J. C. CATFORD

A Linguistic Theory of Translation

Oxford University Press

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This is an important work which brings a new degree of precision into the analysis of what is involved in translation from one language to another. Starting from the assumption that any process concerned with human language can be illuminated by applying to it the latest insights into the nature of language, the author outlines a current British frame-work of descriptive linguistics and applies it to the analysis of translation. Translation is shown to be a much more complex matter than is commonly realized, while at the same time the author indicates important new ways of approaching it. The book is a valuable addition to the literature of a subject which has only recently begun to receive the scientific treatment it deserves.

A Linguistic Theory of Translation

An Essay in Applied Linguistics

J. C. CATFORD

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Preface

TRANSLATION is an activity of enormous importance in the modern world and it is a subject of interest not only to linguists, professional and amateur translators and language-teachers, but also to electronic engineers and mathematicians. Books and articles on translation have been written by specialists in all these fields. Writers on the subject have approached it from different points of view—regarding translation as a literary art, or as a problem in computer-programming, discussing the problem of 'faithfulness' of rendering, of whether words or 'ideas' are to be translated, or of the routines to be set up, say, for stem and affix recognition in machine translation.

The present volume is not primarily concerned with any of these special problems, but rather with the analysis of what translation *is*. It proposes general categories to which we can assign our observations of particular instances of translation, and it shows how these categories relate to one another. In short, it sets up, though somewhat tentatively and incompletely, a theory of translation which may be drawn upon in any discussion of particular translation-problems.

Since translation has to do with language, the analysis and description of translation-processes must make considerable use of categories set up for the description of languages. It must, in other words, draw upon a theory of language—a general linguistic theory.

This book is based on lectures given in the School of Applied Linguistics at Edinburgh University. It was thus originally intended for an audience of students already fairly well-informed about general linguistics. To make it more acceptable to the general reader, an opening chapter has been added which discusses briefly the nature of language and the categories of general linguistics as well as giving an outline of the analysis and description of English which underlies the discussion of a number of examples. Parts of the book are somewhat technical. This is

inevitable in a book on a specialized topic, but it should not dismay the general reader since the main arguments demand little or no previous knowledge of linguistic science and the first chapter may be used for reference when required.

Language-teachers, in particular, may find the book of interest. The extent to which translation can be used in language-teaching is an issue of great concern to teachers, and it is one which cannot be fruitfully discussed without the support of some theory about what translation is, about the nature of translation equivalence, the difference between translation equivalence and formal correspondence, the levels of language at which translations may be performed and so on. The chief defect of the now almost universally condemned 'Grammar-Translation Method' was that it used bad grammar and bad translation—translation is not a dangerous technique in itself provided its nature is understood, and its use is carefully controlled: and translation is in itself a valuable skill to be imparted to students.

A number of students and colleagues contributed useful suggestions when the essay was first circulated in duplicated draft form, to all of whom I am grateful. In particular, however, I should like to thank Dr M. A. K. Halliday, with whom I discussed many parts of the work while it was in preparation, and Miss Leila Dixon, who carried out the difficult task of typing the manuscript in several stages.

J. C. Catford

Edinburgh, 1964

Contents

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General Linguistic Theory

1.0   Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language—a general linguistic theory.

General Linguistics is, primarily, a theory about how languages work. It provides categories, drawn from generalizations based on observation of languages and language-events. These categories can, in turn, be used in the description of any particular language. The general linguistic theory made use of in this book is essentially that developed at the University of Edinburgh, in particular by M. A. K. Halliday[1] and influenced to a large extent by the work of the late J. R. Firth. The present writer, however, takes full responsibility for the brief and, indeed, oversimplified sketch of linguistic theory given here, which differs from that of Halliday chiefly in its treatment of *levels* (1.2).

1.1   Our starting-point is a consideration of how language is related to the human social situations in which it operates. This leads on to classification of *levels* of language (or of linguistic analysis) and then to a discussion of the fundamental *categories* of linguistics which can be used in the description of at least the grammar and phonology of particular languages.

Language is a type of patterned human behaviour. It is a way, perhaps the most important way, in which human beings interact in social situations. Language-behaviour is externalized or manifested in some kind of bodily activity on the part of a *performer*, and presupposes the existence of at least one other human participant in the situation, an *addressee*.[2]

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[1] For a fuller account than it is possible to give here, the reader is referred to M. A. K. Halliday, 'Categories of the Theory of Grammar', *Word*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1961, pp. 241–92; also to Halliday, M. A. K., McIntosh, A., and Strevens, P. D. 'The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching'. Longmans, 1964.

[2] *Performer* and *addressee* are 'participant rôles'. In the limiting case of a man talking to himself—i.e. interacting linguistically with himself—both rôles are

The specific type of behaviour in which language is manifested not only identifies the behaviour *as* language-behaviour but also defines the *medium* which the performer is using. The performer's activity most commonly takes the form of either vocal movements which generate sound-waves, or hand movements which leave a visible trace. The first type of activity is a manifestation of language in the *spoken* medium—the performer is a speaker, and his addressee(s) is/are a hearer or hearers. The second type is a manifestation of language in the *written* medium—the performer is a writer, and his addressee(s) is/are a reader or readers. In the next paragraph we shall, for simplicity, confine ourselves to language in its spoken manifestation.

Language, as we said above, is *patterned* behaviour. It is, indeed, the pattern which *is* the language. On any given occasion, the particular vocal movements and the resultant sound-waves can be described with a *delicacy*, or depth of detail, limited only by the delicacy of the apparatus used for observation and analysis. And the precise quality of these vocal movements and sound-waves will be found to differ on different occasions, even when the speaker is 'saying the same thing'. From the linguistic point of view, the important thing is that, on each occasion of 'saying the same thing' the vocal activities of the speaker conform to the same pattern.

