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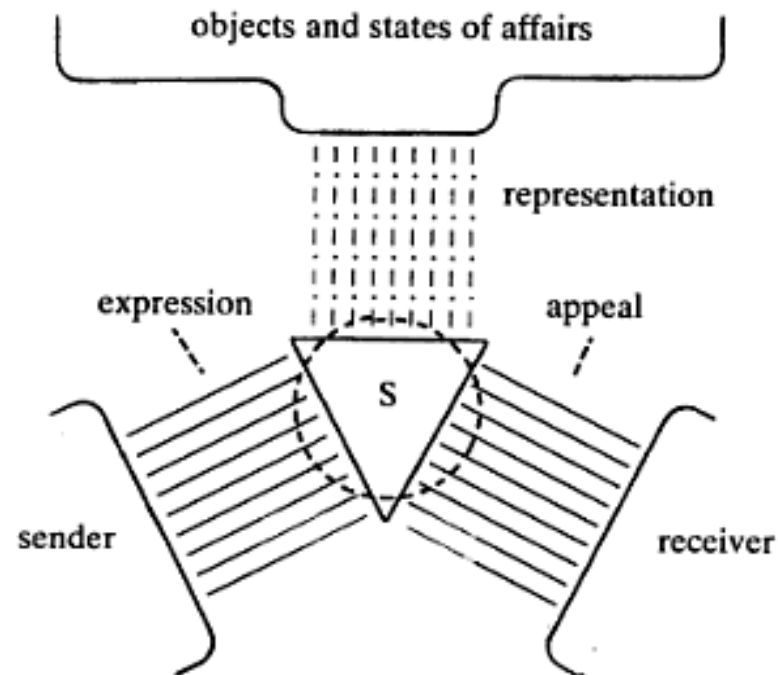
Translating the referential function

About the appropriate balance between presupposed
and new information

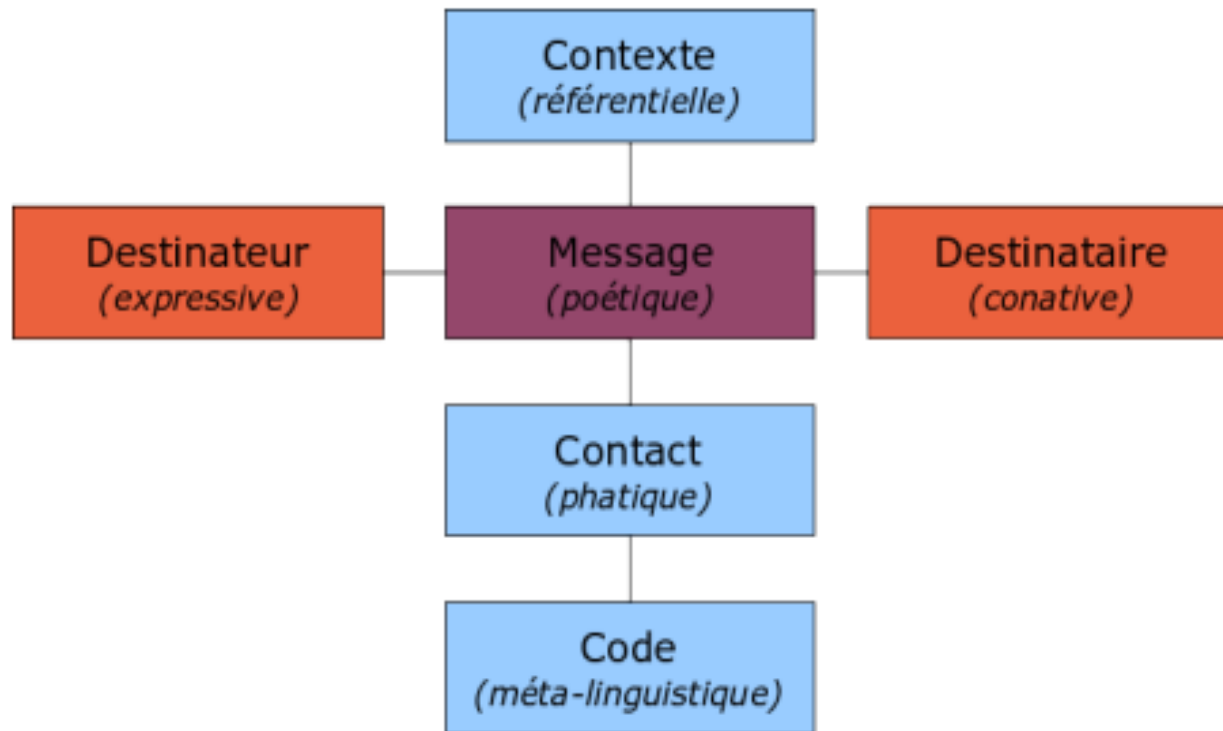
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Karl Bühler (1934): Organon Model

