Mediating Intercultural Communication: The Cultural Filter and the Act of Translation/ Interpreting

Annette L. Combrink

The Context—and Some Contextualising Remarks

> Cross-cultural communication is an extreme example of
> the fact that the world cannot be taken for granted
> (Katan 1999:95).
> … translation mediates cultures (Newmark 1995:2).
> … inside or between languages, human communication
> equals translation (Steiner 1975:47).

Commonplaces and strong and passionate views abound when culture, cultural mediation and communication in general are considered. This is no less true in the field of translation and interpreting, where recent theoretical reflection has centred specifically on these issues. The following situating comment is useful:

> A cultural mediator is a person who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture. The role of the mediator is performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perceptions and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is, by establishing and balancing the communication between them. In order to serve as a link in this sense, the mediator must be able to participate to some extent in both cultures. Thus a mediator must be to a certain extent bicultural (Taft 1981:53).

Taft (1981:73) further indicates that the mediator must possess competencies in both relevant cultures in the areas of knowledge about society. These areas include history, folklore, traditions, customs, values, prohibitions, the natural environment,

people, communication skills (written, spoken and non-verbal), those technical skills required by the mediator's status, such as computer literacy and appropriate dress, social skills such as knowledge of the rules that govern social relations in society and, finally, emotional competence, or the level of self-control appropriate to specific contexts (in this regard, also see the notion of the iceberg below).

This is a useful vantage point, but it still has to be qualified somewhat. Taft (1981:58) himself states that translating is one of the skills of the mediator, but that a mediator is more than a translator. Hatim and Mason (1990:128) clarify this succinctly when they maintain that 'the notion of mediation is a useful way of looking at translators' decisions regarding the transfer of intertextual reference', while Gentzler (1993:77) holds that the goal of translation is to mediate between cultures as follows: 'Its mediating role is more than synchronic transfer of meaning across cultures; it mediates diachronically as well, in multiple historical traditions' and Katan (1999:14) makes the important bottom-line statement that 'cultural mediators should ... be extremely aware of their own cultural identity; and for this reason will need to understand how their own culture influences perception'.

Mediation/mediating—a brief hiatus: To mediate means, according to *Webster's Third International Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to form a connecting link, to interpose between parties in order to reconcile them or to interpret them to each other, to negotiate a compromise of hostile or incompatible viewpoints, demands or attitudes, to act as intermediary agent, be the medium for bringing about (result) or conveying (gift, etc.).

The essential thrust of the discussion is a consideration of apposite notions associated with translation and interpreting (perhaps, more accurately, what are generally considered to be the language professions, with the exception of teaching) within a broad context of rights (human rights, language rights, the right to be understood), as well as apposite notions of culture, followed by some remarks about the teaching of translation and interpreting against the broad backdrop of cultural mediation.

Translation and Interpreting: Theories and Suggestions

Translation is considered to be one of the oldest activities that humans have been known to engage in. Steiner (1975:48) suggests that 'The affair at Babel confirmed and externalized the never-ending task of the translator—it did not initialise it', and

goes on to maintain that 'the subject [translation] is difficult and ill-defined'. It is, on the one hand, as described by Richards (1953:250), 'what may very probably be the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos', and yet, on the other hand, there has always been the sneaking suspicion that translation in its various forms is essentially a derivative, if not actually a second-hand, activity.

Before considering some relevant translation theories, it is important to attend to statements by Louis Kelly (1979) by way of a modest disclaimer. Kelly in *The True Interpreter* (a sane and solid guide amidst a plethora of more fashionable, esoteric, even arcane theoretical speculation), apart from providing a very useful and insightful overview of Steiner's classical division in *After Babel* (1975) of the historical periods of translation theory, makes the important comment that:

> Clearly, the repertoire of translation techniques has not evolved: there is little to choose between Cicero and Pound in range of dynamic techniques … it is only by recognizing a typology of function that a theory of trans- lation will do justice to both Bible and bilingual cereal packet. It is obvious that the Dionysiac language theories of Heidegger are as inadequate as the empirical communication models of Nida. These both ignore the multifari- ous purposes of language: language can frustrate communication, act purely as a medium of information, or create new worlds for its users. A language lives through multiplicity of function, so does translation (Kelly 1979:226f).