The overt language-behaviour described above is causally related to various other features of the situation in which it occurs. There are specific objects, events, relations and so on, in the situation, which lead the performer to produce these particular vocal movements, and no others. The precise nature of the situational features which are relatable to the performer's linguistic behaviour will be found to differ on different occasions, even when he is 'saying the same thing'.

From the linguistic point of view, however, the important thing again is that, in each case, the situational features which lead to 'the same' utterance conform to the same general pattern.

Language then is an activity which may be said to impinge on the world at large at two ends. On the one hand, it is *manifested*

filled simultaneously by the same biological individual: but this is of the most marginal relevance to linguistic theory (cf. 13.2).

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in specific kinds of overt behaviour (e.g. vocal movements): on the other hand, it is *related* to specific objects, events, etc. in the situation. Both of these—vocal movements, and actual events, etc.—are outside of language itself. They are extralinguistic events. They are the *phonic substance* in which vocal activity is manifested, and the *situation* (or *situation substance*) to which this activity is related. The language itself is, however, the organization or patterning which language-behaviour implicitly imposes on these two kinds of substance—language is *form*, not substance.

1.2   In order to account for language-events we make abstractions from these events: abstractions of various types, or at a series of *levels*.

1.21   We distinguish, first, the levels of *medium-substance* (*phonic* substance, for the spoken medium, and *graphic* substance for the written medium), and *situation* (or *situation-substance*), both of which are, in fact, extralinguistic. The internal levels of *language* are those of medium-form—*phonology* and *graphology*, arrived at by a process of abstraction from phonic and graphic substance, and the differently abstracted levels, which Halliday calls the 'formal levels'—*grammar* and *lexis*.[3]

The relationship between (the units of) grammar/lexis and situation (substance) is that of contextual meaning, or *context*.

Language

(Medium)

| phonic substance | — — — | phonology | | | grammar | | |
| graphic substance | — — — | graphology | | | lexis | | Situation (substance) |

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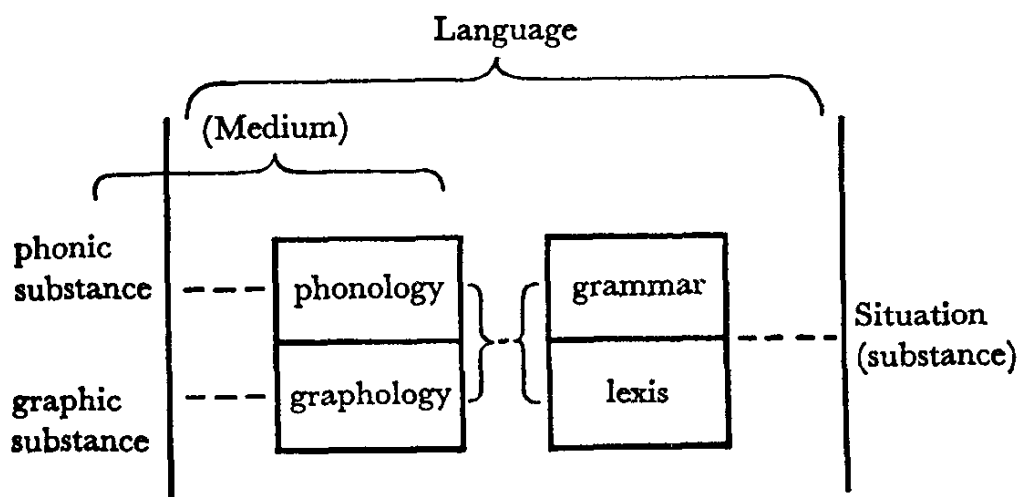
[3] The term 'formal levels' for grammar and lexis has the inconvenience that it suggests that no relatively independent *form* can be stated for the phonological and graphological levels.

The relationship between (the units of) phonology and phonic substance has no generally recognized name, though 'phonetic meaning' might be suggested. The relationship between graphology and graphic substance might likewise be called 'graphetic meaning'. *Context* is the *interlevel* relating grammar/lexis and situation, indicated by the dashed line on the right of the above diagram.

1.22   The levels at which we make abstractions from language-events are thus the following:

1.221   *Grammatical/lexical form*

(i) *Grammar:* the level of linguistic form at which operate *closed systems*: the characteristics of a closed system being: (1) the number of terms is finite; (2) each term is exclusive of the others; (3) any change in the number of terms would change the 'values' (or 'formal meanings') of the other terms (e.g. systems of pronouns, of deictics, of number, of case, of tense . . . etc.).

(ii) *Lexis:* the level of linguistic form at which operate *open sets* (e.g. the open sets of items often occurring as examples or 'exponents' of nouns, verbs, etc.).

1.222   *Medium form*

(i) *Phonology:* the formal units into which phonic substance is organized, and which operate, usually in combination, as the exponents of grammatical/lexical forms.

(ii) *Graphology:* the formal units into which graphic substance is organized, and which operate, usually in combination, as the exponents of grammatical/lexical forms.

1.223   *Medium Substance*

(i) *Phonic substance:* actual vocal sounds—the substance in which phonology is manifested.

(ii) *Graphic substance:* actual visible marks—the substance in which graphology is manifested.

Both types of medium substance have a certain patterning or organization imposed upon them by medium-form.

