant. For example, Indonesian makes a distinction between going out in the rain without the knowledge that it is raining (*kehujan*) and going out in the rain with the knowledge that it is raining (*hujan-hujan*). English does not make this distinction, with the result that if an English text referred to going out in the rain, the Indonesian translator may find it difficult to choose the right equivalent, unless the context makes it clear whether or not the person in question knew that it was raining.

(e) The target language lacks a superordinate

The target language may have specific words (hyponyms) but no general word (superordinate) to head the semantic field. Russian has no ready equivalent for *facilities*, meaning 'any equipment, building, services, etc. that are provided for a particular activity or purpose'.⁸ It does, however, have

several specific words and expressions which can be thought of as types of facilities, for example *sredstva peredvizheniya* ('means of transport'), *naem* ('loan'), *neobkhodimye pomeschcheniya* ('essential accommodation'), and *neobkhodimoe oborudovanie* ('essential equipment').

(f) The target language lacks a specific term (hyponym)

More commonly, languages tend to have general words (superordinates) but lack specific ones (hyponyms), since each language makes only those distinctions in meaning which seem relevant to its particular environment. There are endless examples of this type of non-equivalence. English has many hyponyms under *article* for which it is difficult to find precise equivalents in other languages, for example *feature*, *survey*, *report*, *critique*, *commentary*, *review*, and many more. Under *house*, English again has a variety of hyponyms which have no equivalents in many languages, for example *bungalow*, *cottage*, *croft*, *chalet*, *lodge*, *hut*, *mansion*, *manor*, *villa*, and *hall*. Under *jump* we find more specific verbs such as *leap*, *vault*, *spring*, *bounce*, *dive*, *clear*, *plunge*, and *plummet*.

(g) Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective

Physical perspective may be of more importance in one language than it is in another. Physical perspective has to do with where things or people are in relation to one another or to a place, as expressed in pairs of words such as *come/go*, *take/bring*, *arrive/depart*, and so on. Perspective may also include the relationship between participants in the discourse (tenor). For example, Japanese has six equivalents for *give*, depending on who gives to whom: *youtu*, *ageru*, *morau*, *kureru*, *itadaku*, and *kudasaru* (McCreary, 1986).

(h) Differences in expressive meaning

There may be a target-language word which has the same propositional meaning as the source-language word, but it may have a different expressive meaning. The difference may be considerable or it may be subtle but important enough to pose a translation problem in a given context. It is usually easier to add expressive meaning than to subtract it. In other words, if the target-language equivalent is neutral compared to the source-language item, the translator can sometimes add the evaluative element by means of a modifier or adverb if necessary, or by building it in somewhere else in the

text. So, it may be possible, for instance, in some contexts to render the English verb *batter* (as in child/wife battering) by the more neutral Japanese verb *tataku*, meaning ‘to beat’, plus an equivalent modifier such as ‘savagely’ or ‘ruthlessly’. Differences in expressive meaning are usually more difficult to handle when the target-language equivalent is more emotionally loaded than the source-language item. This is often the case with items which relate to sensitive issues such as religion, politics, and sex. Words like *homosexuality* and *homosexual* provide good examples. *Homosexuality* is not an inherently pejorative word in English, although it is often used in this way. On the other hand, the equivalent expression in Arabic, *shithuth jinsi* (literally: ‘sexual perversion’), is inherently more pejorative and would be quite difficult to use in a neutral context without suggesting strong disapproval.

(i) Differences in form

There is often no equivalent in the target language for a particular form in the source text. Certain suffixes and prefixes which convey propositional and other types of meaning in English often have no direct equivalents in other languages. English has many couplets such as *employer/employee*, *trainer/trainee*, and *payer/payee*. It also makes frequent use of suffixes such as *-ish* (e.g. *boyish*, *hellish*, *greenish*) and *-able* (e.g. *conceivable*, *retrievable*, *drinkable*). Arabic, for instance, has no ready mechanism for producing such forms and so they are often replaced by an appropriate paraphrase, depending on the meaning they convey (e.g. *retrievable* as ‘can be retrieved’ and *drinkable* as ‘suitable for drinking’). Affixes which contribute to evoked meaning, for instance by creating buzz words such as *washateria*, *carpeteria*, and *grocceteria* (Bolinger and Sears, 1968), and those which convey expressive meaning, such as *journalese*, *translationese*, and *legalese* (the *-ese* suffix usually suggests disapproval of a muddled or stilted form of writing) are more difficult to translate by means of a paraphrase. It is relatively easy to paraphrase propositional meaning, but other types of meaning cannot always be spelt out in a translation. Their subtle contribution to the overall meaning of the text is either lost altogether or recovered elsewhere by means of compensatory techniques.

It is most important for translators to understand the contribution that affixes make to the meaning of words and expressions, especially since such affixes are often used creatively in English to coin new words for various

reasons, such as filling temporary semantic gaps in the language and creating humour. Their contribution is also important in the area of terminology and standardization.

(j) Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms

Even when a particular form does have a ready equivalent in the target language, there may be a difference in the frequency with which it is used or the purpose for which it is used. English, for instance, uses the continuous *-ing* form for binding clauses much more frequently than other languages which have equivalents for it, for example German and the Scandinavian languages. Consequently, rendering every *-ing* form in an English source text with an equivalent *-ing* form in a German, Danish, or Swedish target text would result in stilted, unnatural style.

(k) The use of loan words in the source text

The use of loan words in the source text poses a special problem in translation. Quite apart from their respective prepositional meaning, loan words such as *au fait*, *chic*, and *alfresco* in English are often used for their prestige value, because they can add an air of sophistication to the text or its subject matter. This is often lost in translation because it is not always possible to find a loan word with the same meaning in the target language. *Dilettante* is a loan word in English, Russian, and Japanese; but Arabic has no equivalent loan word. This means that only the prepositional meaning of *dilettante* can be rendered into Arabic; its stylistic effect would almost certainly have to be sacrificed.

Loan words also pose another problem for the unwary translator, namely the problem of **false friends**, or **faux amis** as they are often called. **False friends** are words or expressions which have the same form in two or more languages but convey different meanings. They are often associated with historically or culturally related languages such as English, French, and German, but in fact false friends also abound among totally unrelated languages such as English, Japanese, and Russian.

Once a word or expression is borrowed into a language, we cannot predict or control its development or the additional meanings it might or might not take on. Some false friends are easy to spot because the difference in their meanings is so great that only a very inexperienced translator is likely to be unaware of it. The average Japanese translator is not likely to confuse an

English *feminist* with a Japanese *feminist* (*feminist* in Japanese is usually used to describe a man who is excessively soft with women). An inexperienced French or German translator may, however, confuse English *sensible* with German *sensibel* (meaning ‘sensitive’), or English *sympathetic* with French *sympathique* (meaning ‘nice/likeable’).

The above are some of the more common examples of non-equivalence among languages and the problems they pose for translators. In dealing with any kind of non-equivalence, it is important first of all to assess its significance and implications in a given context. Not every instance of non-equivalence you encounter is going to be significant. It is neither possible nor desirable to reproduce every aspect of meaning for every word in a source text. We have to try, as much as possible, to convey the meaning of key words which are focal to the understanding and development of a text, but we cannot and should not distract the reader by looking at every word in isolation and attempting to present him/her with a full linguistic account of its meaning.

2.3.2.2 *Strategies used by professional translators*

With the above proviso in mind, we can now look at examples of strategies used by professional translators for dealing with various types of non-equivalence. In each example, the source-language word which represents a translation problem is underlined. The strategy used by the translator is highlighted in bold in both the original translation and the back-translated version. Only the strategies used for dealing with non-equivalence at word level will be commented on. Other strategies and differences between the source and target texts are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

(a) Translation by a more general word (superordinate)

This is one of the commonest strategies for dealing with many types of non-equivalence, particularly in the area of propositional meaning. It works equally well in most, if not all, languages, since the hierarchical structure of semantic fields is not language-specific.

Example A

Source text (*Kolestral Super* – leaflet accompanying a hair-conditioning product):

The rich and creamy KOLESTRAL-SUPER is easy to apply and has a pleasant fragrance.

Target text (Arabic):

كولسترال سوبر غني ومكثف في تركيبته التي تمنح ممتنعرا
يشبه الكريم، مما يجعله في منتهى السهولة لوضعه علي
الشعر

Kolestral super is rich and concentrated in its make-up which gives a product that resembles cream, making it extremely easy to **put** on the hair.

Example B

Source text (*Kolestral Super*):

Shampoo the hair with a mild WELLA-SHAMPOO and lightly towel dry.

Target text 1 (Spanish):

Lavar el cabello con un champú suave de WELLA y frotar ligeramente con una toalla.

Wash hair with a mild WELLA shampoo and rub lightly with a towel.

Target text 2 (Arabic):

يفصل الشعر بشامبو من "ويللا" علي ان يكون من نوع
الشامبو الملطف . . .

The hair is **washed** with 'wella' shampoo, provided that it is a mild shampoo . . .

Example C

Source text (*A Brief History of Time* – Hawking, 1988; see Appendix 1):

A well-known scientist (some say it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the center of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy.

Target text (Spanish):

Un conocido científico (algunos dicen que fue Bertrand Russell) daba una vez una conferencia sobre astronomía. En ella describía cómo la Tierra **giraba** alrededor del Sol y cómo éste, a su vez, **giraba** alrededor del centro de una vasta colección de estrellas concida como nuestra galaxia.

A well-known scientist (some say that it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a lecture on astronomy. In it he described how the Earth **revolved** around the Sun and how the latter in its turn **revolved** around the centre of a vast collection of stars known as our galaxy.

Example D

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 3):

Today there may be no more than 1000 giant pandas left in the wild, restricted to a few mountain strongholds in the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

Today there may be only 1000 big pandas which still remain in the wild state, restricted to certain mountain **areas** in China's Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu.

The above examples illustrate the use of a general word (superordinate) to overcome a relative lack of specificity in the target language compared to the source language. 'Shampooing' can be seen as a type of 'washing' since it is more restricted in its use: you can wash lots of things but you can only shampoo hair. Similarly, 'orbiting' is a type of 'revolving' because, unlike 'revolving', it only applies to a smaller object revolving around a larger one in space. What the translators of the above extracts have done is to go up a level in a given semantic field to find a more general word that covers the core propositional meaning of the missing hyponym in the target language.

(b) Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word

Example A

Source text: (*Morgan Matroc* – ceramics company brochure; see Appendix 2):

Today people are aware that modern ceramic materials offer unrivalled properties for many of our most demanding industrial applications. So is this brochure necessary; isn't the ceramic market already over-bombarded with technical literature; why should Matroc add more?

Because someone mumbles, 'Our competitors do it.' But why should we imitate our competitors when Matroc probably supplies a greater range of ceramic materials for more applications than any other manufacturer.

Target text: (Italian):

Qualcuno **suggesterisce**: ‘i nostri concorrenti lo fanno.’

Someone **suggests**: ‘Our competitors do it.’

There is a noticeable difference in the expressive meaning of *mumble* and its nearest Italian equivalent, *mugugnare*. The English verb *mumble* suggests confusion or embarrassment, as can be seen in the following examples:⁹

Simon mumbled confusedly: ‘I don’t believe in the beast.’

I looked at the ground, shuffled my feet and mumbled something defensive.

‘I know it wasn’t very successful,’ he mumbled. ‘But give me another chance.’

The Italian near equivalent, *mugugnare*, on the other hand, tends to suggest dissatisfaction rather than embarrassment or confusion. Possibly to avoid conveying the wrong expressive meaning, the Italian translator opted for a more general word, *suggesterisce* (‘suggest’).

Example B

Source text (*A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* – Blacker, 1975; see Appendix 5):

The shamanic practices we have investigated are rightly seen as an archaic mysticism.

Target text (back-translated from Japanese):

The shamanic behaviour which we have been researching should rightly be considered as **ancient** mysticism.

The translator could have used a Japanese phrase which means, roughly, ‘behind the times’ and which would have been closer to both the propositional and expressive meanings of *archaic*. This, however, would have been too direct, that is too openly disapproving by Japanese standards (Haruko Uryu, personal communication). The expressive meaning of *archaic* is lost in the translation.

Example C

Source text (*China’s Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 47):

Many of the species growing wild here are familiar to us as plants cultivated in European gardens – species like this exotic lily.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

We are very familiar with many varieties of the wild life here, they are the kind grown in European gardens – varieties like this **strange unique** lily flower.