As a way of taking a relative shortcut to a theory of translation suitable for the purposes of this article, it is useful to quote Wallmach (1999:85), who maintains that from the 1980s onwards, descriptive translation studies and cultural translation studies could be considered to be 'the dominant discourses on translation'. The developments in the field of translation studies have been consistent and have covered, in the course of the twentieth century, a wide range of concerns. Terms generally associated with translation studies, and popularised by the acknowledged giant in the field of Bible translation, Eugene Nida (Nida and Taber published a landmark book on Bible translation, *Theory and Practice of Translation* in 1974), 'formal correspondence' and 'dynamic equivalence' still tend to shape the thinking of a considerable number of people about translation. However, these terms are considered by theoreticians to have come to the end of their useful existence. Earlier thinking on translation tended towards the prescriptive, with notions of *right* and *wrong* very much in evidence, but this approach came under fire from a variety of critics, such as Neubert and Shreve (1992), Newmark (1988), Lefevere (1992) and Van Leuven-Zwart (1992). Kruger (2000:31) discusses these criticisms at length and

9

points out convincingly that the new pragmatic trend that followed the rejection of the uncritical use of the term equivalence

> ... is closely linked to developments in the seventies which followed in reaction to Chomsky's TG grammar: instead of emphasising the structural aspects of language, the functional aspects of language came to be seen as more important. As a result, texts were no longer regarded as independent linguistic utterances, but rather as part of the socio-culture to which they belong. Translation therefore becomes *a communication activity* in which the *function* of the translated text in the *target culture* is given priority (e.a.).

She goes on to suggest that probably the most useful 'new paradigm' (suggested by Hermans as early as 1985) is Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), which is a more apposite and useful approach in contrast to the whole range of prescriptive approaches so much in evidence up to the middle of the twentieth century. This approach

> ... is first and foremost target-oriented, i.e. the role played by translations in the target culture is examined first, secondly historical and cultural, i.e. the point of departure is that specific texts at a specific moment in time are regarded as translations and function as translations in the target culture, and thirdly, it is descriptive, i.e. the specific characteristics of one or more translations are described .... Therefore, contrary to prescriptive theorists who theorise about translation and then attempt to prove these theories in practice, descriptive translation theorists start with a practical examination of a corpus of texts and systems and then attempt to extrapolate the norms and constraints operating on those texts in a specific culture and at a specific historical moment (Kruger 2000:39).

One could therefore begin to speak of a shift described by Gentzler (1993:185) as a 'move away from looking at translations as linguistic phenomena to looking at translations as cultural phenomena'—there has been a long history of theorisation on translation based on linguistic approaches (see Steiner 1975:236-296; on the history of translation theory, see Gentzler 1993:80ff).

Kelly (1979:227) already noted that:

> The essential variable is what the translator sees in the original, and what he wishes to pass on. Each age and culture translates anew; by their contempo-

raries translators are judged according to criteria peculiar to time, place and genre. If the translator must be a man of other cultures besides his own, is it too much to ask that his critic be likewise a man who crosses frontiers of space and time? Such largeness of vision is rare. Yet it is indispensable to those who would presume to sit in judgement on colleagues of the past. For unless our modern attitudes are tempered by understanding of past criteria, have we any right to expect fair judgement from the future?