1.224   *Situation* (or *situation substance*). All those features of situations, excluding medium substance, which are related or

relatable to language-behaviour. Situation substance has a certain organization imposed upon it by grammatical/lexical form.

1.23 In addition, we must consider the *interlevel* of *context* (or *contextual meaning*): the interlevel of statements about the distinctive features of situation-substance which are relatable to particular grammatical/lexical forms. As we have said above, there is another *interlevel*: the interlevel of statements about the distinctive features of medium substance which are relatable to medium forms.

It will be clear that *context* or *contextual meaning* is what is most usually understood by 'meaning': in our theory, this is only one part of *meaning*, which also includes *formal meaning* which is the way any item operates in the network of formal relations. Both types of meaning are discussed in Chapter 5.
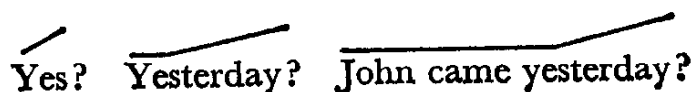
1.3 The fundamental categories of linguistic theory—applicable at least to the levels of grammar, phonology and probably graphology—are *unit*, *structure*, *class* and *system*.

1.31 By a *unit* we mean a stretch of language activity which is the carrier of a pattern of a particular kind. In English phonology, for example, there is a unit, the *tone-group*, which is the carrier of recurrent meaningful patterns of pitch. The following are examples of English tone-groups (the pitch-pattern being roughly indicated by lines drawn over the texts).

Yes. Yesterday. John came yesterday.

The fact that each of these tone-groups is a carrier of a *meaningful* pattern is shown by the possibility of occurrence of units of a similar type which differ only in that the pitch-pattern which they carry is meaningfully different, thus:

Yes? Yesterday? John came yesterday?

In English grammar we have units such as *sentence, clause* and *group*: each of these is the carrier of a particular kind of meaning-

ful grammatical pattern. The following are examples of *sentences*, each carrying the same pattern of arrangement of clauses.

/// If you do that, // you will regret it. ///

/// When John arrived, // we had already started. ///

/// Having arrived too late, // we missed the start of the concert. ///

And these are examples of clauses, each carrying the same pattern of arrangement of groups:

// John / loves / Mary. //

// The young man / was writing / a letter. //

// All these people who were here last night / were / friends of mine. //

1.311   The units of grammar or of phonology operate in *hierarchies*—'larger' or more inclusive units being made up of 'smaller' or less inclusive units. They form a *scale* of units at different *ranks*. Thus, the sentences quoted above each consist of *two clauses*. The sentence is a unit of *higher rank* than the clause. And each clause consists of several *groups*—the clause being a unit of higher rank than the group.

1.32   The unit is the category set up to account for those stretches of language-activity which carry recurrent meaningful patterns. The patterns themselves still have to be accounted for —and these are what we call *structures*. A *structure* is an arrangement of *elements*. Thus, the elements of structure of the English unit 'clause' are P (predicator), S (subject), C (complement), A (adjunct).

The texts: /// John / loves / Mary. ///

/// The young man / was writing / a letter. ///

are two examples of English sentences, each of which consists of a single clause. Each clause has the *structure* SPC. The following clauses:

He / ran / quickly.

The young man / was writing / with a ball-point.

are examples of the structure SPA, and so on.

Among the units of English phonology we find the *syllable*: the elements of syllable structure are N (nucleus or vocalic element), K^r (releasing (initial) consonantal element), K^a (arresting con-

sonantal element), K^i ('interlude' or inter-nuclear consonantal element—occurring only between two Ns). Thus the syllables represented in orthography by *tea, car, now* exemplify the structure KN, those represented by *cat, stop, lumps*, etc. . . . KNK, and so on.

1.33   By a *class* we mean a grouping of members of a unit in terms of the way in which they operate in the structure of the unit next above in the rank scale. Structure, as we have said, is stated in terms of ordered arrangements (in which linear *sequence* often is, but need not always be, a characteristic) of elements: thus, in English, the elements of structure of the unit *clause* are S, P, C, A. The units which operate as exponents of these elements are themselves *groups*. Groups, then, may be classified in terms of the particular elements of clause structure which they expound. Thus we have, in English, the class of *Verbal Groups*, which operate at—or as exponents of—P in clause-structure; the class of *Nominal Groups* which operate as exponents of S or C in clause-structure, etc.

In English phonology, for instance, we have classes of the unit *phoneme*, defined in terms of their operation in the structure of the unit next above, the *syllable*. Thus the members of the unit 'phoneme', which operate as exponents of the element K^r (consonantal releasing element) in syllable structure constitute the class 'initial consonant' or C^i.

1.34   By a *system* we mean a finite set of alternants, among which a choice must be made. Very often, these alternants, the *terms* in a system, are the members of a class: thus the members of the class 'initial consonant' mentioned above constitute a *system* of phonemes *p b t d k g* . . . etc. which can alternate as exponents of that particular class.

An example of a system in grammar might be the *number-system* (Sing/Plur) (Sing/Dual/Plural), etc., of many languages. Where *number* is a system of the Nominal group (as in English) the terms in the system are themselves sub-groups or sub-classes of the *class*.

1.4   We have referred already to *rank* (in 1.311) and have used the terms *exponent* and *delicacy*. These three terms refer to three *scales* which are part of the general theory of language, and of language-description.

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1.41   The *rank scale* is the scale on which units are arranged in a grammatical or phonological hierarchy. In English grammar we set up a hierarchy of 5 units—the largest, or 'highest', on the rank-scale is the *sentence*. The smallest, or 'lowest', on the rank scale is the *morpheme*. Between these, in 'descending' order, are the *clause*, the *group* and the *word*. By placing these in this order on the scale of rank we mean that every sentence consists of one or more than one clause, every clause of one or more than one group, every group of one or more than one word, and every word of one or more than one morpheme.