Exotic has no equivalent in Chinese and other oriental languages. It is a word used by westerners to refer to unusual, interesting things which come from a distant country such as China. The orient does not have a concept of what is *exotic* in this sense and the expressive meaning of the word is therefore lost in translation.

Example D

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 5):

The panda is something of a zoological mystery.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

The panda may be called a **riddle** in zoology.

There is an equivalent for mystery in Chinese, but it is mostly associated with religion. The translator felt that it would be wrong to use it in a zoological context.¹⁰

Example E

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, nos 8 & 10):

- i. The panda's mountain home is wet and lush,
- ii. The panda's mountain home is rich in plant life . . .

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

- i. The mountain **habitat** of the panda is wet and lush,
- ii. The mountain **settlements** of the panda have rich varieties of plants.

Home has no direct equivalent in Chinese; in fact, it is difficult to translate into most languages. In the examples above, it is replaced by Chinese near-equivalents which are both less expressive and more formal.

It is sometimes possible to retain expressive meaning by adding a modifier, as in the following example.

Example F

Source text (Soldati, 'I passi sulla neve'):¹¹

Ma già, oltre i tetti carichi di neve, a non piú di duecento metri dalla parte di Torino, si vedevano altissimi, geometrici, tutti quadrettati in

mille finestre luminose e balconcini, i primi palazzi condominiali, case a riscatto, falansteri di operai e di impiegati.

Target text (English: 'Footsteps in the snow'):

But already, beyond the snow-laden roofs, and no more than two hundred metres in the direction of Turin, there were to be seen towering, geometrical, chequered by a thousand lighted windows and balconies, the first joint-owned buildings, houses under mortgage, workers' and clerks' **ugly** blocks of flats.

The adjective 'ugly' does not actually appear in the source text. The following translator's footnote explains why *ugly* was added in the target text:

Falansteri: communal dwellings which formed part of an ideal cooperative life preached by the French philosopher and socialist writer Charles Fourier (1772–1837). In Italian the word has a pejorative connotation.

(c) Translation by cultural substitution

This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader. The main advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the reader a concept with which s/he can identify, something familiar and appealing. On an individual level, the translator's decision to use this strategy will largely depend on (a) how much licence is given to him/ her by those who commission the translation and (b) the purpose of the translation. On a more general level, the decision will also reflect, to some extent, the norms of translation prevailing in a given community. Linguistic communities vary in the extent to which they tolerate strategies that involve significant departure from the propositional meaning of the text.

Example A

Source text (*A Brief History of Time* – Hawking, 1988; see Appendix 1):

A well-known scientist (some say it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the center of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy. At the end of the lecture, a little

old lady at the back of the room got up and said: ‘What you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise.’ The scientist gave a superior smile before replying, ‘What is the tortoise standing on?’ ‘You’re very clever, young man, very clever,’ said the old lady. ‘But it’s turtles all the way down!’

Target text (back-translated from Greek):

Alice in Wonderland was once giving a lecture about astronomy. She said that the earth is a spherical planet in the solar system which orbits around its centre the sun, and that the sun is a star which in turn orbits around the centre of the star system which we call the Galaxy. At the end of the lecture **the Queen** looked at her angrily and disapprovingly. ‘What you say is nonsense. The earth is just **a giant playing card**, so it’s flat like all **playing cards**,’ she said, and turned triumphantly to the members of her retinue, who seemed clearly satisfied by her explanation. **Alice** smiled a superior smile, ‘And what is this **playing card** supported on?’ she asked with irony. **The Queen** did not seem put out, ‘You are clever, very clever,’ she replied, ‘so let me tell you, **young lady**, that this **playing card** is supported on another, and the other on another other, and the other other on another other other . . .’ She stopped, out of breath, ‘The Universe is nothing but **a great big pack of cards**,’ she shrieked.

The above example illustrates a very interesting use of the strategy of cultural substitution. It is the opening passage in Stephen Hawking’s popular book about Time and the Big Bang Theory (1988). Like Hawking in the original text, the Greek translator sets out to capture the undivided attention of the reader immediately. S/he decides that this is best achieved by introducing the reader to characters which are familiar and interesting rather than to foreign characters and stereotypes with which the reader may not identify. Alice in Wonderland is apparently well known in Greece; the average educated Greek is clearly expected to know the story and to be familiar with the characters of Alice and the Queen, as well as the playing-card characters. For anyone who has read the story, the association with Alice recalls an image of a topsy-turvy paradoxical world, which is particularly apposite in this context. *A little old lady at the back of the room* is an English stereotype of someone who is endearing but tends to get the wrong end of the stick, that is, to misunderstand what is being said. This stereotype image is not likely to

be accessible to people from other cultures. It is replaced by ‘the Queen’, and this is then followed by a series of interesting substitutions, such as ‘giant playing card’ for *flat plate* and ‘a great big pack of cards’ for *turtles all the way down*.

Example B

Source text (*The Patrick Collection* – a leaflet produced by a privately owned museum of classic cars; see Appendix 4):

The Patrick Collection has restaurant facilities to suit every taste – from the discerning gourmet, to the Cream Tea expert.

Target text (Italian):

. . . di soddisfare tutti i gusti: da quelli del gastronomo esigente a quelli dell’esperto di **pasticceria**.

. . . to satisfy all tastes: from those of the demanding gastronomist to those of the expert in **pastry**.

In Britain, *cream tea* is ‘an afternoon meal consisting of tea to drink and scones with jam and clotted cream to eat. It can also include sandwiches and cakes.’¹² *Cream tea* has no equivalent in other cultures. The Italian translator replaced it with ‘pastry’, which does not have the same meaning (for one thing, *cream tea* is a meal in Britain, whereas ‘pastry’ is only a type of food). However, ‘pastry’ is familiar to the Italian reader and therefore provides a good cultural substitute.

Example C

Source text (Italian – Gadda, ‘La cenere delle battaglie’):¹³

Poi, siccome la serva di due piani sotto la sfringuellava al telefono coll’innamorato, assenti i padroni, si imbizzì: prese a pestare i piedi sacripantando «porca, porca, porca, porca . . .»: finché la non ismise, che non fu molto presto.

Target text (English: ‘The ash of battles past’):

Then, because the servant-girl two floors down was chattering at the telephone with her young man, her employers being away, he lost his temper: and began to stamp his feet, bellowing ‘**Bitch, bitch, bitch** . . .’ until she gave up, which was not very soon.

Porca is literally the female of *swine*. A translator’s footnote explains that the Italian word ‘when applied to a woman, . . . indicates unchastity, harlotry’ (Trevelyan, 1965: 196). *Bitch* represents a straightforward cultural substitute.

Although the literal meanings of *porca* and *bitch* are different, both items are used chiefly for their expressive value. Their literal meanings are not relevant in this context.

(d) Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation

This strategy is particularly common in dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzz words. Following the loan word with an explanation is very useful when the word in question is repeated several times in the text. Once explained, the loan word can then be used on its own; the reader can understand it and is not distracted by further lengthy explanations.

Example A

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

The Patrick Collection has restaurant facilities to suit every taste – from the discerning gourmet, to the Cream Tea expert.

Target text (German):

. . . vom anspruchsvollen Feinschmecker bis zum **‘Cream-Tea’-Experten**.

. . . from demanding gourmets to **‘Cream-Tea’-experts**.

The Patrick Collection leaflet is translated for the benefit of tourists visiting this privately owned motor museum in the United Kingdom. As mentioned above, the English cream-tea custom is culture-specific; Germans have coffee and cakes. The German translator could have used the strategy of cultural substitution. ‘Coffee and cakes’ could have replaced *cream tea* (cf. the Italian version of the same text in (c) above), but the translator seems to have decided that the kind of educated German who has access to this type of literature will know of the English cream-tea custom. This also explains the use of the loan word on its own, without an explanation. Note that the transferred English expression is, as is often the case with loan words in translation, in inverted commas. In addition, compounding is much more common in German than it is in English. ‘Tea expert’ would normally be one word in German (as would, presumably, ‘cream tea expert’ if such a person existed). The use of a loan word has restricted the German translator, however, since combining a loan word, *cream tea*, with a German word, the equivalent of

'experts', would confuse the reader. Likewise, combining two English words, *cream* and *tea*, would conflict with normal English usage. The use of hyphens is a compromise between the norms of the two languages.

Compare the strategies used by the German and Italian translators with those used by the French and Japanese translators of the same text:

Target text (French):

. . . – de la table gourmande au **Salon de Thé à l'anglaise**.

. . . from the gourmet table to the **English style tea salon**.

Back-translation of Japanese text (Appendix 4):

. . . from the gourmet with keen recognition to a shop specializing in **cream cakes and tea**.

Example B

Source text (*A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*; see Appendix 5):

The shamanic practices we have investigated are rightly seen as an archaic mysticism.

Target text (back-translated from Japanese):

The **shamanic** behaviour which we have been researching should rightly be considered as ancient mysticism.

Shaman is a technical word used in religious studies to refer to a priest or a priest doctor among the northern tribes of Asia. It has no ready equivalent in Japanese. The equivalent used in the translation is made up of *shaman* as a loan word, written in katakana script (the script commonly used to transcribe foreign words into Japanese) plus a Japanese suffix which means 'like' to replace the *-ic* ending in English. The Japanese suffix is written in the Kanji script (the Chinese system used to transcribe ordinary Japanese).

Example C

Source text (*Kolestral Super*):

For maximum effect, cover the hair with a plastic cap or towel.

Target text (Arabic):

للمحمول علي فعالية مطلقة، يُغطّي الشعر بواسطة "كاب" لي
قبعة بلاستيكية تُغطّي الشعر، او بواسطة منشفة .

For obtaining maximum effectiveness, the hair is covered by means of a ‘**cap**’, **that is a plastic hat which covers the hair**, or by means of a towel.

Note that the explanation which follows the loan word is based on modifying a superordinate/general word, namely the equivalent of ‘hat’. Note also the use of inverted commas as in the German translation quoted above (from *The Patrick Collection*).

Example D

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

Morning coffee and traditional cream teas are served in the conservatory.

Target text (back-translated from Japanese):

Morning coffee and traditional afternoon tea and cream cakes can be enjoyed in the **conservatory (green house)**.

Example E

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

A UNIQUE MOTOR MUSEUM
TERRACED GARDENS AND GOURMET
RESTAURANT COMBINE TO MAKE
T H E U L T I M A T E A T T R A C T I O N

Target text (back-translated from Japanese):

Unique Motor Museum
Terraced Gardens **Gourmet Restaurant**
are gathered

T H E U L T I M A T E A T T R A C T I O N

The underlined words in the source text in both examples (D and E) are used as loan words in the Japanese text, not because they have no equivalents in Japanese but because they sound more modern, smart, high class. The emphasis here is on evoked rather than propositional meaning.

As with the strategy of cultural substitution, the freedom with which translators use loan words will often depend on the norms of translation prevailing in their societies. Arabic and French, for instance, are much less tolerant of loan words than Japanese.

(e) Translation by paraphrase using a related word

This strategy tends to be used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the source text is significantly higher than would be natural in the target language (see 2.3.2.1, items (i) and (j)).

Example A

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

Hot and cold food and drinks can be found in the Hornet's Nest, overlooking the Alexick Hall.

Target text (German):

Im Hornet's Nest, **das** die Alexick-Halle **überblickt**, bekommen Sie warme und kalte Speisen und Getränke.

In the Hornet's Nest, **which overlooks** the Alexick-Hall, you can have hot and cold meals and drinks.

Example B

Source text (*Kolestral Super*):

The rich and creamy KOLESTRAL-SUPER is easy to apply and has a pleasant fragrance.

Target text (Arabic):

كولسترال سوپر غني ومكثف في تركيبته التي تمنح مستحضرًا
يشبه الكريمة . . .

Kolestral-super is rich and concentrated in its make-up which gives a product **that resembles cream** . . .

The paraphrase in the Arabic text uses comparison, a strategy which can be used to deal with other types of non-equivalence.

Example C

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 6):

There is strong evidence, however, that giant pandas are related to the bears.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

But there is rather strong evidence that shows that big pandas **have a kinship relation** with the bears.

Example D

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

As well as our enviable location, other facilities include an excellent Conference and Arts Centre, gourmet restaurant, and beautiful terraced gardens.