Looking at translation as a cultural phenomenon immediately of course brings into play factors related to ideology as well. The manipulative potential and function of translation and interpreting have come into play to some extent, but there is still a wide field to embrace in this regard. This also opens up issues of ethics and fidelity. The ironic utterance '*traddutore, traditore*' (an Italian expression meaning that the translator is a betrayer) has become a commonplace in discussions about translation, fidelity and ethics. Kelly (1979:218), comes up with the provocative view that 'If there is a moral responsibility in translation, it flows from initiative *appropriately* or *abusively* taken' (e.a.). Considering the issue of translation and interpreting from a post-colonial perspective is also an interesting angle—the notion of power relations within the context of the marginalisation of languages, as considered below in the section on language rights, is also pertinent in this regard.

Taking the notion of the translator as a cultural communicator somewhat further, by concentrating on processes, Katan (1999:124) explores frames and gestalts as important strategies for translators, especially within the context of effecting cultural mediation. He maintains that: 'Many translation theorists are now convinced of the importance of frames and a gestalt approach to translation'. According to Neubert and Shreve, a good translator reads the text, and in so doing accesses grouped linguistic and textual knowledge. This 'grouped' knowledge at the level of the text has been variously named by translation theorists as 'text type' and 'genre'. However, the main area of interest is the frame. Neubert and Shreve (1992:60) for example, define frames in terms of organisation of experience and knowledge repertoires: 'This organization of experience may be referred to as framing and the knowledge structures themselves as frames'.

He quotes Hönig (1991:79-80) to the effect that 'Scheme and frame stand for different parts of the reader's expectation structures, they are structured domains of long-term memory', and this leads, according to Katan (1999:125) to a situation where, in the mind of the translator, 'a meaningful but virtual text is formed ... from the meaningful but wordless text, the translator then sketches a pattern of words in the target language'. Bell (1991:161) takes this somewhat further when he states that 'Current thinking among translation theorists ... insists that a translated text is a new

creation that derives from careful reading; a *reconstruction* rather than a copy'. This echoes Lefevere's (1992:3) views on especially literary translation as *rewriting* (e.a.). Katan (1999:125) insists that

> ... an essential difference between a traditional translator and a mediator is the mediator's ability to understand and create frames. The mediator will be able to understand the frames of interpretation in the source culture and will be able to produce a text which would create a similar set of interpretation frames to be accessed in the target reader's mind.

This view is supported by Snell-Hornby's (1988:52) view that translation should essentially be seen as a cross-cultural transfer, and Candlin (in the introduction to Hatim and Mason 1990) maintains quite categorically that the translator's work should

> ... extend beyond the apposite selection of phrases to an investigative exploration of the signs of culture ... it asks us to explore our ideologically and culturally-based assumptions about all those matters on which we utter, in speech or in writing, or in signs (Hatim & Mason 1990:vii).

Katan (1999:126) does, however, caution that

> ... this holistic or global approach to translation does not mean that a cultural mediator can disregard the text itself. A successful mediator must be consciously aware of the importance of both text and context, which means both the words and the implied frames.

This cautionary note is also sounded by Mona Baker (1996:17), who warns that many scholars have now adopted a 'cultural perspective ... a dangerously fashionable word that almost substitutes for rigour and coherence'. The possible loss of rigour through an uncritical adherence to notions of culture is a real danger, and adopting the cautious approach advocated by Katan (1999:1), who regards culture as a 'system for orienting experience', is therefore the path of wisdom and discretion.

Culture and Cultural Communication: Some Comments
The notion *culture* is probably as diverse, many-sided and open to contentious interpretation as any other concept known to man. It is therefore probably prudent to take recourse to definitions hallowed by time and space and to

extrapolate carefully from them, with the necessary disclaimers and caveats either explicitly or implicitly presented.