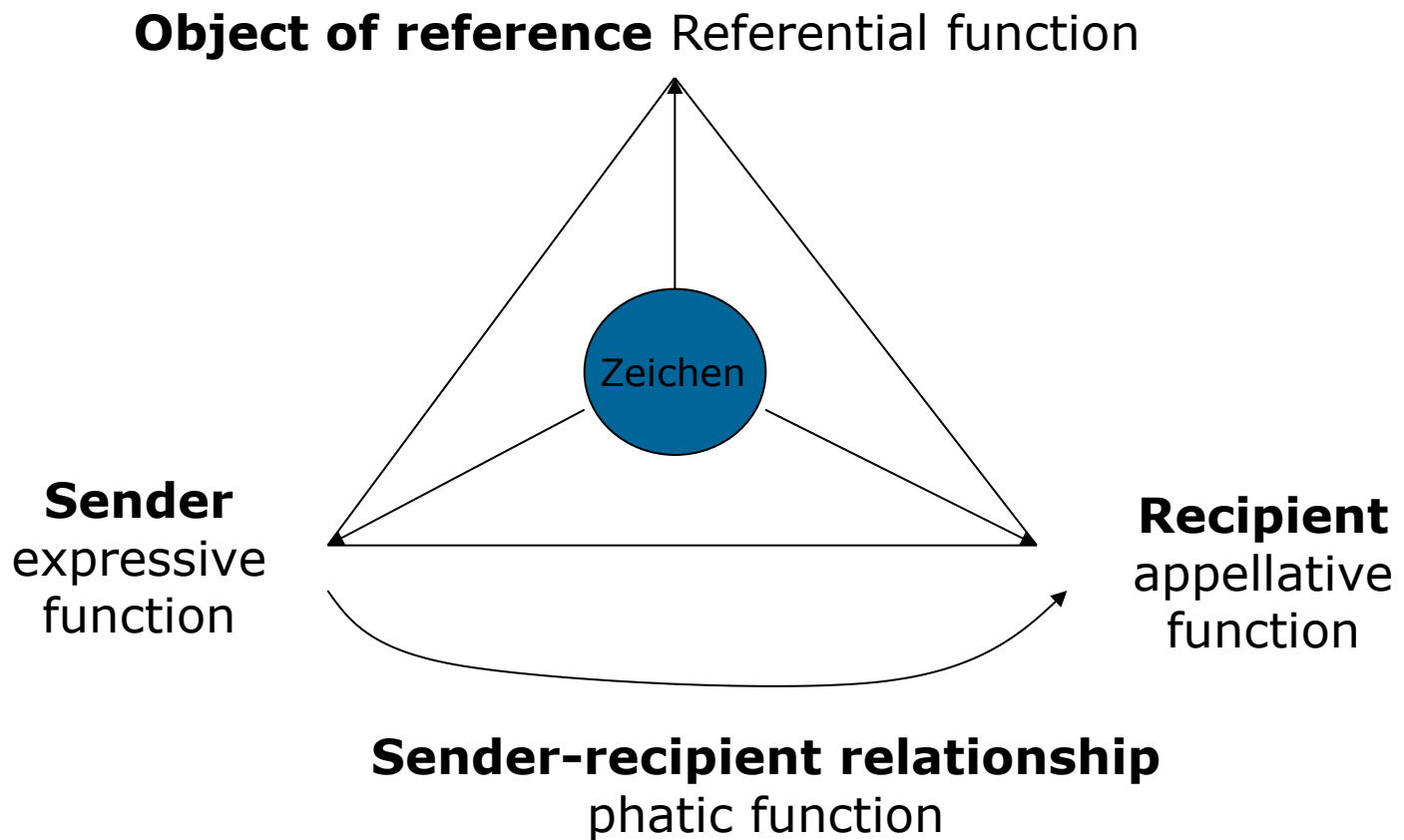
2. ORGANON MODEL OF LANGUAGE (A)