Target text (French):

Outre une situation enviable, le Musée prévoit également un Centre de Conférence et des Arts, un restaurant gourmand et de magnifiques jardins **implantés en terrasse**.

Besides its enviable location, the museum equally provides a Conference and Arts Centre, a gourmet restaurant and magnificent gardens **created in a terrace**.

(f) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words

If the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts. Instead of a related word, the paraphrase may be based on modifying a superordinate or simply on unpacking the meaning of the source item, particularly if the item in question is semantically complex.

Example A

Source text ('A secret best seller', *The Independent*, November 1988):¹⁴

In the words of a Lonrho affidavit dated 2 November 1988, the allegations . . .

Target text (Arabic):

وحسب النص الوارد في افادة كتابية مشفوعة بميمين قدمتها
مؤسسة لونرو بتاريخ ٢ نوفمبر ١٩٨٨، فإن الادعاءات . . .

According to the text of a **written communication supported by an oath** presented by the Lonrho organization and dated 2 November 1988, the allegations . . .

Example B

Source text (*Palace and Politics in Prewar Japan* – Titus, 1974; see Appendix 6):

If the personality and policy preferences of the Japanese emperor were not very relevant to prewar politics, social forces certainly were. There

are two reasons for giving them only the most tangential treatment here.

Target text (back-translated from Japanese):

. . . There are two reasons for us not having treated this social power in this book except **in a very slight degree which is like touching slightly**.

Example C

Source text (*Brintons* – press release issued by carpet manufacturer; see Appendix 9):

They have a totally integrated operation from the preparation of the yarn through to the weaving process.

Target text (Arabic):

هذا وتقوم الشركة بتنفيذ جميع خطوات الانتاج بمصانعها،
من اعداد الخيوط الى نسجها . . .

The company **carries out all steps of production in its factories**, from preparing the yarn to weaving it . . .

Example D

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

You can even dine 'alfresco' in the summer on our open air terrace.

Target text (German):

Im Sommer können Sie auch auf der Terrasse **im Freien** sitzen und essen.

In the summer you can also sit and eat on the terrace **in the open**.

Alfresco, 'in the open air', is a loan word in English. Its meaning is unpacked in the German translation. The two expressions, *alfresco* and 'in the open', have the same 'propositional' meaning, but the German expression lacks the 'evoked' meaning of *alfresco*, which is perhaps inevitable in this case. Note that the loan word is placed in inverted commas in the source text.

Example E

Source text (*A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*; see Appendix 5):

On the basis of the world view uncovered by the shaman's faculties, with its vision of another and miraculous plane which could interact causally with our own, the more advanced mystical intuitions of esoteric Buddhism were able to develop.

Target text (back-translated from Japanese):

... with the image of another miraculous dimension which can causally **influence each other mutually** with the daily world . . .

Example F

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 9):

... the lower mixed broadleaf forests . . . are the areas most accessible to and disturbed by Man.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

... the mixed broadleaf forests of the lowland area . . . are the places **where human beings enter most easily** and interfere most.

The main advantage of the paraphrase strategy is that it achieves a high level of precision in specifying propositional meaning. One of its disadvantages is that a paraphrase does not have the status of a lexical item and therefore cannot convey expressive, evoked, or any kind of associative meaning. Expressive and evoked meanings are associated only with stable lexical items which have a history of recurrence in specific contexts. A second disadvantage of using this strategy is that it is cumbersome and awkward to use because it involves filling a one-item slot with an explanation consisting of several items.

(g) Translation by omission

This strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question.

Example A

Source text (*The Patrick Collection*; see Appendix 4):

This is your chance to remember the way things were, and for younger visitors to see in real-life detail the way their parents, and their parents before them lived and travelled.

Target text (French):

Voici l'occasion de retrouver votre jeunesse (qui sait?) et pour les plus jeunes de voir comment leurs parents et grands-parents vivaient et voyageaient.

Here is the chance to rediscover your youth (who knows?) and for the younger ones to see how their parents and grandparents used to live and travel.

Example B

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 10):

The panda's mountain home is rich in plant life and gave us many of the trees, shrubs and herbs most prized in European gardens.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

The mountain settlements of the panda have rich varieties of plants. There are many kinds of trees, shrubs and herbal plants that are preciously regarded by European gardens.

The source text addresses a European audience, and the use of *gave us* highlights its intended orientation. The Chinese translation addresses a different audience and therefore suppresses the orientation of the source text by omitting expressions which betray its original point of view.

Example C

Source text (*Brintons*; see Appendix 9):

The recently introduced New Tradition Axminster range is already creating great interest and will be on display at the Exhibition.

Target text (Arabic):

اثارت مجموعة "نيو تراديشين اكسمنستر" درجة عالية من الاهتمام منذ ان قامت الشركة بتقديمها حديثا، وهي من ضمن انواع المسجاد التي سيتم عرضها بالمعرض.

The 'New Tradition Axminster' collection has aroused a high degree of interest since the company introduced it recently, and it is among the types of carpets which will be displayed in the exhibition.

There is inevitably some loss of meaning when words and expressions are omitted in a translation. For instance, *already* in the last example conveys

the idea that the New Tradition Axminster range is creating great interest 'earlier than anticipated' and this is lost in the translation. It is therefore advisable to use this strategy only as a last resort, when the advantages of producing a smooth, readable translation clearly outweigh the value of rendering a particular meaning accurately in a given context.

(h) Translation by illustration

This is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the target language refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly if there are restrictions on space and if the text has to remain short, concise, and to the point.

Figure 2.1 appeared on a Lipton Yellow Label tea packet prepared for the Arab market. There is no easy way of translating *tagged*, as in *tagged teabags*, into Arabic without going into lengthy explanations which would clutter the text. An illustration of a tagged teabag is therefore used instead of a paraphrase.



Figure 2.1

The examples discussed in this chapter do not, by any means, represent an exhaustive account of the strategies available for dealing with non-equivalence at word level. You are encouraged continually to study and analyse texts prepared by professional translators in order to discover more strategies and learn to assess the advantages and disadvantages of using each strategy in various contexts.

EXERCISES

1. Comment on any differences in meaning between the items in each of the following sets. The differences may relate to expressive or evoked meaning. For instance, some items may be register-specific or dialect-specific, others may be derogatory or neutral. If you are not familiar with a particular word or expression, consult a good dictionary of English before you comment on its meaning.

car, auto, automobile, motor, limousine, limo, banger, jalopy comfortable, comfy, homely, cosy, snug (of a place) dad, daddy, pa, papa, pop, father, pater, sire, old man

Now list all the words and expressions you can think of which are available in your target language for *car*, *comfortable*, and *father*. Comment on any differences in meaning between (a) the individual items in each set, and (b) the English items above and the items in the corresponding sets in your target language.

2. Make a list of all the English verbs you can think of which have to do with speech, such as *say*, *suggest*, *complain*, *mumble*, *mutter*, *murmur*, *whisper*, *speak*, *tell*, and so on. Try to group them into sets, starting with the more general ones.

Now list all the verbs of speech you can think of in your target language, starting with the more general ones. Comment on the presence or absence of any semantic gaps in your target language *vis-à-vis* English.

Repeat this exercise using nouns which may come under the general heading of PUBLICATIONS. In English, this would include *book*, *newspaper*, *magazine*, *newsletter*, *bulletin*, *journal*, *report*, *pamphlet*, *periodical*, etc.

3. Make a list of ten English words which you feel are particularly difficult to translate into your target language. Comment on the source of difficulty in each case.
4. Make a list of three English affixes which systematically produce forms that have no direct equivalents in your target language. Suggest suitable paraphrases for each affix.
5. Find the full extract of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* in Appendix 1. Produce two translations of it in your target language. One translation should aim at giving the target reader a straightforward account of the contents of the text. In producing the second translation, assume that Professor Hawking, or his publisher, has authorised you to use whatever strategies are necessary to ensure that the reader's attention will be captured in these opening passages.

Comment on the different strategies used in each translation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

On words and morphemes

- Bolinger, D. and Sears, D. (1968) *Aspects of Language* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), Chapter 4: 'Words and their make-up'.
- Palmer, F. R. (1976) *Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Chapter 4, section 4.4: 'The word'.
- Yule, G. (1985) *The Study of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Chapter 8: 'Morphology'.

On lexical meaning

- Catford, J. C. (1965) *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (London: Oxford University Press), Chapter 13: 'Language varieties in translation' (discusses dialect and register variation).
- Cruse, D. A. (1986) *Lexical Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Chapter 12, sections 12.1 and 12.2: 'Synonymy'.

On semantic fields

- Bolinger, D. and Sears, D. (1968) *Aspects of Language*, Chapter 6: 'Meaning'.
- Carter, R. and McCarthy, M. (1988) *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (London: Longman), Chapter 2: 'Lexis and structure'.
- Palmer, F. R. (1976) *Semantics*, Chapter 4: 'Lexical semantics: fields and collocation', Sections 4.1–4.3.

On non-equivalence and translation strategies

- Barnwell, K. (1974) *Introduction to Semantics and Translation* (High Wycombe: Summer Institute of Linguistics), Chapter 9: 'Transferring lexical meaning from one language to another'.
- Beekman, J. and Callow, J. (1974) *Translating the Word of God* (Michigan: Zondervan), Chapters 12 and 13: 'Lexical equivalence across languages'.
- Ivir, V. (1987) 'Procedures and strategies for the translation of culture', in G. Toury (ed.) *Translation Across Cultures* (New Delhi: Bahri).
- Nida, E. A. (1964) 'Linguistics and ethnology in translation-problems', in D. Hymes (ed.) *Language in Culture and Society: a Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (New York: Harper & Row).

NOTES

- 1 Bolinger and Sears do not in fact adopt this definition. They prefer to define **words** as 'the least elements between which other elements can be inserted with relative freedom' (1968: 43).

- 2 I use 'speaker' as shorthand for 'speaker and/or writer'.
- 3 Gregory (1980: 464) suggests that 'distinctions amongst modes of discourse, if they are to be useful and revealing, have to be more delicate than the simple spoken–written dichotomy'. He distinguishes, for instance, between speaking spontaneously and non-spontaneously, and within spontaneous speech between conversing and monologuing. In non-spontaneous speech, he distinguishes between reciting (i.e. performing in the oral tradition) and the speaking of what is written. For a detailed discussion of these and other distinctions in mode, see Gregory and Carroll (1978).
- 4 Some linguists would not accept this view, or at least not totally. See, for instance, Lyons (1977:260): 'The external world or reality is not just an undifferentiated continuum.' I personally tend to agree with Lowe (1985: 4):

Reality, the world of experience, consists of a *continuous*, uninterrupted flow of impressions of all sorts which man can perceive with his physical senses. Human language, by categorizing these impressions through the various representational systems it has developed, has introduced some sort of *discontinuity* into this flow of impressions – hence the expression 'to split' the world of experience – by providing man with a mental vision or representation of experience. In fact, by providing man with a certain conceptualization of reality, every language proposes an original, discontinuous vision of the universe of experience. And in a sense, every meaningful unit of a given language participates in some way in the creation of the global mental vision of the world this particular language proposes to its speakers.

- 5 The notion of **lexical set** has a more specific definition in the study of lexis. Briefly, a **lexical set** consists of items which have a like privilege of collocation (see Chapter 3, section 3.1 for a discussion of collocation).
- 6 COBUILD stands for 'Collins Birmingham University International Language Database'. At the time of writing this book, the COBUILD corpus consisted of 20 million words of spoken and written English.
- 7 *ITI News*, vol. 3, no. 3, December 1988. ITI is the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, United Kingdom.
- 8 As defined by the *COBUILD Dictionary of English* (Sinclair, 1987b).
- 9 From the COBUILD corpus of English; see note 6 above.
- 10 Ming Xie, translator (personal communication).
- 11 'I passi sulla neve' ('Footsteps in the snow'), a short story by Mario Soldati, translated by Gwyn Morris, in Trevelyan 1965.
- 12 As defined by the *COBUILD Dictionary of English* (Sinclair, 1987b).
- 13 'La cenere delle battaglie' ('The ash of battles past'), a short story by Carlo Emilio Gadda, translated by I. M. Rawson, in Trevelyan 1965.
- 14 Article published in *The Independent* newspaper (8 November 1988) – copy attached to Tiny Rowland's *A Hero from Zero*, a document describing the acquisition of the House of Fraser by Mohamed Fayed.