Thus 'Yes!' is a sentence consisting of one clause, consisting of one group, consisting of one word, consisting of one morpheme. And 'As soon as the boys had arrived, their mother gave them tea'. is a sentence consisting of two clauses. The first clause consists of three groups, the second of four groups. In the first clause the group *as soon as* consists of three words, the groups *the boys* and *had arrived* of two words each. In the second clause, the first group *their mother* consists of two words, the remaining three groups of one word each . . . and so on.

1.411   The normal relation between units in a grammatical hierarchy is that stated here: namely that a unit at any rank consists of one or more unit of the rank next below, or, conversely, that a unit at any rank *operates in the structure of the unit next above*.

We must, however, make allowance for the fact that in all languages we find 'Chinese box' arrangements of units, in which a unit may sometimes operate in the structure of a unit of the *same* or of *lower* rank. To deal with this, we make use of the concept of *rank-shift*.

Thus, in English, *clauses* normally operate as exponents of elements of *sentence-structure*. But we also find clauses operating within *groups*, i.e. as exponents of elements in the structure of a unit of the rank *below* the clause.

For example, in *Since we couldn't meet earlier, we met after the concert* the clause *we met after the concert* is operating directly in the structure of the sentence, as exponent, in fact, of α (a 'free clause') in a sentence of structure βα (a 'free clause' preceded by a 'bound clause') (see 1.721 below). But in *The man we met after the concert is my brother* the clause *we met after the concert* is *rank-shifted*. It is not

operating directly in the structure of the sentence, but within a Nominal Group. It is, in fact, operating as exponent of Q (qualifier) in the structure of the nominal group *The man we met after the concert*. This nominal group, in turn, is exponent of S in the clause *The man we met after the concert* (S) | *is* (P) | *my brother* (C).

Similarly in *He met Susan at the party* the adverbial group *at the party* is operating directly in the structure of the clause—as exponent of A. But in *The girl at the party was Susan* the group *at the party* is *rank-shifted*. It is not operating directly in the clause, but within a Nominal Group, as exponent of Q.

The concept of *rank* (and rank scale) is an important one both in theoretical linguistics and in many applications of linguistics, including translation-theory.

1.42   The scale of *exponence* is a scale of 'exemplification' or of degrees of abstraction, running from 'highest degree of abstraction' to 'most specific and concrete exemplification'. Thus, in English phonology, we may say that the class C (consonant) represents the highest degree of abstraction at phoneme rank. In any given instance, say of an utterance of the word *tea*, we may say that the initial phoneme here is a (member of the class) C: its exponent in this case is the particular phoneme / t /, and this, in turn, has its ultimate exponent in a piece of actual phonic substance, represented in phonetic transcription by, say, [t^h].

Exponence is related to rank in the sense that an element of structure of a unit at one rank is *expounded* by—or has as its exponent—a unit or units of the rank next below. But exponence is a separate scale, and at any one rank we may go off sideways, as it were, to a relatively concrete exemplification: thus we might call the sequence of particular grammatical and lexical items represented by 'A linguistic theory of translation' an *exponent* of the unit 'group'. In other words, we also use the term *exponent* in talking of the relationship between the abstract units and items of grammar and lexis and their realizations in medium form. Thus, in English, *I* is the graphological exponent of the grammatical item '1st person singular subject pronoun', *bank* is the graphological exponent of two different lexical items which we might label X (meaning 'money shop') and Y (meaning 'border of river . . . etc.') and so on.

1.43   The third scale mentioned here is that of *delicacy*: this is the scale of 'depth of detail'. At a *primary degree* of delicacy, we recognize, or set up, only the minimal number of units or classes, etc., which are forced upon us by the data. Thus, if we are going to attribute *any* structure at all to English *nominal groups* we must set up *three* elements: H (head), M (modifier) and Q (qualifier). Our *least delicate* description of English Ngp structure is thus (M . . . n) H (Q . . . n), which means that one element, H, is always present, and this may be preceded and/or followed by one or more element M or Q. Thus we should say, at a primary degree of delicacy, that the groups:

<div style="text-align:center">

Old / men

These three old / men

</div>

have the structure, MH and MMMH. By taking a further step down the delicacy scale we recognize different classes of the element M — namely d (deictic), o (numerative), e (epithet), and we can say that *These three old / men* has the structure d o e H, in which d o e is a more delicate statement of structure than MMM.

1.5   *Lexis*. We stated in 1.221 that *lexis* is that part of language which is not describable in terms of closed systems. The distinction between grammar and lexis is not absolute, but rather in the nature of a *cline*, with very well marked poles, but some overlap in between.

In English, for instance, most exponents of the word-class *verb* are open-set lexical items: a few, such as *can, may* etc. are purely grammatical items: and a few others are either lexical or grammatical, e.g. BE which is a lexical item in 'He *is* a teacher' or 'He has *been* a teacher.' and a grammatical item in 'He *is* talking'.