The definition used in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1988.4:567) to introduce the topic is a useful general starting point or platform for discussion:

> Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

This difficult activity (the act of defining culture) had by 1984 been wryly rejected by Seelye (1984:13) when he stated that '[he knew] of no better way to ensure having nothing productive happen than for a language department to begin its approach to culture by a theoretical concern for defining the term'. Seelye's view is strongly supported by Trompenaars (1993:22) who admits that '[i]n fifteen years I have seldom encountered two or more groups or individuals with identical suggestions regarding the concept of culture'. Katan (1999:17) suggests more practically that one should look at a

> ... shared mental model or map of the world, which includes culture. The model is a system of congruent and interrelated beliefs, values, strategies and cognitive environments which guide the shared basis of behaviour. Each aspect of culture is linked in a system to form a unifying context of culture which identifies a person and his or her own culture.
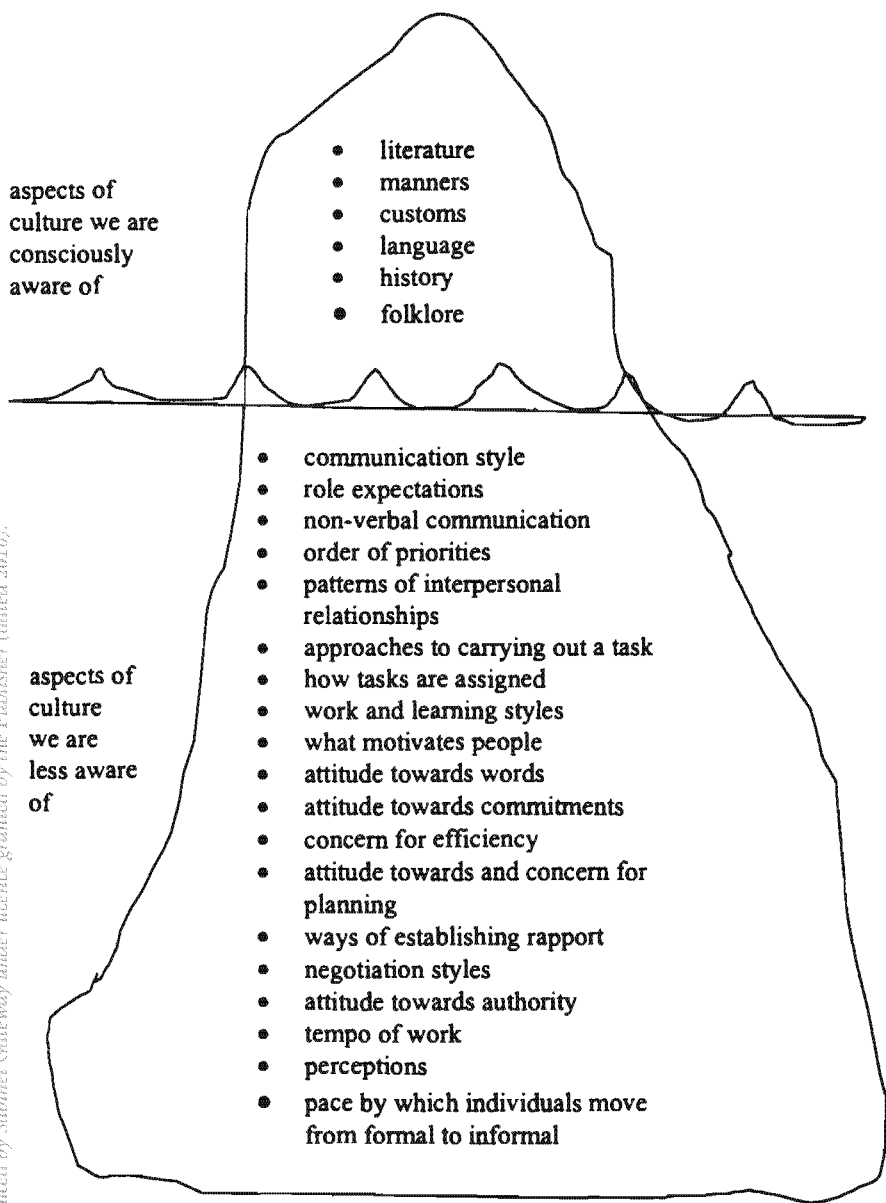
In this regard then, it is important to identify a model of culture that would constructively advance this discussion. The model proposed by Hall in *The Hidden Dimension* (1982:19) (called a 'triad of culture'), and refined by Macnair and Corsellis (2000:12), provides a useful springboard for the present purposes. In both instances the metaphoric framework suggested is that of an iceberg (cf. below).