3 Equivalence above word level

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation; single words may enter by thousands, and the fabrick of the tongue continue the same, but new phraseology changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our style, . . . let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavour, with all their influence, to stop the licence of translators, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of *France*.

(Samuel Johnson, Preface to the *Dictionary*, 1755: xii)

In the previous chapter, we discussed problems arising from non-equivalence at word level and explored a number of attested strategies for dealing with such problems. In this chapter, we will go one step further to consider what happens when words start combining with other words to form stretches of language.

It goes without saying that words rarely occur on their own; they almost always occur in the company of other words. But words are not strung together at random in any language; there are always restrictions on the way they can be combined to convey meaning. Restrictions which admit no exceptions, and particularly those which apply to classes of words rather than individual words, are usually written down in the form of rules. One of the rules of English, for example, is that a determiner cannot come after a noun. A sequence such as *beautiful girl the* is therefore inadmissible in English.¹ Some restrictions are more likely to admit exceptions and apply to individual words rather than classes of words. These cannot be expressed in terms of

rules, but they can nevertheless be identified as recurrent patterns in the language. In the following sections, we will concentrate on this type of lexical patterning. We will discuss, for instance, the ‘likelihood’ of certain words occurring with other words and the naturalness or typicality of the resulting combinations. In particular, we will address the difficulties encountered by translators as a result of differences in the lexical patterning of the source and target languages.

Lexical patterning will be dealt with under two main headings: **collocation** and **idioms and fixed expressions**.

3.1 COLLOCATION

Why do builders not *produce* a building or authors not *invent* a novel, since they do invent stories and plots? No reason as far as dictionary definitions of words are concerned. We don’t say it because we don’t say it.

(Bolinger and Sears, 1968: 55)

When we discussed **lexical meaning** in Chapter 2, we made a brief reference to **collocation** under **presupposed meaning** and defined it tentatively as ‘semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word’ (p. 14). Another way of looking at **collocation** would be to think of it in terms of the tendency of certain words to co-occur regularly in a given language.

At one level, the tendency of certain words to co-occur has to do with their propositional meanings. For example, *cheque* is more likely to occur with *bank*, *pay*, *money* and *write* than with *moon*, *butter*, *playground* or *repair*. However, meaning cannot always account for collocational patterning. If it did, we might expect *carry out*, *undertake* or even *perform* to collocate with *visit*. Yet, English speakers typically *pay a visit*, less typically *make a visit*, and are unlikely to *perform a visit*. We do not speak of *grilling bread*, even though we put it under the grill (Newman, 1988). When butter or eggs go bad they are described in English as *rancid* and *addled*, respectively. Both *rancid* and *addled* mean ‘stale/rotten’, but *addled butter* and *rancid eggs* are unacceptable or at least unlikely collocations in English (Palmer, 1976). Moreover, words which we might think of as synonyms or near-synonyms will often have quite different sets of collocates. English speakers typically *break rules* but they do not *break regulations*; they typically talk of *wasting time* but not of *squandering time*. Both *deliver a verdict* and *pronounce a verdict* are acceptable collocations in English. Likewise, *pronounce a sentence* is

Table 3.1 Unpredictability of collocational patterning

	<i>unblemished</i>	<i>spotless</i>	<i>flawless</i>	<i>immaculate</i>	<i>impeccable</i>
performance	-	-	+	+	+
argument	-	-	+	-	?
complexion	?	?	+	-	-
behaviour	-	-	-	-	+
kitchen	-	+	-	+	-
record	+	+	-	?	+
reputation	?	+	-	?	?
taste	-	-	?	?	+
order	-	-	?	+	+
credentials	-	-	-	-	+

+ = common/acceptable collocation

- = unacceptable/unlikely collocation

? - questionable/may be acceptable in some idiolects

acceptable and means more or less the same as *deliver/pronounce a verdict*. And yet, *deliver a sentence* is an unlikely collocation. Cruse gives a similar example (1986: 281). The adjectives *unblemished*, *spotless*, *flawless*, *immaculate*, and *impeccable* can be thought of as synonyms or near-synonyms, and yet they do not combine freely with the same set of nouns (see table 3.1).

When two words collocate, the relationship can hold between all or several of their various forms, combined in any grammatically acceptable order. For example, *achieving aims*, *aims having been achieved*, *achievable aims*, and *the achievement of an aim* are all equally acceptable and typical in English. On the other hand, it is often the case that words will collocate with other words in some of their forms but not in others. We *bend rules* in English but are unlikely to describe *rules* as *unbendable*. Instead, we usually talk of *rules* being *inflexible*.

It would seem, then, that the patterns of collocation are largely arbitrary and independent of meaning. This is so both within and across languages. The same degree of mismatch that can be observed when comparing the collocational patterns of synonyms and near-synonyms within the same language is evident in the collocational patterning of 'dictionary equivalents/near equivalents' in two languages. For example, the English verb *deliver* collocates with a number of nouns, for each of which Arabic uses a different verb. The Arabic 'dictionary equivalent' of *deliver* is *yusallim*.

English	Arabic	
deliver a letter/telegram	<i>yusallimu</i>	khitaaban/tillighraafan
deliver a speech/lecture	<i>yulqi</i>	khutbatan/muhaadaratan
deliver news	<i>yanqilu</i>	akhbaaran
deliver a blow	<i>yuwajjihu</i>	darbatan
deliver a verdict	<i>yusdiru</i>	hukman
deliver a baby	<i>yuwallidu</i>	imra'atan

The last Arabic expression, *yuwallidu imra'atan*, literally means something like 'deliver a woman' or 'assist a woman in childbirth'. In the process of childbirth, Arabic focuses on the woman, whereas English prefers to focus on the baby; it would be unacceptable, under normal circumstances, to speak of *delivering a woman* in Modern English. This suggests that differences in collocational patterning among languages are not just a question of using, say, a different verb with a given noun; they can involve totally different ways of portraying an event. Patterns of collocation reflect the preferences of specific language communities for certain modes of expression and certain linguistic configurations; they rarely reflect any inherent order in the world around us. As Sinclair so aptly puts it, 'there are many ways of saying things, many choices within language that have little or nothing to do with the world outside' (1987a: 320). This is not to say that collocations do not often reflect the cultural setting in which they are embedded. Some collocations are in fact a direct reflection of the material, social, or moral environment in which they occur. This explains why *bread* collocates with *butter* in English but not in Arabic. *Buy a house* is a frequent collocation in English, but in German it is very rare because the practice of house-buying is very different in the two cultures (Alexander, 1987). *Law and order* is a common collocation in English; in Arabic a more typical collocation would be *al-qanuun wa al-taqaalid* ('law and convention/tradition'). The English collocation reflects the high value that English speakers place on order and the Arabic collocation reflects the high respect accorded by Arabs to the concept of tradition.

3.1.1 Collocational range and collocational markedness

Every word in a language can be said to have a **range** of items with which it is compatible, to a greater or lesser degree. **Range** here refers to the set of collocates, that is other words, which are typically associated with the word in question. Some words have a much broader collocational range than others.

The English verb *shrug*, for instance, has a rather limited collocational range. It typically occurs with *shoulders* and does not have a particularly strong link with any other word in the language. *Run*, by contrast, has a vast collocational range, some of its typical collocates being *company*, *business*, *show*, *car*, *stockings*, *tights*, *nose*, *wild*, *debt*, *bill*, *river*, *course*, *water*, and *colour*, among others.

Two main factors can influence the collocational range of an item (Beekman and Callow, 1974). The first is its level of specificity: the more general a word is, the broader its collocational range; the more specific it is, the more restricted its collocational range. The verb *bury* is likely to have a much broader collocational range than any of its hyponyms, such as *inter* or *entomb*, for example. Only *people* can be *interred*, but you can *bury people*, *a treasure*, *your head*, *face*, *feelings*, and *memories*. The second factor which determines the collocational range of an item is the number of senses it has. Most words have several senses and they tend to attract a different set of collocates for each sense. For example, in its sense of 'manage', the verb *run* collocates with words like *company*, *institution*, and *business*. In its sense of 'operate or provide', it collocates with words like *service* and *course*. It is, of course, perfectly reasonable to argue that the opposite is also true, that it is the collocational patterning of a word that determines its different senses (see 3.1.3 below). Either way, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between the number of senses a word has and its collocational range.

It will be obvious from our discussion of collocation so far that, unlike grammatical statements, statements about collocation are made in terms of what is typical or untypical rather than what is admissible or inadmissible. This means that there is no such thing as an impossible collocation. New and unusual combinations of words occur frequently and we do not necessarily dismiss them as unacceptable. The reason for this is that collocational ranges are not fixed. Words attract new collocates all the time; they do so naturally, through processes of analogy, or because speakers create unusual collocations on purpose. But how does this work in practice and what do unusual patterns of collocation achieve?

Patterns of collocation which have a history of recurrence in the language become part of our standard linguistic repertoire and we do not stop to think about them when we encounter them in text. By contrast, collocations which have little or no history of recurrence catch our attention and strike us as unusual. In wording his/her message, a speaker or writer has two broad options.

S/he can reinforce the patterns of collocation which already exist in the language by adhering to them:

Herman J. Mankiewicz had been a fine screenwriter . . . , a *compulsive gambler*, a famous drunk, a slashing wit, and a man who was almost ferociously accident prone.

(Shirley MacLaine, *You Can Get There From Here*, 1975: 66–7; my emphasis)

Alternatively, s/he can create variations on an existing pattern by, for instance, extending the range of an item:

I first met Hugh Fraser in 1977. Charming, rather hesitant, a heavy smoker and *heavy gambler*, he had made such headway through his fortune that he had decided to sell his last major asset, the controlling shares in the business which his father had built up and named Scottish and Universal Investments.

(Lonrho, *A Hero from Zero*, p. 1; my emphasis)

The difference between *compulsive gambler* and *heavy gambler* is that the first is a common collocation in English, whereas the second represents an attempt to extend the range of *heavy* to include *heavy gambler*, by analogy with *heavy smoker* and *heavy drinker*. The collocation *heavy gambler* does not strike us as particularly unusual because it only involves a slight extension of an existing range. This kind of natural extension of a range is far less striking than **marked** collocations which involve deliberate confusion of collocational ranges to create new images – a **marked** collocation being an unusual combination of words, one that challenges our expectations as hearers or readers.² Marked collocations are often used in fiction, poetry, humour, and advertisements precisely for this reason: because they can create unusual images, produce laughter and catch the reader's attention. The following example of marked collocation is from John Le Carré's *The Russia House* (1989: 102; my emphasis):

Some tout at the book fair wanted me to take UK rights in a book on *glasnost* and the crisis of peace. Essays by past and present hawks, reappraisals of strategy. Could real *peace break out* after all?

War normally *breaks out*, but *peace prevails*. These unmarked collocations suggest that war is a temporary and undesirable situation and that peace is a normal and desirable one. The deliberate mixing of collocational ranges in

the above extract conveys the unexpected image of peace being an abnormal, temporary, and possibly even an undesirable situation.

To sum up, we create new collocations all the time, either by extending an existing range or by deliberately putting together words from different or opposing ranges. As well as being reinforced, the established patterns in a language can therefore be used as a backdrop against which new images and new meanings can be invoked. New collocations often catch on, are reinforced by usage and eventually become part of the standard repertoire of the language. In turn, they can be used as a backdrop for communicating new meanings by creating new collocations, and so the cycle continues.

3.1.2 Collocation and register

Collocational patterns are not always typical/untypical in relation to the language system as a whole. You may have noted that all the examples used so far have been of common, everyday collocations which are more or less familiar to all of us, regardless of our occupations, special interests or hobbies. Some collocations may seem untypical in everyday language but are common in specific registers. Sinclair (1966) explains that *dull highlights* and *vigorous depressions* may sound odd in everyday English but are common collocations in the fields of photography and meteorology respectively. In statistics, collocations such as *biased error* and *tolerable error* are common and acceptable. A reader who is not familiar with the register of statistics may wrongly assume that these collocations are marked. However, collocational markedness is not an absolute quality; it always depends on what the norm is in a given register.