1.51   The categories discussed in 1.2 are not applicable to lexis. We deal formally with lexis in terms of *collocation* and *lexical sets*. A collocation is the 'lexical company' that a particular lexical item keeps. Any particular lexical item tends to collocate most frequently with a range of other lexical items. We refer to the item under discussion as the *node* or *nodal item*, and the items with which it collocates as its *collocates*. Thus in English, if we take *sheep* and *mutton* as *nodes* we will find that each has a distinct range

of *collocates*: e.g. *sheep* collocates frequently with such lexical items as *field*, *flock*, *shear*, etc., *mutton* collocates with such lexical items as *roast*, *menu*, *fat* . . . etc. There are certainly overlaps in collocational range—thus we may have *a (whole) roast sheep* and we might have *fat sheep* as well as *mutton fat*, but on the whole they have different collocational ranges, and this establishes the fact that they belong to different lexical sets and are different lexical items.

A *lexical set* is a group of lexical items which have similar collocational ranges.

1.52   *Collocation* and *lexical set* are concepts which sometimes enable us to establish the existence of two distinct lexical items, even when both share exactly the same medium exponents. Thus in English we have a graphological form *bank*—but the fact that this enters into two distinct collocational ranges, and hence apparently belongs to two distinct lexical sets enables us to say that there are two distinct lexical items which happen to share the same medium exponents, graphological *bank*, phonological / baŋk /.[4]

1.6   We mentioned in 1.0 that our approach to the *levels* of language and linguistic analysis was somewhat different from that of Halliday, and indicated in 1.21 that this difference lay in the fact that we set up a separate level of *medium form*. In other words, instead of regarding *phonology* (and likewise *graphology*) as an *interlevel* linking phonic (or graphic) substance directly with the 'formal levels' of grammar and lexis, we regard the *medium* as being to some extent autonomous and detachable from grammar and lexis. Since this view of medium as 'detachable' is important for our theory of translation, some justification and discussion of it must be given here.

1.61   Medium form is a part of a language. Every language has its characteristic *phonology* and many languages have a characteristic *graphology*. In the process of analysing and describing a language we set up, as phonological units, just those bundles of

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[4] Following a widely accepted convention, phonological forms are normally cited within slant-lines. Occasional use is, however, made of single and double vertical lines, as in 1.61 below. These are used only when explicit reference is being made to the description of English Phonology given in 1.71.

distinctive phonic features which function contrastively in the exponence of grammatical and lexical items of that language. Thus we set up / p / and / b / as distinct phonemes because such pairs as / pig / and / big /, / pak / and / bak / are exponents of distinct lexical items: and we set up the *foot* or rhythmic unit as a phonological unit because the difference in foot-division between such pairs as

$$\| \text{ that's a } | \text{ blackbird } \|$$
$$\text{and } \| \text{ That's a } | \text{ black } | \text{ bird } \|$$

is exponent of a difference in grammatical structure:

| blackbird | = compound-noun as H in Ngp structure,
| black | bird | = adjective + noun as MH in Ngp structure.

1.62   In other words, the *discovery* procedure for phonological analysis must depend directly on grammatical/lexical differences. But once the phonology has been *established*, by discovering what phonic distinctions operate as exponents of grammatical/lexical distinctions in that particular language, it can be regarded— indeed must be regarded—as relatively autonomous or independent. It is this autonomy of phonology which makes it possible for two or more lexical or grammatical items to *share* the same phonological exponents—e.g. the three or more distinct English lexical items which share the one phonological exponent / piᵊ /— partially distinguished in graphological exponence as *peer* and *pier*. It also makes it possible for one single item to have more than one phonological exponent, such as the English 'indefinite article' which has the alternative phonological exponents / ᵊ / or / ᵊn /, and the 'nominal plural morpheme' which has a series of phonological exponents / s,z,iz /, / ᵊn /, / internal vowel-change / etc.

1.63   More striking evidence of the autonomy and detachability of *medium* is the fact that the grammar and lexis of *one* language can be expounded (though often with some losses in distinctiveness) in the *medium* of another. We are all familiar with the Englishmen who speaks French fluently and 'correctly', but who speaks it entirely through the medium of English phonology. His

grammar/lexis are purely French—but his phonology is English. We normally attribute a certain primacy to grammar/lexis, since in this case we should say 'He's speaking French with an English accent' but not 'He's speaking English, but with French grammar and lexis'.

1.64 Graphology, too, is in a sense *detachable* from the particular language of which it is characteristic. The air traveller in India, for example, notices on one side of his plane, the legend:

INDIAN AIRLINES

and on the other:

इंडियन एयरलाइन्स

This Devanagari inscription, which might be transliterated Iɖiyən eyərlains is exponent of a piece of *English* grammar and lexis. It is English expounded in Devanagari (Hindi) graphology.

1.65 It is the detachability of the medium levels from the grammatical/lexical levels which makes phonological and graphological translation possible.

1.7 We have already drawn upon English for examples in this chapter, and we will continue to do so throughout this book. It seems desirable, therefore, to give here the barest outline of the description of English phonology and grammar which we are using. This is not the place to give a full description, even in summary form, of English—but the indications given here will serve to codify what has already been referred to, and will help to elucidate most of the references to English given later.

1.71 *English Phonology*. In English phonology we have a hierarchy of units at four ranks:

(i) *Tone-group*

(ii) *Foot* (or *rhythmic group*)

(iii) *Syllable*

(iv) *Phoneme*

The relation between these is the normal one: i.e. every Tone-group consists of one or more Foot, every Foot of one or more Syllable, every Syllable of one or more Phoneme. Thus ‖ Yes ‖ (with, say, falling tone) is a tone-group, consisting of one foot,

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consisting of one syllable, consisting of three phonemes. And
|| What did you | do | yesterday || is a Tone group consisting of
three feet. The first foot || What did you | and the last foot
| yesterday || each consist of three syllables: the middle foot consists
of only one. And the syllables consist of varying numbers of
phonemes.