Culture when conceptualised in these terms provides an illuminating framework for this discussion. The iceberg theory has in fact also been endorsed by Brake *et al* (1995:34-39), when they point out that:

> Laws, customs, rituals, gestures, ways of dressing, food and drink and methods of greeting and saying goodbye ... these are all part of culture, but they are just the tip of the cultural iceberg ... the most powerful elements of culture are those that lie beneath the surface of everyday interaction. We call these value orientations. Value orientations are preferences for certain outcomes over others.

CULTURAL BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION
The Iceberg Conception of the Nature of Culture

aspects of
culture we are
consciously
aware of

- literature
- manners
- customs
- language
- history
- folklore

aspects of
culture
we are
less aware
of

- communication style
- role expectations
- non-verbal communication
- order of priorities
- patterns of interpersonal relationships
- approaches to carrying out a task
- how tasks are assigned
- work and learning styles
- what motivates people
- attitude towards words
- attitude towards commitments
- concern for efficiency
- attitude towards and concern for planning
- ways of establishing rapport
- negotiation styles
- attitude towards authority
- tempo of work
- perceptions
- pace by which individuals move from formal to informal

14

It is at this point that the sensitivity of the translator should be at its most acute, and it is this particular kind of sensitivity that should be systematically and consistently inculcated in the would-be translator/interpreter. In the training of translators and interpreters a natural sensitivity to the issue of cultural difference should be enhanced further, and constructive and sustained attention paid to those cultural issues that are located under the surface, where the bulk of the metaphorical iceberg floats.

An acute and nuanced awareness of cultural difference as being embedded in the very nature of humanity and in the very structures of the languages under consideration would materially enhance the products of translation and interpreting and underpin consideration of what would be a given in the linguistic and cultural context of an individual and a language community—the language rights of individuals as located within the context of fundamental and universal human rights. The mode of handling language rights can in fact mean cultural enslavement or cultural liberation.

Language Rights of Citizens

Language rights have been very much in the forefront in South Africa in recent years, as a direct result of the enshrinement of language rights in the country's constitution and of campaigns of varying strength and intensity aimed at raising awareness of these rights. The actual enforcement of these rights has, sadly, been less vigorously implemented.

Tying in with the post-colonial context discussed below is the telling statement by Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989:470) that:

> If you want to have your fair share of the power and the resources (both material and non-material) of your native country, you have to be able to take part in the democratic processes in your country. You have to be able to negotiate, try to influence, *to have a voice*. The main instrument for doing that is language. You must be able to communicate with your fellow citizens in order to be able to influence your own situation, *to be a subject in your life, not an object* to be handled by others.

This view is of enormous importance when the whole vexed issue of language rights and people's access to such rights comes to the forefront. It is within that context that the following comments will be made.

While some examples of linguistic iniquity discussed later come specifically from the legal sphere, the issue of multi-language access of citizens in countries around the world is generally a very fraught one, and problems within the

legal field can be readily extrapolated to other fields. Alexander (1999:34f) discusses this problem and refers to the fact that the USA, for example, will have to relinquish once and for all the notion of the melting-pot in favour of the only workable notion—which he considers to be a 'salad-bowl' approach. He points out the immensely complex and sophisticated range of problems concomitant with the issue of linguicism:

> These are complex questions that relate as much to the history of human rights as they do to the development of communications technology and consequent changes in the operational modalities of the world economy (commonly discussed under the rubric of 'globalisation'). It is clear, however, that the struggles that have been triggered by these developments around issues of *'culture'* and *'language'* are also class struggles about *domination* and *subordination*, about hegemony and democratic choice, about homogenisation and the intrinsic value of cultural diversity. At the national level, but in slightly different permutations, the same struggles are taking place in most of those countries (including European countries and 'emerging' markets such as South Africa) which attract economic immigrants and political refugees (Alexander 1999:34).