Register-specific collocations are not simply the set of terms that go with a discipline. They extend far beyond the list of terms that one normally finds in specialized dictionaries and glossaries. It is not enough, for instance, to know that *data* in computer language forms part of compound terms such as *data processing* and *data bank* and to become familiar with the dictionary equivalents of such terms in the target language. In order to translate computer literature, a translator must, among other things, be aware that in English computer texts, *data* may be *handled*, *extracted*, *processed*, *manipulated*, and *retrieved*, but not typically *shifted*, *treated*, *arranged*, or *tackled*. A translator of computer literature must also be familiar with the way in which the equivalent of *data* is used in his/her corresponding target texts, that is,

with the set of collocates which are compatible with the equivalent of *data*. Being a native speaker of a language does not automatically mean that the translator can assess the acceptability or typicality of register-specific collocations. This is largely why courses in specialized and technical language form an important component of translation training syllabuses.

3.1.3 Collocational meaning

In Chapter 2, meaning was discussed almost as if it was a property that each word possesses in its own right. It is, however, disputable whether a word on its own can ‘mean’ anything. What we do when we are asked to give an account of the meaning of a word in isolation is to contextualize it in its most typical collocations rather than its rarer ones. Asked to explain what *dry* means, we are likely to think of collocations such as *dry clothes*, *dry river*, and *dry weather*, which would prompt the definition ‘free from water’. As we move away from the most common collocations of *dry*, it becomes clear that the meaning of *dry* depends largely on its pattern of collocation and is not something that the word possesses in isolation.

Try paraphrasing the meaning of *dry* in each of the following combinations:

dry cow	dry sound	dry book
dry bread	dry voice	dry humour
dry wine	dry country	dry run

Most, if not all of the above collocations have unique meanings. This suggests that what a word means often depends on its association with certain collocates. When the translation of a word or a stretch of language is criticized as being inaccurate or inappropriate in a given context, the criticism may refer to the translator’s inability to recognize a collocational pattern with a unique meaning different from the sum of the meanings of its individual elements. A translator who renders *dry voice* for instance as ‘a voice which is not moist’ would be mistranslating *dry* in this context, having failed to recognize that when it collocates with *voice* it means ‘cold’, in the sense of not expressing emotion. Likewise, a translator who renders *run a car* as ‘drive a car fast’ would be misinterpreting *run* in this context. Taking account of collocational meaning rather than substituting individual words with their dictionary equivalents is therefore crucial at the first stage of translation, that is when the translator is interpreting the source text.

Note that even when there appears to be a close match between

collocational patterns in two languages, they may not carry the same meaning. For example, *to run a car* in English means ‘to own, use, and be able to maintain a car financially’. In modern Greek, to speak of a car ‘running’ simply means that it is being driven fast or with excessive speed.

3.1.4 Some collocation related pitfalls and problems in translation

Differences in the collocational patterning of the source and target languages create potential pitfalls and can pose various problems in translation. Some of these problems are more difficult to handle than others. The following are some of the more common pitfalls and problems that are often encountered in translating non-literary texts. Where applicable, examples are given of strategies used by professional translators to overcome the problems under discussion. The English collocation which poses a translation problem is underlined. The collocation or expression which substitutes it in the target text is highlighted in bold.

3.1.4.1 *The engrossing effect of source text patterning*

It is easy to assume that as long as a collocation can be found in the target language which conveys the same or a similar meaning to that of the source collocation, the translator will not be confused by differences in the surface patterning between the two. For example, *strong tea* is literally ‘dense tea’ in Japanese; *break the law* is an unacceptable collocation in Arabic, the common collocation being, literally, ‘contradict the law’; likewise, *keep a dog/cat* is unacceptable in Danish, where the usual expression is ‘hold a dog/cat’. A Japanese, Arabic, or Danish translator, one might assume, would not hesitate to make the necessary adjustment since, to all intents and purposes, the English/Japanese, English/Arabic, and English/Danish collocations have the same meanings, respectively. There are, nevertheless, many published translations which testify to the contrary. Translators sometimes get quite engrossed in the source text and may produce the oddest collocations in the target language for no justifiable reason. Here is an example from *A Hero from Zero* (p. iv).

Back at the dull mahogany tables of the Commission, I found myself again seated opposite the familiar, tall, languid figure of Sir Godfray Le Quesne, rocking gently on his chair, with his hands clasped behind his

head, and his eyes closed as he listened or slept through the hearings. He'd been looking into us for four years, and knew our business backwards. What am I doing here, I thought, as I gazed by the hour and by the month at the hole in the sole of his leather shoe, and wondered why Lonrho's bid was in the hands of a man who couldn't organise his own shoe repairs.

The French translator of *A Hero from Zero* (a document produced by Lonrho Plc. about the acquisition of the House of Fraser by Mohamed Fayed) rendered *shoe repairs* as *réparer ses chaussures* ('to repair his shoes'), which is a literal translation from English. In French, *réparer* collocates with things like 'fridges', 'cars', and machines in general, but it does not collocate with *chaussures*. The translator should have used *ressemeler ses chaussures* ('resole his shoes'), which is a far more natural collocation in French.³

Confusing source and target patterns is a pitfall that can easily be avoided once the translator is alerted to the potential influence that the collocational patterning of the source text can have on him/her. A good method of detaching oneself from the source text is to put the draft translation aside for a few hours. One can then return to the target text with a better chance of responding to its patterning as a target reader eventually would, having not been exposed to and therefore influenced by the source-text patterning in the first place. At any rate, translators are well advised to avoid carrying over source-language collocational patterns which are untypical of the target language, unless there is a very good reason for doing so.

3.1.4.2 *Misinterpreting the meaning of a source-language collocation*

A translator can easily misinterpret a collocation in the source text due to interference from his/her native language. This happens when a source-language collocation appears to be familiar because it corresponds in form to a common collocation in the target language. I am assuming here that the professional translator would normally be working from a foreign language into his/her native language or language of habitual use (see Code of Professional Conduct, Institute of Translation and Interpreting, UK). The following example is also from *A Hero from Zero* (p. 59):

All this represents only a part of all that Forbes Magazine³ reported on Fayed in the March issue mentioned before. In 1983, he had approached the industrialist Robert O. Anderson under the cover of a commission

agent. The industrialist had been struck by his appearance as someone with modest means. Mr. Anderson was therefore astonished by his sudden acquisition of a considerable fortune.

Target text (Arabic, p. 69):

... وقد رأى فيه رجل الصناعة شخصاً يئتم مظهره عن التواضع والبساطة.

Back-translation:

The industrialist saw in him a person whose appearance suggests **modesty and simplicity**.

The collocation *modest means* suggests lack of affluence in English. The equivalent of ‘modest’ in Arabic (*mutawaadi*) can suggest a similar meaning in some collocations such as *dakhl mutawaadi* (‘small income’). However, both the adjective *mutawaadi* (‘modest’ and the noun *tawaadu* (‘modesty’) used in connection with a person usually mean that s/he is unassuming. This interpretation is further reinforced by the addition of *basaata* (‘simplicity’). The translator of the above extract seems to have confused the collocational patterns of English and Arabic, thus misinterpreting the source collocation and communicating the wrong meaning in the target text.

3.1.4.3 *The tension between accuracy and naturalness.*

In rendering unmarked source-language collocations into his/her target language, a translator ideally aims at producing a collocation which is typical in the target language while, at the same time, preserving the meaning associated with the source collocation. This ideal cannot always be achieved. Translation often involves a tension – a difficult choice between what is typical and what is accurate.

The nearest acceptable collocation in the target language will often involve some change in meaning. This change in meaning may be minimal, or not particularly significant in a given context. On the other hand, it may be significant; for example, a *good/bad law* in English is typically a ‘just/unjust law’ in Arabic. The significance of this difference in meaning depends on whether the issue of ‘justice’ is in focus in a given text and whether the context favours avoiding explicit reference to justice. Similarly, the nearest acceptable collocation which can replace *hard drink* in Arabic is ‘alcoholic drinks’. But *hard drink* refers only to spirits in English, for example whisky, gin, and brandy. It does not include other alcoholic drinks such as beer, lager,

or sherry. The Arabic collocation, however, refers to any alcoholic drink, including beer, lager, sherry, as well as spirits. The meanings of the two collocations therefore do not map completely. Whether the translator opts for the typical Arabic collocation or tries to translate the full meaning of *hard drink*, possibly by a circumlocution, will depend on whether the distinction between hard and soft alcoholic drinks is significant or relevant in a given context. A certain amount of loss, addition, or skewing of meaning is often unavoidable in translation; language systems tend to be too different to produce exact replicas in most cases. The degree of acceptability or non-acceptability of a change in meaning depends on the significance of this change in a given context. Accuracy is no doubt an important aim in translation, but it is also important to bear in mind that the use of common target-language patterns which are familiar to the target reader plays an important role in keeping the communication channels open. The use of established patterns of collocation also helps to distinguish between a smooth translation, one that reads like an original, and a clumsy translation which sounds 'foreign'.

Here are some examples of translations which have opted for naturalness at the expense of accuracy. The change in meaning involved in the following examples is not significant enough to justify cluttering the text with additional explanations or using untypical target collocations:

Example A

Source text (*Brintons*; see Appendix 9):

New Tradition offers a fascinating series of traditional patterns in miniature using rich jewel-like colours that glow against dark backgrounds.

Target text (Arabic):

تقدم مجموعة "نيو تراديشين" عدد من التسميمات التقليدية الممتازة بحجم مصغر، في ألوان باهرة كالوان الجواهر، تزيد الخلفيات الداكنة من توهجها.

Back-translation:

The 'New Tradition' collection presents a number of fascinating designs in a reduced size, in **dazzling colours** like the colours of gems, the glowing of which is enhanced by the dark backgrounds.

Rich colours are vivid and deep. The Arabic collocation suggests brightness rather than depth of colour.

Example B

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 4):

These young pandas in Beijing Zoo are great crowd pullers.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

These young pandas in the Beijing Zoo **attract** a lot of **spectators**.

Crowd pullers is not an acceptable collocation in Chinese. In addition, the expression is quite informal. Chinese does not favour informal style in written discourse. Although much of the evoked meaning of *crowd pullers* is lost in the Chinese translation, the collocation used to replace it is more natural and stylistically more acceptable.

Example C

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 60):

The Chinese people have already made substantial efforts to protect the giant panda, which is considered to be a national treasure. Nevertheless, we are at a critical time for this species.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

The Chinese people have already done a lot to protect the big panda which is regarded as a national treasure. However, we are at the **crucial moment** when the panda is **in the condition of life-death-existence-extinction**.

Critical time is replaced by a more typical Chinese fixed expression which has a similar, though perhaps more emphatic, meaning.

The following examples involve a more significant change in meaning. You may or may not agree with the translator's decision to opt for a typical target collocation in each case:

Example D

Source text (*The Independent*):

Tiny Rowland is a crisper writer than Peter Wright and has an even stranger story to tell.

Target text (Arabic):

وتأيني رولاند أحد قلماء من بيتر رايت، كما أن
الحكاية التي يرويها أغرب بكثير.

Back-translation:

Tiny Rowland has a **sharper pen** than Peter Wright's, and also the story which he is narrating is much stranger.

Crisp writing is clear, concise writing. The collocation suggests approval. In Arabic, 'sharp pen' is a common and typical collocation. However, both its propositional and expressive meanings are quite different from those of *crisp writing* in English. A writer is described as having a 'sharp pen' in Arabic if s/he is a fierce critic. The collocation does not suggest approval.

Example F

Source text (*A Hero from Zero*, p. 13):

In fact, the money came from the Sultan of Brunei, a naive individual, easily romanced and seduced by the oily charm of Mohamed Fayed.

Target text (Arabic, p. 27):

ولكن الواقع ان هذه الاموال قد جاءت من سلطان بروناي وهو انسان ساذج يصدق القصص الخيالية المملقة، والغراء السحر الزائف لمحمد فايد.

Back-translation:

But the fact is that this money had come from the Sultan of Brunei and he is a naive person who believes imaginary, fake stories, and the **false charm** of Mohammed Fayed tempted him.

To describe someone as having *oily charm* in English means not only that they are insincere, but also that there is something particularly unpleasant, even sickening, in the way they show excessive politeness or flatter people. In Arabic, 'false charm' merely suggests that someone who appears charming at first glance may not turn out to be as good as they think or claim to be.