1.711   The *tone-group*. The elements of tone-group structure are
T (tonic) which is always present, and P (pretonic) which may
be absent. The exponent of T is a *foot*, or more than one foot,
which carries one of a system of five contrastive *tones*: the dis-
tinctive tone starts on the first syllable (of the first foot) of the
tonic. The exponent of P, if present, is one or more foot preceding
the tonic, and carrying one of a restricted range of pretonic
intonation contours. In these examples tone-group boundaries
are marked by || , foot-boundaries by | , the initial syllable of the
tonic by underlining.

(i)   *Tonic only*

|| yes || || yesterday || || John came | yesterday ||

(ii)   *Pretonic + Tonic*

|| John came | yesterday ||
    P   T

|| David was the | one who did | all the | work ||
              P   T

1.712   The location of the tonic is significant. It can be shifted
from one foot to another, and such shifts are changes of *tonicity*.
For example:

	David was the	one who did	all the	work	
	David was the	one who did	all the	work	
	David was the	one who did	all the	work	

1.713   The *tone-group*, then, is the unit which carries contrastive *intonation* patterns. The contrasts are of two kinds (i) contrasts of *tone*, i.e. selection of one or another out of a system of five tones operating at the *tonic*: e.g.

1. ‖ yes ‖   ＼ falling
2. ‖ yes ‖   ／ rising
3. ‖ yes ‖   ＿／ low-level + rise
4. ‖ yes ‖   ＼／ fall-rise
5. ‖ yes ‖   ／＼ rise-fall

and (ii) contrasts of *tonicity*, i.e. selection of one or another location for the tonic.

1.714   The *foot*. This is the unit of stress or rhythm. The foot is the carrier of contrastive differences in stress-distribution. The distinctive phonic features of the foot are (i) each foot is expounded, or manifested, by a major chest pulse starting strongly stressed, then falling off (stress-curve ╱﹏﹍): if the foot consists of more than one syllable, this means that the first syllable is more strongly stressed than its successor(s), (ii) each foot within one and the same tone-group tends to have approximately the same duration.

The alphabet, for instance, may be recited with various types of foot-division, e.g.

(i)   ‖ A | B | C | D | E ‖
(ii)   ‖ A B | C D | E F | G ‖
(iii) ‖ A B C | D | E F | G ‖   etc.[5]

1.715   The elements of foot-structure are I (initial, or *ictus*) and R (reduced, or *remiss*)[6]. The exponent of I is always a single syllable. The exponent of R, if present, is one, or more than one,

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[5] The *feet* and foot-divisions will be most apparent if the reader 'beats time' while reading these aloud, letting the down-beat coincide with the start of each foot.

[6] The terms *ictus* and *remiss* have recently been revived by D. Abercrombie— the first being a traditional term, the second used by Joshua Steele in *Prosodia Rationalis* (1779). They are used by M. A. K. Halliday in his 'The Tones of English', *Archivum Linguisticum*, Vol. XV, Fasc. 1, pp. 1-28, 1964.

syllable. Thus, in the examples above, the feet represented in
‖ A | B | C | . . . etc. each have the structure I. Those repre-
sented by ‖ A B | C D | . . . etc. have the structure IR with a
single syllable as exponent of R, while that represented by
‖ A B C | has the same structure IR, but here R is expounded
by two syllables.

In some cases, the exponent of either I or R is a 'zero syllable'
—that is, a momentary silence, or *rest*, represented by a caret ($_\wedge$).
The time taken up by the *rest* is usually about that which is
needed to make up the duration of a full foot. When an utterance
begins with an unstressed syllable, we take this to be the exponent
of R in an initial foot, the exponent of I in this case being *rest*.
This appears to be justified by the fact that when such 'incom-
plete' feet occur immediately after a preceding utterance by the
same speaker there is commonly a momentary silence, which
makes up the time-lapse appropriate to a foot. Thus

‖ $_\wedge$ I | didn't | go there ‖

1.716   Differences of foot-division are meaningful, being often
the exponents of differences in the structure of grammatical
units: e.g.

1.   ‖ John was a | light house | keeper ‖
2.   ‖ John was a light | house keeper ‖

Here the foot-division before 'light' in 1. marks *light house* as a
compound noun operating as exponent of H in the Ngp. The
foot-division between *light* and *house* in 2. is exponent of a
grammatical division, marking *light* as M in the Ngp, where
house is H.

1.717   The *syllable*. The *syllable* is the unit of syllabicity. Syl-
lables sometimes coincide with feet. When syllable-divisions occur
within a foot their phonic exponent is a momentary retardation
of the major chest-pulse movement.

The elements of syllable-structure are N (nucleus) and K
(consonantal, or marginal element): the latter may be subdivided
as K^r (consonantal syllable-releasing element), K^a (consonantal

syllable-arresting element) and K^i (consonantal inter-nuclear unit[7]). The unit K^i occurs only between two Ns, and cannot be assigned to either of them.

Syllable structures are thus: N, K^rN, NK^a, K^rNK^a, $NK^i(N)$, $(N)K^iN$. Examples: N oh! K^rN tea, spar, straw, NK^a at, and, asks. K^rNK^a top, stop, stops, etc.

The exponents of N are V (simple vowel) or V^v (complex vowel), the exponents of K^r are C (one consonant) or CC or CCC; the exponents of K^a are C, CC, CCC, CCCC.