Roman Jakobson (1969): Language functions



The Four-Function Model (Nord 1997)



The referential function: definition and description

- Bühler: sign = symbol of referent
- The referential function of a sign is understood as the way a sign refers to, or represents, the referent.
- A word, an utterance, a text, an icon, a gesture or a broken twig by the wayside is a sign if the community which uses it has agreed on a meaning.
- For persons from outside the community who do not know the meaning attributed to the sign, the sign does not have a referential function.
- They may even interpret the sign as something similar to what they have in their culture, but in doing so, they risk all sorts of misunderstandings.

Example 1: Gestures as signs



- Italy: emphasis when accompanying aggressive utterances or negative judgements
- Middle East: politely asking for a bit of patience
- Turkey: “well, okay”
- some parts of Africa: “just a little bit”.

Text-reception and text-production strategies

- A text is an offer of information. (*Skopos* theory)
- A *translatum* is a target-language offer of information for target-culture recipients about a source-language offer of information produced for source-culture recipients.
- Information is processed by linking the information offered in a text or discourse with the knowledge the recipients have stored in their memories.
- Text producers try to adapt their text-production strategy to what they presuppose to be known by their addressees in order to produce a text which (a) **can** be processed by these addressees (because it provides sufficient textual information) and (b) **is interesting enough** in that it does not provide too much information the audience is already familiar with.

Example 2: Proper name

- "Aus Tradition in die Zukunft". So lautet das Leitmotiv des Jubiläumsjahres 1986, in dem **die Ruperto Carola** 600 Jahre alt wird. (*First paragraph of a text published on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of Heidelberg University in 1986*)
- "Tradition et modernisme": C'est sous ce double signe qu'est placée l'année 1986, année du six-centième anniversaire de la fondation de **l'université Ruperto Carola**.
- "Desde la tradición hacia el futuro" es el lema bajo el que se conmemora en 1986 el VI Centenario. Se trata de resaltar la tradición secular de **la Universidad Ruperto Carola**.
- "From tradition into the future" is the motto for 1986, the 600th anniversary of **Heidelberg University**.

The referential function across cultures

Function	works in target culture if...	if not, the translator has two options:	
REFE- RENTIAL FUNCTION	– textual information is sufficient – ST object is familiar to TT receiver - or – ST sender and TT receiver share sufficient amount of knowledge	✓ change referential into meta-referential function ▪ providing additional information in paratext (footnote, foreword, glossary etc.)	✓ make the referential function work for the target audience ▪ by explicitation in the text / or implication if information is redundant

Some classical dichotomies in translation

Author	Type A	Type B
Cicero (106-43 B.C.): <i>De optimo genere oratorum</i>	"[traducere] ut interpretes" (like a translator)	"[traducere] ut orator" (like a rhetorician)
St. Jerome (348-420): <i>Letter to Pammaquius</i>	verbum e verbo [exprimere]	sensum de sensu [exprimere]
Martin Luther: <i>Circular about translation</i> , 1530	"translate"	"germanize" („eindeutschen“)
Friedrich Schleiermacher : <i>About the different methods of translating</i> (1813)	"take the reader to the text" (translation proper)	"take the text to the reader" (= interpretation of pragmatic texts)
Eugene A. Nida (1964)	"formal equivalence"	"dynamic/functional equivalence"
Juliane House (¹ 1977, ² 1981; rev. 1997)	"overt translation"	"covert translation"

Functional translation typology (Nord)

INTERCULTURAL TEXT TRANSFER							
Function of translation process	The TT is a target-language documentation of a communicative interaction realized in the source culture				The TT is an instrument for communication in the target culture produced by processing the information offer of the source text		
Function of translatum	metatextual				phatic / referential / expressive / appellative		
translation type	DOCUMENTARY TRANSLATION				INSTRUMENTAL TRANSLATION		
Translation form	inter-lineal	literal	philological	exoticizing	equi-function.	hetero-function.	homologous