3.1.4.4 Culture-specific collocations

Some collocations reflect the cultural setting in which they occur. If the cultural settings of the source and target languages are significantly different, there will be instances when the source text will contain collocations which convey what to the target reader would be unfamiliar associations of ideas. Such culture-specific collocations express ideas previously unexpressed in

the target language. Like culture-specific words, they point to concepts which are not easily accessible to the target reader.

Example A

Source text (Euralex Circular; see Appendix 8):

Papers relating to the lesser-known languages will be particularly welcome.

Target text (back-translated from Russian):

We intend to discuss separately questions concerning the **socalled 'small', i.e. less widespread and 'big', i.e. more widespread languages.**

In English academic writing, it is common and acceptable to talk about 'lesser-known languages', as well as 'major languages' and 'minor languages'. Russian has no equivalent collocations. Furthermore, the political and social setting of Russian makes it potentially offensive to draw a distinction between better-known and lesser-known, or major and minor languages. The translator of the above extract seems to be aware of the oddity of such associations in Russian and their potential for causing offence. Hence, inverted commas are used around 'small' and 'big', they are each followed by a paraphrase, and the whole expression is preceded by 'so-called', which serves to distance the writer/translator from the associations made.

Note that the translation of culture-specific collocations involves a partial increase in information. This is unavoidable inasmuch as unfamiliar associations of ideas cannot simply be introduced in a target text without giving the reader some hint as to how to interpret them.

Example B

Source text (*Kolestral Super*):

KOLESTRAL-SUPER is ideal for all kinds of hair, especially for damaged, dry and brittle hair.

Target text (Arabic):

كولسترال-سوبر هو مثالي لجميع انواع الشعر خصوصا
للشعر المتقصف، المتآذي أو التالف وأيضا للشعر
الجاف أو الضعيف البنية والقابل للكسر.

Back-translation:

Kolestral-super is ideal for all kinds of hair, especially for **the split-ends hair, harmed or damaged hair and also for hair which is dry, of weak structure or liable to breaking.**

Sometimes, translators opt for accuracy of meaning, or for what appears to them to be accuracy of meaning, at the expense of all else. It is unfortunate that some translators still feel that their job is to reproduce everything in the source text, come what may. The above extract is taken from an instruction leaflet which accompanies a hair conditioner. Common collocates of *hair* in English include *dry*, *oily*, *damaged*, *permed*, *fine*, *flyaway* and *brittle*, among others. These collocations reflect a cultural reality in the English-speaking world. A large number of English speakers have fine, flyaway hair, which also tends to be brittle. Common collocates of 'hair' in Arabic are mainly 'split-ends', 'dry', 'oily', 'coarse', and 'smooth'. These collocations also reflect the cultural reality of the Arabic-speaking world. The collocations *damaged hair* and *brittle hair* have no close equivalents in Arabic. The translator of the above extract nevertheless feels obliged to reproduce every possible aspect of meaning conveyed in the source text, regardless of whether the source collocations are likely to have any significance in the Arabic context. The collocations and the lengthy explanations given in Arabic 'mean' very little to the Arab reader. Moreover, it is doubtful whether 'damaged hair' and 'brittle hair' would, in fact, be seen as problems by the average Arab. It is reasonable to assume that people only seek solutions for problems they are aware of or which they are likely to have.

3.1.4.5 Marked collocations in the source text

Unusual combinations of words are sometimes used in the source text in order to create new images (see 3.1.2 above). Ideally, the translation of a marked collocation will be similarly marked in the target language. This is, however, always subject to the constraints of the target language and to the purpose of the translation in question.

Example A

Source text (*Language and Society* – a bilingual journal published in Canada – no. 15 (1985), p. 8):⁴

Canada has chosen to 'entrench' its dual cultural heritage in its institutions and, as a result, official translation has taken firm root.

Target text (French, p. 8):

Canada a choisi «**d'enchasser**» – le mot est hélas! à la mode – son double **héritage** culturel dans ses institutions et la traduction officielle y est, par conséquent, solidement enracinée.

Back-translation:

Canada has chosen to '**insert**' – the word is alas in fashion! – its double cultural **heritage** in its institutions and official translation is, as a consequence, solidly rooted there.

The reader of the source text is alerted to the writer's wish to communicate an unusual image by the inverted commas around *entrench*. In the target text, the marked collocation is further highlighted by means of an interjection from the translator ('the word is alas in fashion').

Example B

Source text (*Language and Society*, no. 15 (1985), p. 22):

The young ethnic child begins to lose the first language mainly because of impoverishment of reference. What this means is that as the child becomes more and more exposed to English outside the home, he lacks the linguistic resources to deal with many topics in the first language, which tends to become restricted to household matters. We call this phenomenon 'kitchen German', from the observation among many adults of European background in Western Canada whose only remembrance of their parents' language consists of a few words or phrases to do with household chores.

Target text (French, p. 22):

. . . Nous inspirant de la désignation «**kitchen German**», nous dirons qu'il y a là une **langue «popote»** comme on a pu l'observer chez nombre d'adultes d'origine européenne établis dans l'Ouest canadien. La compétence langagière est toujours liéé par des associations habituelles à des contextes particuliers.

Back-translation:

. . . Inspiring us from the name '**kitchen German**', we shall say that there is a '**cooking**' language as one has been able to observe among a number of adults of European origin established in Western Canada. The language competence is always connected by habitual associations to particular contexts.

Note again the use of inverted commas around marked collocations in the source and target texts.

To conclude our brief discussion of collocation, I would reiterate that language is not made up of a large number of words which can be used together in free variation. Words have a certain tolerance of compatibility. Like individual words, collocational patterns carry meaning and can be culture-specific. This, in addition to their largely arbitrary nature, gives rise to numerous pitfalls and problems in translation.

3.2 IDIOMS AND FIXED EXPRESSIONS

Generally speaking, collocations are fairly flexible patterns of language which allow several variations in form. For example, *deliver a letter*, *delivery of a letter*, *a letter has been delivered*, and *having delivered a letter* are all acceptable collocations. In addition, although the meaning of a word often depends on what other words it occurs with, we can still say that the word in question has an individual meaning in a given collocation. Thus, *dry cow* means a cow which does not produce milk. We can still identify a particular meaning associated with the word *dry* in this collocation, and, of course, *cow* still retains its familiar meaning of 'a farm animal kept for its milk'. Idioms and fixed expressions are at the extreme end of the scale from collocations in one or both of these areas: flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning. They are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components.

An idiom such as *bury the hatchet* ('to become friendly again after a disagreement or a quarrel') or *the long and the short of it* ('the basic facts of the situation') allows no variation in form under normal circumstances. Unless s/he is consciously making a joke or attempting a play on words, a speaker or writer cannot normally do any of the following with an idiom:

1. change the order of the words in it (e.g. *'the *short* and the *long* of it');
2. delete a word from it (e.g. *'spill beans');
3. add a word to it (e.g. *'the *very* long and short of it'; *'face the *classical* music');
4. replace a word with another (e.g. *'the *tall* and the short of it'; *'bury a hatchet');
5. change its grammatical structure (e.g. *'the music was faced').

As their name suggests, fixed expressions such as *having said that*, *as a matter of fact*, *Ladies and Gentlemen*, and *all the best*, as well as proverbs such as *practise what you preach* and *waste not want not*, allow little or no variation in form. In this respect, they behave very much like idioms. Unlike idioms, however, fixed expressions and proverbs often have fairly transparent meanings. The meaning of *as a matter of fact* can easily be deduced from the meanings of the words which constitute it, unlike the meaning of an idiom such as *pull a fast one* or *fill the bill*. But in spite of its transparency, the meaning of a fixed expression or proverb is somewhat more than the sum meanings of its words; the expression has to be taken as one unit to establish meaning. This is true of any fixed, recurring pattern of the language. Encountering any fixed expression conjures up in the mind of the reader or hearer all the aspects of experience which are associated with the typical contexts in which the expression is used. It is precisely this feature which lies behind the widespread use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions in any language. They encapsulate all the stereotyped aspects of experience and therefore perform a stabilizing function in communication. Situation- or register-specific formulae such as *Many happy returns*, *Merry Christmas*, *Further to your letter of . . .*, and *Yours sincerely* are particularly good examples of the stabilizing role and the special status that a fixed expression can assume in communication.

3.2.1 Idioms, fixed expressions, and the direction of translation

Although most idioms resist variation in form, some are more flexible than others. For example, a BBC radio reporter once quoted a conference speaker as saying ‘There was too much *buck passing*’ (Baker and McCarthy, 1988). The common form of the idiom is *pass the buck* (‘refuse to accept responsibility for something’). And yet, we would not expect to hear *There was too much way giving* for *give way* (‘allow someone to do something you disapprove of’).

A person’s competence in actively using the idioms and fixed expressions of a foreign language hardly ever matches that of a native speaker. The majority of translators working into a foreign language cannot hope to achieve the same sensitivity that native speakers seem to have for judging when and how an idiom can be manipulated. This lends support to the argument that translators should only work into their language of habitual use or mother tongue. The Code of Professional Ethics of the Translators’ Guild of Great Britain⁵ states:

A translator shall work only *into* the language (in exceptional cases this may include a second language) of which he has native knowledge. ‘Native knowledge’ is defined as the ability to speak and write a language so fluently that the expression of thought is structurally, grammatically and *idiomatically* correct.

(quoted in Meuss, 1981:278; my emphasis)

Assuming that a professional translator would, under normal circumstances, work only into his/her language of habitual use, the difficulties associated with being able to use idioms and fixed expressions correctly in a foreign language need not be addressed here. The main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language. These difficulties are much more pronounced in the case of idioms than they are in the case of fixed expressions.

3.2.2 The interpretation of idioms

As far as idioms are concerned, the first difficulty that a translator comes across is being able to recognize that s/he is dealing with an idiomatic expression. This is not always so obvious. There are various types of idioms, some more easily recognizable than others. Those which are easily recognizable include expressions which violate truth conditions, such as *It’s raining cats and dogs*, *throw caution to the winds*, *storm in a tea cup*, *jump down someone’s throat*, and *food for thought*. They also include expressions which seem ill-formed because they do not follow the grammatical rules of the language, for example *trip the light fantastic*, *blow someone to kingdom come*, *put paid to*, *the powers that be*, *by and large*, and *the world and his friend*. Expressions which start with *like* (simile-like structures) also tend to suggest that they should not be interpreted literally. These include idioms such as *like a bat out of hell* and *like water off a duck’s back*. Generally speaking, the more difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely a translator will recognize it as an idiom. Because they do not make sense if interpreted literally, the highlighted expressions in the following text are easy to recognize as idioms (assuming one is not already familiar with them):

This can only be done, I believe, by a full and frank **airing of the issues**.
I urge you all to **speak your minds** and not to **pull any punches**.

(*Language and Society*, no. 14 (1985), p. 6)

Provided a translator has access to good reference works and monolingual dictionaries of idioms, or, better still, is able to consult native speakers of the language, opaque idioms which do not make sense for one reason or another can actually be a blessing in disguise. The very fact that s/he cannot make sense of an expression in a particular context will alert the translator to the presence of an idiom of some sort.

There are two cases in which an idiom can be easily misinterpreted if one is not already familiar with it.

(a) Some idioms are ‘misleading’; they seem transparent because they offer a reasonable literal interpretation and their idiomatic meanings are not necessarily signalled in the surrounding text. A large number of idioms in English, and probably all languages, have both a literal and an idiomatic meaning, for example *go out with* (‘have a romantic or sexual relationship with someone’) and *take someone for a ride* (‘deceive or cheat someone in some way’). Such idioms lend themselves easily to manipulation by speakers and writers who will sometimes play on both their literal and idiomatic meanings. In this case, a translator who is not familiar with the idiom in question may easily accept the literal interpretation and miss the play on idiom. The following example illustrates how easy it is to accept a literal interpretation that seems plausible in a given context. The text from which the extract is taken is quoted in the *Translator’s Guild Newsletter* (vol. X, January 1985, 1).

I’d just done my stint as rubber duck, see, and pulled off the grandma lane into the pitstop to **drain the radiator**.

This is an extract from a highly idiomatic passage of Citizen Band (CB) Radio special ‘trucking talk’. *Rubber duck* is the first trucker in a convoy, *grandma lane* is the slow lane, and *pitstop* refers to services or a place where one stops for a rest. In the context of trucks, motorways, and stopping at a service station, a literal interpretation of *drain the radiator* seems highly plausible. It is, however, a special idiom used by CB drivers and means ‘to urinate; use the toilet’.