1.718 The *phoneme*. Phonemes are the units of articulation which operate as exponents of elements of syllable structure. The primary classes are:

V, *vowels*—operating as exponent of N in syllable structure:

    i e a o u ə

v, *glides*—operating alone, or in complex vowels (V^v), as exponent of N: i ə u

C, *consonants:* p b t d k g f v θ ð s z ʃ ʒ h m n ŋ l r w y

1.72 In English *grammar* we recognize a hierarchy of five units:

    1. *Sentence*
    2. *Clause*
    3. *Group*
    4. *Word*
    5. *Morpheme*

1.721 *Sentence:* The primary elements of sentence-structure are α and β. Sentence-structures which occur are α, β, $\alpha\beta$, $\beta\alpha$ . . . etc.

    Examples: α John arrived yesterday.
                β When John arrived!
                $\alpha\beta$ John arrived after we had left.
                $\beta\alpha$ After we had left, John arrived.   etc.

The exponents of elements of sentence-structure are clauses.

1.722 *Clause*. The primary classes of clause are *free* (operating as exponent of α in sentence-structure) and *bound* (operating as exponent of β in sentence-structure).

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[7] The *interlude* of C. F. Hockett *Manual of Phonology*, p. 52.

The primary elements of clause structure: S, P, C, A, have been given above (1.33). Primary clause structures include:

SP e.g. *he/came*   *they/had arrived* etc.

$\widehat{SP}$ (S inserted in P)   e.g. *did he come ?*   *had they arrived ?*
P (A etc.)   e.g. *Come!* *Come here.*

The exponents of these elements are: P—one, or more than one, Verbal Group (if more than one, the first is finite or non-finite, the other(s) are non-finite), S and C—one, or more than one, Nominal Group, A—one or more than one Adverbial Group.
1.723   *Group.* The primary group classes are *Verbal*, operating at P in clause structure, *Nominal*, operating at S or C in clause structure, and *Adverbial*, operating at A in clause structure.

Since practically no reference is made in the rest of this book to the structure of groups other than Nominal, we confine ourselves here to Nominal Groups.

We have already given the primary elements of Nominal Group structure in 1.43 above: M, H and Q. The structures which actually occur are:

H e.g. John, he, wine, etc.

M . . . H e.g. Old John, red wine, these three old books, etc.

HQ e.g. John the Baptist, people who live in glass houses, etc.

M . . . HQ e.g. the man in the moon, the old man who lives next door, etc.

Secondary elements of Ngp structure, at M are d, o, and e (already exemplified in 1.43 above).

The normal exponents of elements of group structure are *words*. In Ngps, however, we may have *rank-shifted clauses* and *rank-shifted groups* as exponents, e.g. In *What you say is wrong, what you say* is a rank-shifted clause (of structure CSP) operating as exponent of H in the Ngp. *What you say.* In the Ngp *the man who came to dinner . . .*, which has the structure MHQ, the exponent of Q is the rank-shifted clause *who came to dinner*. In the Ngp *the man in the moon*, which has the structure MHQ, the exponent of Q is the rank-shifted Adverbial group *in the moon*.
1.724   *Words.* These fall into a large number of classes in terms

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of their operation in the structure of groups. The primary elements of word-structure are B (base) and A (affix). The exponents of these are morphemes.

1.725   *Morphemes.* These are the smallest meaningful units of grammar. They fall into two primary classes in terms of their operation in the structure of words—*base morphemes*, and *affix morphemes*. Since morphemes are at the 'bottom' of the rank scale they themselves have no structure. In phonological and graphological exponence affix morphemes may be expounded linearly (e.g. the Nominal plural morpheme expounded, most frequently, by a suffixed graphological -s, or phonological / -s, -z, -ⁱz/), or exponentially fused with base morphemes (e.g. *saw* = fused exponence of base morpheme SEE + affix morpheme 'preterite').

1.8   To conclude this introductory chapter we summarize the field of linguistics and the linguistic sciences.

General Linguistics is the general theory of how language works. It provides categories which are applicable in all branches of linguistic science.

General Phonetics is the theory of phonic substance: it provides categories which can be used in the description of the distinctive phonic features of the phonological units of particular languages.

Descriptive Linguistics is the application and extension of general linguistic categories in the description of particular languages.

Comparative Linguistics is an extension of descriptive linguistics which establishes relations between two or more languages. When the languages are separated in space, but not time, it is Synchronic Comparative Linguistics. When they are separated in time, it is Diachronic Comparative Linguistics.

Other parts of the general field of linguistics include Institutional Linguistics and the theory of *Language Varieties* (dealt with in Chapter 13).

Applied Linguistics is a term used to cover all those applications of the theory and categories of general linguistics which go beyond (i) the elucidation of how languages work and (ii) the description of a particular language or languages for its/their own sake. The theory of translation is essentially a theory of applied linguistics.

2

Translation: Definition and General Types

2.0   The theory of translation is concerned with a certain type of relation between languages and is consequently a branch of Comparative Linguistics. From the point of view of translation theory the distinction between synchronic and diachronic comparison is irrelevant. Translation equivalences may be set up, and translations performed, between any pair of languages or dialects—'related' or 'unrelated' and with any kind of spatial, temporal, social or other relationship between them.

Relations between languages can generally be regarded as two-directional, though not always symmetrical. Translation, as a process, is always uni-directional: it is always performed in a given direction. 'from' a *Source Language* 'into' a *Target Language*. Throughout this paper we make use of the abbreviations: SL = Source Language, TL = Target Language.

2.1   *Translation* may be defined as follows:

the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL).

This definition is intentionally wide—not vague, though it may appear so at first sight. Two lexical items in it call for comment. These are 'textual material' (where 'text' might have been expected) and 'equivalent'.