Presupposition: (Meta)Linguistic knowledge

- **Example 3a**
- R/V 1984-de: Als Oberbegriff für “Übersetzen” und “Dolmetschen” wird der Terminus *Translation* von der Leipziger Schule übernommen (vgl. Kade 1968, 33).
- **Example 3b**
- R/V 2013-En: As a generic term to cover both translating and interpreting, we shall adopt the German term *Translation*, pronounced [transla:tsio:n], from the Leipzig School (cf. Kade 1968: 33), which will be rendered as ‘translational action’ (TA) in this book. (p. 7)

Presupposition: Knowledge of languages (Example 4)

- (a)...was Georges Mounin feststellt: „Um eine Sprache gut zu übersetzen“ – und die Übersetzungen sachgerecht einschätzen zu können, so fügen wir hinzu – , „reicht es nicht aus, diese Sprache zu lernen...“ (a.a.O. [= *Die Übersetzung*, München 1967, C.N.], S. 108) (Reiß 1971-de: 80)
- (b) ...George [sic] Mounin's (1967 [= *Die Übersetzung*, Munich, C.N.], p. 108) statement is absolutely true for translators as well as for translation critics, that “in order to translate a language well” – and we would add, in order to evaluate a translation objectively – “it is not enough to learn the language...” (Reiß [1971]2000-en: 76)
- (c) ...la remarque faite par Georges Mounin garde toute sa validité aussi bien pour le traducteur que pour le critique des traductions :
Insomma, per ben tradurre – et nous prenons la liberté de l'ajouter, pour être capable d'énoncer une critique pertinente des traductions¹⁹⁹ – non basta studiare la lingua...²⁰⁰
- ¹⁹⁹ [NdT] L'incidente est de Katharina Reiß.
- ²⁰⁰ Cf. *Die Übersetzung*, p. 108 ; [NdT] le passage cité ici est extrait de *Teoria e storia della traduzione*, p. 122. (Reiß [1971]2002-fr: 102)

Ex. 5: Garantie/Guarantee/Bon de garantie/Garantieschein

- *Anthon Berg* har altid bestræbt sig for at levere varer af fineste kvalitet.
- Anthon Berg, **Copenhagen, chocolaterie** fondée en 1884, fabriquant des produits de qualité supérieure, a conservé sa réputation en librant des marchandise toujours soigneusement sélectionnées, contrôlées et emballées, de manière à préserver le bon goût et la fraîcheur.
- Anthon Berg **of Copenhagen, Denmark**, famous **chocolate makers** since 1884, has built its reputation on the exclusive use of the finest raw materials available, combined with the strictest quality control and most careful packaging.
- Anthon Berg, **Kopenhagen**, seit 1884 berühmte **Schokoladenfabrik**, hat ihren Ruf auf Verwendung feinsten Rohstoffe, strengster Qualitätskontrolle und sorgfältiger Verpackung aufgebaut.

Presupposition: Culture-specific behaviour (Ex. 6)

- 17 καὶ καταβὰς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔστη ἐπὶ τόπου πεδινοῦ [...] Καὶ αὐτὸς **ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς** αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἔλεγε· (Luke 6,17; 20)
- And he came down with them [from the mountain] and stood in the plain [...] And **he lifted up his eyes** on his disciples and said... (KJV)
- Et lui, **ayant levé les yeux sur** ses disciples, dit:... (NTF 1922)
- Y **alzando él los ojos a** sus discípulos, decía... (Reina 1569, rev. 1996)
- **Levantando os olhos para** os discípulos, Jesus dizia... (BSB 1982)
- Jesus **setzte sich, sah** zu seinen Jüngerinnen und Jüngern **auf** und sagte... (DNT 1999) [*Jesus sat down, looked up at his disciples and said...*]

Referential function and translation type (1): Example 7a

Philological translation

- Hsi-feng rose to signify obedience. Taking the list she read through it and marked *The Resurrection*¹ and *The Rhapsody*². Handing it back she observed, "When they've finished this *Double Promotion*³ there'll be just time enough for these two."