(b) An idiom in the source language may have a very close counterpart in the target language which looks similar on the surface but has a totally or partially different meaning. For example, the idiomatic question *Has the cat had/got*

your tongue? is used in English to urge someone to answer a question or contribute to a conversation, particularly when their failure to do so becomes annoying. A similar expression is used in French with a totally different meaning: *donner sa langue au chat* ('to give one's tongue to the cat'), meaning to give up, for example when asked a riddle. *To pull someone's leg*, meaning to tell someone something untrue as a joke in order to shock them temporarily and amuse them when they find out later that it was a joke, is identical on the surface to the idiom *yishab rijlu* ('pull his leg') which is used in several Arabic dialects to mean tricking someone into talking about something s/he would have rather kept secret. In French, a similar expression: *tirer la jambe* ('pull the leg') means to drag one's steps. Instances of superficially identical or similar idioms which have different meanings in the source and target languages lay easy traps for the unwary translator who is not familiar with the source-language idiom and who may be tempted simply to impose a target-language interpretation on it.

Apart from being alert to the way speakers and writers manipulate certain features of idioms and to the possible confusion which could arise from similarities in form between source and target expressions, a translator must also consider the collocational environment which surrounds any expression whose meaning is not readily accessible. Idiomatic and fixed expressions have individual collocational patterns. They form collocations with other items in the text as single units and enter into lexical sets which are different from those of their individual words. Take, for instance, the idiom *to have cold feet*. *Cold* as a separate item may collocate with words like *weather*, *winter*, *feel*, or *country*. *Feet* on its own will perhaps collocate with *socks*, *chilblain*, *smelly*, etc. However, *having cold feet*, in its idiomatic use, has nothing necessarily to do with *winter*, *feet*, or *chilblains* and will therefore generally be used with a different set of collocates.

The ability to distinguish senses by collocation is an invaluable asset to a translator working from a foreign language. It is often subsumed under the general umbrella of 'relying on the context to disambiguate meanings', which, among other things, means using our knowledge of collocational patterns to decode the meaning of a word or a stretch of language. Using our knowledge of collocational patterns may not always tell us what an idiom means but it could easily help us in many cases to recognize an idiom, particularly one which has a literal as well as a non-literal meaning.

3.2.3 The translation of idioms: difficulties

Once an idiom or fixed expression has been recognized and interpreted correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the target language. The difficulties involved in translating an idiom are totally different from those involved in interpreting it. Here, the question is not whether a given idiom is transparent, opaque, or misleading. An opaque expression may be easier to translate than a transparent one. The main difficulties involved in translating idioms and fixed expressions may be summarized as follows:

(a) An idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the target language. The way a language chooses to express, or not express, various meanings cannot be predicted and only occasionally matches the way another language chooses to express the same meanings. One language may express a given meaning by means of a single word, another may express it by means of a transparent fixed expression, a third may express it by means of an idiom, and so on. It is therefore unrealistic to expect to find equivalent idioms and expressions in the target language as a matter of course.

Like single words, idioms and fixed expressions may be culture-specific. Formulae such as *Merry Christmas* and *say when* which relate to specific social or religious occasions provide good examples. Basnett-McGuire (1980: 21) explains that the expression *say when* 'is . . . directly linked to English social behavioural patterns' and suggests that 'the translator putting the phrase into French or German has to contend with the problem of the non-existence of a similar convention in either TL culture'. Less problematic, but to some extent also culture-specific, are the sort of fixed formulae that are used in formal correspondence, such as *Yours faithfully* and *Yours sincerely* in English. These, for instance, have no equivalents in Arabic formal correspondence. Instead, an expression such as *wa tafadalu biqbuul fa'iq al-ihitiraam* (literally: 'and be kind enough to accept [our] highest respects') is often used, but it bears no direct relationship to *Yours faithfully* or *Yours sincerely*. The same mismatch occurs in relation to French and several other languages.

Idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. It is not the specific items an expression contains but rather the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific contexts which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate. For example, the English expression *to carry coals to Newcastle*, though culture-specific in the sense that it contains a reference to Newcastle coal and uses it as a measure of abundance, is nevertheless closely paralleled in German by

Eulen nach Athen tragen ('to carry owls to Athens'). Both expressions convey the same meaning, namely: to supply something to someone who already has plenty of it (Grauberg, 1989). In French, the same meaning can be rendered by the expression *porter de l'eau à la rivière* 'to carry water to the river'. Palmer (1976) explains that in Welsh it rains 'old women and sticks' rather than 'cats and dogs', and yet both expressions mean the same thing.

(b) An idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations, for instance, or they may not be pragmatically transferable. *To sing a different tune* is an English idiom which means to say or do something that signals a change in opinion because it contradicts what one has said or done before. In Chinese, *chang-dui-tai-xi* ('to sing different tunes/to sing a duet') also normally refers to contradictory points of view, but has quite a different usage. It has strong political connotations and can, in certain contexts, be interpreted as expressing complementary rather than contradictory points of view.⁶ *To go to the dogs* ('to lose one's good qualities') has a similar counterpart in German, but whereas the English idiom can be used in connection with a person or a place, its German counterpart can only be used in connection with a person and often means to die or perish. Fernando and Flavell (1981) compare *to skate on thin ice* ('to act unwisely or court danger voluntarily') with a similar Serbian expression: *navuci nekoga na tanak led* ('to pull someone onto the thin ice'). The Serbian idiom differs from the English one in that it implies forcing someone into a dangerous position. Though similar in meaning, the contexts in which the two idioms can be used are obviously different.

(c) An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time (see 3.2.2 (a) above). Unless the target-language idiom corresponds to the source-language idiom both in form and in meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the target text. The following extract is from a passage which constituted part of the British Translators' Guild Intermediate Examinations for all languages (1986).

In creating Lord Peter Wimsey, Dorothy L Sayers demonstrated all the advantages of the amateur private eye. As a wealthy dilettante he was able to pursue the clues without the boring necessity of earning a living. His title as the younger son of a duke pandered to reader snobbery and to the obsessive fascination of some readers with the lifestyle of the aristocracy,

or with what they imagined that lifestyle to be. He had sufficient influence to be able to **poke his nose into** the private affairs of others where less aristocratic **noses** might have been speedily bloodied.

The above play on idiom can only be reproduced in languages such as French or German which happen to have an identical idiom or at least an idiom which refers to interfering in other people's affairs and which has the equivalent of *nose* in it.

Another example comes from Arab Political Humour by Kishtainy (1985). Although this book was originally written in English, the writer quotes jokes and anecdotes of Arab origin, so that English is in fact the target language here. The following joke emerged after the defeat of the Arab forces in 1967, which resulted in the annexation of Arab territory by Israel.

Egypt's Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Amin, was horrified to see President Nasser ordering a tattoo artist to print on his right arm the names of all the territories seized by Israel like Sinai, Gaza, Sharm al-Shaykh, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights.

'Why are you doing this?'

'Lest I should forget them.'

'But why tattooed? What will you do if we get them back?'

'If we get them back **I'll cut off my right arm.**'

(Kishtainy, 1985: 157–8; my emphasis)

Unless you are an Arab speaker, you will find it difficult to appreciate the humour of the above passage, which relies totally on the manipulation of literal and idiomatic meanings. To cut off one's arm, or cut off one's right arm for emphasis, is an idiom which is similar in meaning to *pigs might fly* in English. It means that something is impossible or at least highly unlikely to happen. Neither this English expression nor any other English idiom with a similar meaning can be used to replace 'I'll cut off my right arm' in the above passage, because the literal meaning of the Arabic expression is as important as its idiomatic meaning in this context. The literal translation that the author gives above is just as ineffective since the non-Arab reader has no access to the idiomatic meaning. This book was translated into Arabic by Al-Yaziji in 1988 and, not surprisingly, the jokes work much better in the Arabic version.

(d) The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target languages. English uses idioms in many types of text,

though not in all. Their use in quality-press news reports is limited, but it is quite common to see idioms in English advertisements, promotional material, and in the tabloid press. The following example from one of Austin Rover's glossy brochures illustrates the heavy use of idioms in this type of English written discourse. The whole passage is highly idiomatic and very informal in style. The main idioms are highlighted in bold:

METRO

Your own sense of style is all your own. Brilliant. Colourful. Original. With loads of **get up and go**.

There's a car **after your own heart**. The new 1989 Metro. Sporty new models which look great – and **don't hang around**. A new range. With vivid new colours and trim. Full of fresh ideas. Luxurious. And wickedly stylish.

Get going in the new Metro GTa. Where else would you find 73PS performance, alloy wheels and looks like that – at such a price?

Or **show what you're made of** at the wheel of the new Metro Sport. It's got style. And a performance engine that says **it's a lot more than just a pretty face**.

Fancy something really special in the sports luxury department? With a sunroof, central locking, tinted glass and a lot more, the new Metro 1.3GS **is just the ticket**. And so is the price.

(Today's Cars, Austin Rover, 1989)

Using idioms in English is very much a matter of style. Languages such as Arabic and Chinese which make a sharp distinction between written and spoken discourse and where the written mode is associated with a high level of formality, tend, on the whole, to avoid using idioms in written texts. Fernando and Flavell (1981: 85) discuss the difference in rhetorical effect of using idioms in general and of using specific types of idiom in the source and target languages and quite rightly conclude that 'Translation is an exacting art. Idiom more than any other feature of language demands that the translator be not only accurate but highly sensitive to the rhetorical nuances of the language.'

3.2.4 The translation of idioms: strategies

The way in which an idiom or a fixed expression can be translated into another language depends on many factors. It is not only a question of whether an idiom with a similar meaning is available in the target language.

Other factors include, for example, the significance of the specific lexical items which constitute the idiom, i.e. whether they are manipulated elsewhere in the source text, as well as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using idiomatic language in a given register in the target language. The acceptability or non-acceptability of using any of the strategies described below will therefore depend on the context in which a given idiom is translated. The first strategy described, that of finding an idiom of similar meaning and similar form in the target language, may seem to offer the ideal solution, but that is not necessarily always the case. Questions of style, register, and rhetorical effect must also be taken into consideration. Fernando and Flavell are correct in warning us against the ‘strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor-language, however inappropriate it may be’ (1981: 82).

3.2.4.1 *Using an idiom of similar meaning and form*

This strategy involves using an idiom in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items. This kind of match can only occasionally be achieved.

Example A

Source text (*A Hero from Zero*, p. 21):

The Sultan’s magnificent income was distributed impulsively at his command. The rain fell on the just and on the unjust.

Target text (French, p. 21):

Le revenue fabuleux du Sultan était distribué sur un simple ordre de sa part. **La pluie tombait aussi bien sur les justes que sur les injustes.**

Back-translation:

The fantastic income of the Sultan was distributed on a simple order on his part. **The rain was falling on the just as well as on the unjust.**

Example B

Source text (*Language and Society*, no. 16 (1985), p. 7):

Five days into what would be the final clash, Pawley tried to force Speaker Jim Walding’s hand into calling a vote with or without the Tories.

Target text (French, p. 7):

Au cinquième jour de ce qui allait se révéler l'affrontement final, M. Pawley tenta **de forcer la main au** président de la chambre Jim Walding pour qu'il décrète une mise aux voix, avec ou sans la participation des conservateurs.

Back-translation:

On the fifth day of what was going to prove to be the final confrontation, Mr. Pawley tried **to force the hand of** the president of the Chamber, Jim Walding, to declare a placement of the vote, with or without the participation of the conservatives.

Example C

Source text (*A Hero from Zero*, p. 85):

The Fayedys have turned the pre-bid House of Fraser strategy on its head.

Target text (Arabic, p. 94):

وبذا يكون الاخوة فايد قد قلبوا استراتيجيتهم هاتوا
أوف فريزر السابقة علي عرض الامتلاك، رأساً علي
عقب.

Back-translation:

And with this the Fayed brothers have **turned** the strategy of the House of Fraser previous to the offer of ownership **head over heel**.

The Arabic expression, which means 'upside down', is similar in form only to another English idiom, *head over heels (in love)*, meaning 'very much in love'.

Example D

Source text (*Masters of the Universe*):

Perhaps Granamyr wanted to show us that things aren't always what they seem.