Linguicism, considered to be an essentially invidious way of propagating and consciously enhancing existing and new linguistic inequalities, is defined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988:13) as 'ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues)'. Linguicism as a means of establishing, maintaining and enforcing skewed power relations in terms of language rights is explored in greater depth by S.M. Beukes in her thesis *Vertaling in Suid-Afrika: 'n Kritiese Perspektief* (1993).

The debate about language rights, which is of crucial importance within the entire sphere of translation and interpreting, is intimately connected with the debates on language and the postcolonial situation. There are a number of vociferous advocates of the rights of indigenous languages in the African context. Chief among these has been the Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1994:6), who has stated that:

> The real aim of colonialism was to control the people's wealth ... [but] economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism, this involved two

aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature, and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised.

The grim consequences of the negation of the natural language of people are sketched by Kwesi Prah (1995:45f), who states categorically that:

> Concepts, abstract notions, and scientific linguistic tools are most accessible and provide greater facility for effective usage if they are grounded in language which provides the systemic grid for interpreting and intervening in reality .... In all developed societies science and technological development is based on the native language, cultivated as the mother tongue. In Africa, the position is different .... African languages are underrated as possible vehicles of science and technological development. Because they have for decades been underrated, this has led to a retardation in their development and meant as a consequence a retrenchment of African languages and cultures in the effort to develop Africa. This retardation implies stagnation and the confirmation of the inferior status of African languages and cultures in the general discourse on development in Africa.

The importance of this notion is underlined in the extract from the point of departure of the landmark Addis Ababa (1986:2) conference on language that:

> [Language] is at the heart of a people's culture ... the cultural advancement of the African peoples and the acceleration of their economic and social development will not be possible without harnessing in a practical manner indigenous African languages in that advancement and development ... to liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilization of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state in favour of the gradual take-over of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain [and] ... to encourage the increased use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels.

This is an area of concern within the South African context as well—witness the many cries for empowerment of the African languages that, across the tertiary sector,

Annette L. Combrink

have seen a disastrous decline in student numbers in recent times. It would seem, ironically, in spite of measures designed to enhance their use within all the fields of function of languages, that these languages are more at risk now, for a number of reasons both cultural and economic, than they have ever been before. This grim reality has important implications for the training of interpreters and translators. The market for interpreting would seem to have become narrowed very much to the area of legal interpreting, as will emerge more fully below.

The whole fraught issue of language rights within the context of the law has ramifications internationally and nationally. Gonzalez *et al.* (1991:5f) deal with this issue very explicitly when they maintain that:

> Bridging the language barrier between public language and the home languages of community members, either formally or informally, has become a prominent issue in our daily lives .... Nowhere is this fact more apparent than in our legal system. Language services have historically, although not systematically, been provided for non-English-speaking participants in the criminal justice system when deemed necessary by the trial judge ... to this day, limited- or non-English-speakers who come before the courts have no guarantee that their stories will be told or that they will understand what the court is telling them. Moreover, when they do tell their stories, it is more likely than not that significant portions of their testimony will be distorted by the interpreter ... as a result the fundamental right of non-English speakers to participate in the legal system is violated.

Awareness of this problem is also implied in Macnair and Corsellis (2000:1) when they point out that, in the British Probation Service, which is working with the Prison Service, national standards have been developed which require:

> Services to ensure that they provide suitably qualified interpreters in all circumstances where offenders or their families might otherwise be disadvantaged.