The use of the term 'textual material' underlines the fact that in normal conditions it is not the entirety of a SL text which is translated, that is, replaced by TL *equivalents*. At one or more levels of language there may be simple replacement, by non-equivalent TL material: for example, if we translate the English text *What time is it?* into French as *Quelle heure est-il?* there is replacement of SL (English) grammar and lexis by *equivalent* TL (French) grammar and lexis. There is also *replacement* of SL graphology by TL graphology—but the TL graphological form is by no means a translation *equivalent* of the SL graphological form.

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Moreover, at one or more levels there may be no replacement at all, but simple transference of SL material into the TL text. On this, see Chapter 6 below.

The term 'equivalent' is clearly a key term, and as such is discussed at length below. The central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence.

Before going on to discuss the nature of translation equivalence it will be useful to define some broad types or categories of translation in terms of the *extent* (2.2), *levels* (2.3), and *ranks* (2.4) of translation.

2.2   *Full vs. Partial* translation. This distinction relates to the *extent* (in a syntagmatic sense) of SL text which is submitted to the translation process. By *text* we mean any stretch of language, spoken or written, which is under discussion. According to circumstances a text may thus be a whole library of books, a single volume, a chapter, a paragraph, a sentence, a clause . . . etc. It may also be a fragment not co-extensive with any formal literary or linguistic unit.

2.21   In a *full* translation the entire text is submitted to the translation process: that is, every part of the SL text is replaced by TL text material.

2.22   In a *partial* translation, some part or parts of the SL text are left untranslated: they are simply transferred to and incorporated in the TL text. In literary translation it is not uncommon for some SL lexical items to be treated in this way, either because they are regarded as 'untranslatable' or for the deliberate purpose of introducing 'local colour' into the TL text. This process of transferring SL lexical items into a TL text is more complex than appears at first sight, and it is only approximately true to say that they remain 'untranslated': on this, see 6.31.

2.23   The distinction between full and partial translation is hardly a (linguistically) technical one. It is dealt with here, however, since it is important to use the distinct term *partial* in this semi-technical, syntagmatic, sense, reserving the term *restricted* for use in the linguistically technical sense given in 2.3.

2.3 *Total vs. Restricted* translation. This distinction relates to the *levels* of language involved in translation.

2.31 By *total* translation we mean what is most usually meant by 'translation'; that is, translation in which all levels of the SL text are replaced by TL material. Strictly speaking, 'total' translation is a misleading term, since, though total *replacement* is involved it is not replacement by *equivalents* at all levels (cf. 2.1 above).

In 'total' translation SL grammar and lexis are replaced by equivalent TL grammar and lexis. This replacement entails the replacement of SL phonology/graphology by TL phonology/graphology, but this is not normally replacement by TL *equivalents*, hence there is no translation, in our sense, at that level[1]. For use as a technical term, *Total Translation* may best be defined as:

replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis with consequential replacement of SL phonology/graphology by (non-equivalent) TL phonology/graphology.

2.32 By *restricted translation* we mean:

replacement of SL textual material by equivalent TL textual material, at only one level,

that is translation performed only at the phonological or at the graphological level, or at only one of the two levels of grammar and lexis.

It should be noted that, though phonological or graphological translation is possible, there can be no analogous 'contextual translation'—that is translation restricted to the inter-level of context but not entailing translation at the grammatical or lexical levels. In other words there is no way in which we can replace SL 'contextual units' by equivalent TL 'contextual units' without *simultaneously* replacing SL grammatical/lexical units by equivalent TL grammatical/lexical units, since it is only by virtue

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[1] Occasionally there is concomitant replacement by a TL form which is phonologically equivalent, or nearly equivalent, to the SL form at the phonological level, as when Jap. *iie* is translated by (Amer.) Eng. *yeah*, as it may be in certain cases (see 5.6). When this happens in total translation it is normally purely accidental. Rare cases of deliberate attempts at partial replacement by *equivalent* TL phonology, in total translation, do occur: e.g. in film 'dubbing' and translation of poetry.

of their encapsulation, so to say, in formal linguistic units that 'contextual units' exist. Context is, in fact, the organization of situation-substance into units which are co-extensive with and operationally inseparable from the formal units of grammar and lexis. With the medium levels the situation is different. Phonology, for instance, is the organization of phonic substance into units which, in combination, function as exponents of the units of grammar and lexis; phonological units, as such, are not bound to grammatical or lexical units in the way in which contextual units are bound to such units. Hence the separability of phonology/graphology for translation purposes; and, on the other hand, the non-separability of context.

2.321 In *phonological* translation SL phonology is replaced by equivalent TL phonology, but there are no other replacements except such grammatical or lexical changes as may result accidentally from phonological translation: e.g. an English plural, such as *cats*, may come out as apparently a singular *cat* in phonological translation into a language which has no final consonant clusters.

2.322 In *graphological* translation SL graphology is replaced by equivalent TL graphology, with no other replacements, except, again, accidental changes.

2.323 Phonological translation is practised deliberately by actors and mimics who assume foreign or regional 'accents'— though seldom in a self-conscious or fully consistent way (i.e. except in the case of particularly good mimics, the phonological translation is usually only partial). The phonetic/phonological performance of foreign-language learners is another example of (involuntary and often partial) phonological translation. Graphological translation is sometimes practised deliberately, for special typographic effects, and also occurs involuntarily in the performance of persons writing a foreign language.

Both phonological and graphological translation must be included in a general theory of translation because they help to throw light on the conditions of translation equivalence, and hence on the more complex process of total translation.

2.324 Graphological translation must not be confused with *transliteration*. The latter is a complex process involving phono-