¹ A scene from *The Peony Pavilion*, by the Ming playwright Tang Hsien-tsu.

² A scene from *The Palace of Eternal Youth*, by the Ching playwright Hung Sheng.

³ A popular opera chosen for its suspicious title.

(Tsao Hsueh-Chin and Kao Hgo: *A Dream of Red Mansions*, vol. 1, chapter 11; trans. Yang Hsien-Yi + Gladys Yang)

Referential function and translation type (2): Example 7b

Exoticising translation

- Xi-feng politely rose to thank her, and taking the **playbill** from You-she, scanned it through and picked out two of the **items listed**: one a **scene** from *The Return of the Soul* and the other 'Gui-nian Plays His Guitar' from *The Palace of Eternal Youth*. 'If they do these two after they have finished **singing** this **scene** from *Faithful Bi-lian*,' she said, handing the playbill back to You-shi, 'I think that will be just about enough for the day.'
- Cao Xueqin: *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 1, chapt. 11. Trans. David Hawkes. (Penguin Classics)

Pragmatic presuppositions: Example 8

- Übersetzt man „las Cortes“ mit „das spanische *Ständeparlament*“, so ist zwar nicht die genaue Information über diese besondere Spielart eines Parlaments vermittelt, wohl aber der Hinweis enthalten, daß es sich um kein Parlament nach dem Modell der westlichen Demokratien handelt. (Reiß 1971-de: 80)
- If *las Cortes* is translated as “the Spanish Estates Parliament” nothing is said about this particular variety of parliament, but it is probably [sic] hinted that this is not a parliament on the Western democratic model. (Reiß [1971]2000-en: 77)
- De la même façon, si l’on traduit « las Cortes » par « le Parlement des États espagnols », on ne transmet pas le fait que ce Parlement a un mode de fonctionnement particulier, mais on laisse tout de même entendre que ce Parlement ne correspond pas au modèle des démocraties occidentales¹⁹⁷.
- ¹⁹⁷ [NdT] **Franco était encore au pouvoir en 1971, année où parut l’édition originale du présent ouvrage.** (Reiß [1971]2002-fr: 101-2)

Example 9: Phatic function turned into referential function

“Liebe geht durch den Magen.”
Dieser Spruch findet in
München seine besondere
Bestätigung...

“The way to people’s hearts is
through their stomachs,” it is
said, and this proverb is
perhaps particularly true in
Munich...

- “L’amour passe par l’estomac,” **affirme un proverbe allemand**, qui se trouve à Munich amplement confirmé...
- El amor pasa por el estómago es un adagio que vale especialmente para Múnich...

Conclusions

- The referential function relies on shared knowledge between sender and recipients. We assume that source-text producers usually adjust the explicitness of their text to the knowledge they presuppose in the audience they are addressing.
- The target text is directed at a different audience. To make the referential function work, the translator will aim to produce an appropriate balance between presupposed and verbalized information in the *translatum* as well.
- This means that they explicitate implicit information which the target audience cannot be assumed to be familiar with, and implicitate information which they consider to be redundant for them.

Conclusions (cont.)

- We can distinguish three types of knowledge presuppositions which are relevant for translation:
 - ❖ Linguistic presuppositions referring to
 - metalinguistic knowledge (of the source, the target and third languages) and
 - knowledge of languages (the source, the target and third languages)
 - ❖ Encyclopaedic knowledge referring to
 - culture-specific factual knowledge (of the source, the target and third cultures) and
 - knowledge of culture-specific forms of behaviour (of the source, the target and third cultures:
 - ❖ Pragmatic knowledge about the communicative situation of the source text (if this is different from that of the target text).

Conclusions (cont.)

- References to the source culture are usually explicitated, references to the target culture can sometimes be implicitated, references to a third culture can be reproduced maintaining the degree of explicitness of the source text.
- The strategies used for explicitation or implicitation depend on the translation type and form chosen in line with the translation *skopos*.
 - ❖ In documentary translation, paratexts (notes, glossaries etc.) are used for explicitation. Implicitation is (probably) avoided.
 - ❖ In instrumental translation, the distribution of presupposed and new information is usually readjusted in the main body of the text, making text processing as smooth as possible.



Thank you!
Merci!