This is spelt out even more clearly subsequently when they state that:

> A refined appreciation of language and culture is now recognized as a necessary precursor to the Service more effectively working with all of the Communities that make up the ethnically-rich society in England and Wales .... Working across language and culture corresponds with the Probation Service's aspiration to work with and value 'diversity'. Some aspects of the

differences between cultures are more evident than others. Aspects such as literature, language, history and customs may be quite evident. Others such as non-verbal communication, interpersonal relationships, attitudes towards authority and perceptions of professionalism may also be very different but less evident. It can be suggested that it is in the more subtle and less evident areas that issues may arise that impact upon criminal behaviour and, for legal services across the range, how they and their staff should best respond (Macnair & Corsellis 2000:2).

The situation and the most apposite approach for dealing with it are summed up in the following terms:

The staff of Probation Services work with people at a number of points in the process from offence to, and beyond sentence ... and the absence of [these] competencies in such situations leads to each party being dysfunctional in their individual input and dysfunctional in their relationship to each other (Macnair & Corsellis 2000:7).

The situation in South Africa with regard to language services being provided for purposes of obviating the iniquities inherent in the situation of virtual linguicism pertaining to English and to a lesser extent Afrikaans is very similar to the situation outlined above. In the case of legal interpreting, South Africa is, ironically, ahead of the world in the sense that legal interpreting is provided free of charge in the African languages through legal interpreters appointed on a permanent basis by the Justice Department. This is commendable, but the system is not without problems. While some of these interpreters are excellent, the quality of service rendered by others is not in line with the requirements so clearly spelled out by Gonzalez *et al.* (1991:473ff). Provision for better pay and for better qualification structures for such interpreters has been slow in coming and the situation is still far from ideal. In terms of other, more general but no less crucial, provisions being made to enable the citizens of the country to participate in everyday life in a manner in which provision is made for their language and culture, the picture is bleak. With the present precarious situation of the Pan South African Language Board (up to June 2001 the Cabinet had not succeeded in appointing more than seven members out of a possible thirteen to the new Board) and the general unwillingness to provide adequate translation and interpreting services (see for example the study by Reinhardt 2000, for information about language provisions in the provincial legislatures), it is well-nigh impossible to provide the sort of services required for the most basic adherence to this crucial, indeed central, requirement of the Constitution.

19

Annette L. Combrink

Apart from the fact that this constitutes an essential breach in respecting the rights of citizens, it also constitutes a more insidious and invasive breach: there is an impoverishment of the cultural multiplicity of the nation through the gradual erosion of the rich layers of cultural complexity captured in the various languages of the country. This means that, both above and below the surface, the iceberg itself is melting down and imperceptibly letting cultural complexity become absorbed in a homogenising ocean.

Training and Accreditation of Translators/ Interpreters

> The language professions are crucial for the preservation of national identities as well as individual and collective dignity and pride. But they are also crucial for communication between different nationalities, different cultures and religions. They are important for keeping together our multilingual and multicultural global village. They are important for their knowledge and experience of how to bridge interlingual gaps. They are tools for mutual understanding, for cooperation and peace (Dollerup & Loddegaard 1992:5).

Both the training and the accreditation of translators/interpreters have been a site of explosive contest for years. This is not surprising when one considers the complexity of the processes of translation and interpreting, as indicated in the preceding discussion, combined with the very complex considerations that have to be brought into play in talking about training. The profile of the court interpreter (and this could be extrapolated to any translator/interpreter), as described by Gonzalez *et al.* (1991:19) is illuminating:

> A court interpreter must have a superior, unquestionable command of two languages and must be able to manipulate registers from the most formal varieties to the most casual forms, including slang. The interpreter's vocabulary must be of considerable depth and breadth to support the wide variety of subjects that typically arise in the judicial process. At the same time, the interpreter must have the ability to orchestrate all of these linguistic tasks while interpreting in the simultaneous and consecutive and interpretation modes for persons speaking at rates of 200 words or more per minute.

Sanders (1989:25) compounds the bleak picture by noting that:

These cognitively complex tasks demand acute memory, concentration, and analysis skills. Court interpreters must possess a wide general knowledge of the world ... unfortunately, these high-level interpreting skills are hard to find, and the demand for qualified court interpreters has not been satisfied.