Target text (French):

Peut-être Granamyr voulait-il nous montrer que **les choses ne sont pas toujours ce qu'elles paraissent**.

Back-translation:

Perhaps Granamyr wanted to show us that **things are not always what they seem**.

3.2.4.2 Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

It is often possible to find an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items. For example, the English expression *One good turn deserves another* and the French expression *À beau jeu, beau retour* ('a handsome action deserves a handsome return') use different lexical items to express more or less the same idea (Fernando and Flavell, 1981).

Example A

Source text (*China's Panda Reserves*; see Appendix 3, no. 54):

The serow, a type of wild mountain goat, is very much at home among the rocky outcrops of Sichuan.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):

The serow, a type of wild mountain goat, is **totally at ease** in Sichuan's many rocky levels.

The Chinese idiom used to replace *very much at home* is *shi fen zi zai*. It consists of a measure word based on a ten-point scale, plus 'self at ease'. The measure word means '100 per cent', but the scale used is out of 10 rather than out of 100.

Example B

Source text (*Masters of the Universe*):

Feel the force of my fist, frozen fiend!

Target text (German):

Dir werde ich einheizen, du Scheusal!

Back-translation:

I will make things hot for you, monster!

The above statement is addressed to an ice monster. The German expression *Dir werde ich einheizen* means literally, or as near literally as possible, 'I will put the heating on to you'.

3.2.4.3 Translation by paraphrase

This is by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic

preferences of the source and target languages. You may or may not find the paraphrases accurate; the examples below are quoted as they appear in the original documents to illustrate the strategy of paraphrase rather than to explain the meanings of individual idioms.

Example A

Source text (*Austin Montego* – car brochure):

The suspension system has been fully updated to take rough terrain in its stride.

Target text (Arabic):

وقد رفعت طاقة نظام التعليق بحيث يتغلب على وعورة الارض.

Back-translation:

The capacity of the suspension system has been raised so as to **overcome** the roughness of the terrain.

Example B

Source text (*Language and Society*, no. 15 (1985), p. 22):

Programmes to teach heritage languages to ethnic youngsters in upper elementary or high school are all quite laudable, but if it is merely a question of trying to reinforce or replant first language competence already lost for all practical purposes, then this is rather like shutting the stable door when the horse has bolted.

Target text (French, pp. 22–3):

Ces cours, qui seraient dispensés dans les dernières classes de l'élémentaire ou au secondaire constituent certes une initiative louable; mais c'est peut-être **trop peu trop tard**, car dans bien des cas ces jeunes n'ont plus qu'un vague souvenir de leur langue ancestrale.

Back-translation:

These courses, which would be given in the last classes of elementary or to the secondary certainly constitute a laudable initiative; but it is perhaps **too little too late**, because in a good many cases these youngsters have no more than a vague memory of their ancestral language.

Example C

Source text (*A Hero from Zero*, p. iii):

Lonrho's directors then agreed not to bid without the prior permission of the Department of Trade. We were to regret signing that undertaking, and I do not think that any public company should agree to open-ended ad hoc restraints of this kind. It was subsequently used by Norman Tebbit, as Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry, to unfairly restrain a Lonrho bid while he pushed another pony past the post.

Target text 1 (French, p. iii):

. . . Cela fut, par la suite, utilisé par Norman Tebbit, alors ministre du Commerce et de l'Industrie, afin de repousser injustement une offre de Lonrho et dans le même temps **favoriser un autre candidat**.

Back-translation:

. . . This was used afterwards by Norman Tebbit, then minister of Commerce and Industry, in order to reject unfairly an offer from Lonrho and at the same time **to favour another candidate**.

Target text 2 (Arabic, p. 9):

وقد استغل هذا التمهيد فيما بعد من قبل نورمان تيببيت باعتباراه وزيراً للتجارة والصناعة، حين اعاق دون عدل عرض لونرو بينما اعان متسابغاً آخر على بلوغ نهاية السباق .

Back-translation:

. . . This undertaking was later exploited by Norman Tebbit in his capacity as Minister of Trade and Industry when he unjustly restrained Lonrho's offer while **helping another competitor to reach the end of the race**.

Example D

Source text (*Language and Society*, no. 16 (1985), p. 4):

One frequent criticism of the Manitoba Government throughout the language controversy was that it never seemed to get a handle on the issue.

Target text (French, p. 4):

Tout au long de la controverse linguistique, on reprocha fréquemment au gouvernement du Manitoba de ne pas réussir, selon toute apparence, à **maîtriser** la situation.

Back-translation:

For the whole length of the linguistic controversy, the government of Manitoba was reproached frequently for not succeeding, by all appearances, in **mastering** the situation.

Example E

Source text ('Saving China's tropical paradise' – World Wide Fund for Nature text which accompanied a slide show):

Best news of all is the decision to develop a system of five nature reserves totalling 2000 sq.kms. where representative examples of the region's unique ecosystems will be protected for the future.

Target text (back-translated from Chinese):⁷

The best news is a decision to develop a system of 2000 sq.kms. consisting of five reserves. In such a system representative animal and plant species within the unique ecosystem of this area will be protected.

'The best news is' does not have the status of a fixed expression in Chinese. Although it looks very similar to *Best news of all*, it is just a paraphrase of the English expression.

3.2.4.4 Translation by omission

As with single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text. This may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons. Here is an example from *A Hero from Zero* (p. vi):

It was bitter, but funny, to see that Professor Smith had doubled his own salary before recommending the offer from Fayed, and added a pre-dated bonus for good measure.

Target text (Arabic, p. 12):

وكان من المؤسف، بل ومن المضحك، أن يتمكن البروفيسور
سميث من مضاغلة راتبه مرتين قبل أن يتقدم بتوصيته
لقبول عرض فايد، وأن يضيف الي ذلك مكافأة يتحدد
سلفاً موعد حصوله عليها .

Back-translation:

It was regrettable, even funny, that Professor Smith had been able to

double his salary twice before offering his recommendation to accept Fayed's offer, and that he added to this a bonus, the date of which had been previously decided on.

One strategy which cannot be adequately illustrated, simply because it would take up a considerable amount of space, is the strategy of compensation. Briefly, this means that one may either omit or play down a feature such as idiomaticity at the point, where it occurs in the source text and introduce it elsewhere in the target text. This strategy is not restricted to idiomaticity or fixed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss of meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text. Mason (1982:29) explains that, because they were unable to translate specific puns at the points at which they occurred in the text, the translators of *Astérix* 'have sometimes resorted to inserting English puns (of equivalent impact rather than equivalent meaning) in different frames of the cartoon'.

Using the typical phraseology of the target language – its natural collocations, its own fixed and semi-fixed expressions, the right level of idiomaticity, and so on – will greatly enhance the readability of your translations. Getting this level right means that your target text will feel less 'foreign' and, other factors being equal, may even pass for an original. But naturalness and readability are also affected by other linguistic features and these will be discussed at various points in the following chapters.

EXERCISES

1. Choose one English word and find its first dictionary equivalent in your target language. Make a list of some common collocations of the English word. Make an independent list of the most typical collocations of your target-language equivalent. Compare the two lists and comment on the differences and similarities in the collocational patterning of the two items.
2. Make a list of some common collocations of an English word of your choice.
 - a. Suggest some common collocations in your target language which convey similar meanings to those of the English collocations. Comment on any difference in meaning.
 - b. If there are no common collocations in your target language which express meanings similar to those conveyed by the English collocations, suggest

circumlocutions which can be used either as paraphrases or footnotes to convey the meanings of the English collocations in question (if necessary) to a target reader.

3. Make a list of some English idioms with which you are familiar and which have close counterparts in your target language. Comment on any differences in meaning, form, or context of use between each English idiom and its 'equivalent' in your target language.
4. Make a list of some common English expressions or idioms which you feel would be difficult to translate into your target language, for example because they relate to specific English habits or social occasions. Try, to the best of your ability, to paraphrase each expression twice: the first time as briefly as possible so that it can be inserted in a text, and the second time more elaborately so that it can be included as a footnote to a text.
5. Imagine that you have been asked by a client to translate the following text into your target language. The text comes from a newspaper report on current trends in the British retail market. Your target reader is: working at management level, involved in the retail business, exports fashion to high street shops in the United Kingdom, and is therefore familiar with the names of department stores, etc.

The high street is having a facelift. In an unprecedented flurry of activity, new retailing concepts are being launched, while some of the 'oldies' are being revitalised. Marks and Spencer is testing new layouts, shops within shops, satellite stores. The experimental Woolworth stores are light years away from the traditional Woolies. Burton has begun a blitz to install some of its high street names in branches of the department store chain Debenhams, which it has just acquired – with the controversial 'galleria' concept to follow.

(from The Translators' Guild Intermediate Examination, 1986)

When you have translated the text, comment on the strategies you used to deal with various collocations such as the combination of *high street* and *facelift* or *concepts* and *launched*.

6. Try your hand at this challenging extract from an Austin Rover brochure (*Today's Cars*, 1989). Imagine that you have been asked to translate the passage below into your target language, for distribution in your local market. Do not be distracted by

unfamiliar car terminology; this is not the object of the exercise. If necessary, leave a gap if you cannot find an equivalent for a specialized term.

You will note that the passage includes several idioms and is highly informal in style. Whatever strategies you decide to use in translating it, remember that idioms are not just used for the meanings they convey but also for the effect they produce on the reader, for their stylistic value.

METRO SPORT

The new Metro Sport. Terrific looks. Loads of go. For a lot less than you think.

The Sport looks just what it is – a hot little hatchback that knows how to handle itself. With an aerodynamic tail spoiler; all-white sports wheel trims; and special graphics and paint treatment.

Under the bonnet is a 73 PS1.3 engine with a real sting in its tail. (Relax – it's also remarkably economical.)

You won't have to put up with a spartan cockpit in return for sparkling performance. Just try those stylishly trimmed sports seats for size.

Now tune into the electronic stereo radio/stereo cassette player. Four speakers, great sound. *And* a built-in security code theft deterrent.

There's a wealth of driving equipment too – including a tachometer of course.

Right up your street? Choose your Sport in one of five selected colours. And paint the town red.

When you have translated the text, comment on any difficulties involved, the strategies you used, and any change in the level of informality in your target version.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

On collocation

Barnwell, K. (1974) *Introduction to Semantics and Translation* (High Wycombe: Summer Institute of Linguistics), Chapter 6, section 6.8: 'Collocation'.

Beekman, J. & Callow, J. (1974) *Translating the Word of God* (Michigan: Zondervan), Chapter 11: 'Collocational clashes'.

Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. (1988) *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (London: Longman), Chapter 2, section 7: 'Linguistic goings-on'.

Mackin, R. (1978) 'On collocations: Words shall be known by the company they keep', in P. Strevens (ed.) *In Honour of A. S. Hornby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

On idioms and fixed expressions

Carter, R. (1987) *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives* (London: Allen & Unwin), Chapter 3, section 3.6: 'Idioms galore', and section 3.7: 'Fixing fixed expressions'.
Fernando, C. and Flavell, R. (1981) *On Idiom: Critical Views and Perspectives* (Exeter Linguistic Studies 5, University of Exeter), Chapter 4: 'Contrastive idiomatology'.

NOTES

- 1 Rules are generally described in terms of grammatical statements; see Chapter 4.
- 2 Markedness is an important concept in language study. For a good treatment of different types of markedness, see Lyons (1977: 305–11). For a discussion of the relationship between markedness, choice, and meaning, see section 5.1.1.3. of this book.
- 3 I am grateful for this information to Paula Chicken of the French Department, University of Birmingham.
- 4 In all the examples from *Language and Society*, I am not actually sure whether the source language is English or French, but I am assuming it is English for convenience.
- 5 Superseded by the Code of Professional Conduct of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting. The new wording is: '... a Member shall translate only into a language in which he has mother-tongue or equivalent competence, or interpret only between languages in one of which he has mother-tongue or equivalent competence' (article 4.1).
- 6 I am grateful to Ming Xie, University of Cambridge, for this information.
- 7 最好的消息是发展一个由五个自然保护区共两千平方公里面积的决定。在这一体系中该区独特生态系统中有代表性的动植物将得到保护。其中之一是动物将保护长臂猿、野牛、老虎和大象，以及珍稀的双叶果树 (dipterocarp) 森林。