The same type of information emerges from Macnair and Corsellis (2000:13) who maintain that the role of interpreters as a channel of communication can be described in the following way:

Communication:	Is more than the written and spoken word—therefore means working across language and culture.
The interpreters:	Will bring their own culture and therefore stereotypes, racism, sexism, etc. with them.
Good training:	Will help interpreters not just with the language issues but also with the cultural issues and help the interpreter to act professionally, i.e. in an 'extra-cultural' fashion.

In summary, then, the thrust of their argument is that good interpreting arrangements are necessary to ensure that justice prevails, that accurate and relevant communication is effected in order to enforce informed and legitimate judgements—all crucial concomitants of the visibility of justice for all participants in the process.

The point that needs underlining here is that in the training of translators and interpreters the cultural sensitivity outlined in the iceberg model needs to be enhanced to a point of sophistication that is not of necessity available wherever translators and interpreters are trained. If an interpreter/translator is to avoid the pitfalls implied above (his own existing biases and prejudices), the training process will need to be rigorous and wide-ranging.

The kind of profile outlined above is applicable to practically any language practitioner. For purposes of training such language practitioners, it would be essential to have:

- A coherent system of training of language practitioners across all the training institutions, in other words, proper co-ordination within the SAQA context.

- A proper and coherent system of accreditation and registration that will make it possible for candidates to obtain and to maintain a suitable level and mode of accreditation. Gonzalez *et al.* (1991:19-20,15) make the point that prior to the 1979 institution of the Federal Court Interpreter Examination, 'few practitioners of this exacting skill had their interpreting skills assessed', even though 'court interpreting is the fastest growing field of specialization in translation and interpretation inside and outside the United States ... because it is an emerging field, little is known about the highly precise and demanding work done by court interpreters'. At present the only system that is in operation in this country is the process run and administered by the South African Translators' Institute, a process that is gradually gaining in credibility and acceptance, but which is hampered by lack of resources.

- General acceptance of such a system. Macnair and Corsellis make the very strong point that, in the United Kingdom, only interpreters from the National Register of Interpreters are now used (2000:7). Unfortunately this kind of situation is not yet on the cards in South Africa in the very near future—the government has not yet approved a National Language Policy and plan, and before this is in place it would not be possible to set up further structures, as the necessary framework of enabling legislation would not be available.

- A sense of linguistic pride acknowledged by speakers of the indigenous languages. These languages should be allowed to develop within the framework of all the language functions necessary for the maintenance and active constructive development of a language.

- A general acceptance of the high levels of skill involved in the language professions, so that adequate remuneration would be a matter of course and good candidates could be attracted to the profession.

Conclusion

The cultural mediator, translator or interpreter will need to understand how culture in general operates and will be able to frame a particular communication within its context of culture. Then, as mediator, he or she will need to disassociate from that frame and mind-shift or chunk to a virtual text which will guide choice when creating a new text for the addressee (Katan 1999:241).

It is an undeniable fact that should the factors considered here not be factored into any act of translation and/or interpreting, the act would in itself be a failure, since the necessary cultural mediation would not take place. Misperception, misinterpretation and mistranslation, which might easily occur, would lead to a breakdown of the process and this would ultimately result in the aims of mediation, as spelled out at the beginning of the paper, not being achieved. Under these circumstances, essential connections and links will not be made, so that the intended act of inter-cultural communication will founder on the hidden bulk of the cultural iceberg, that could have been avoided by a deft and well-considered act of inter-cultural navigation.

Department of English
Potchefstroom University for CHE

References

Alexander, N 1999. Multilingualism and Education in the New South Africa. In Extra, G (ed): *Over Babylon gesproken*. Centrum Voor Studies van Meertaligheid in de Multiculturele Samenleving. Tilburg: Babylon.

Baker, M 1996. Linguistics and Cultural Studies: Complementary or Competing Paradigms in Translation Studies? In Haller, S & G Steiner (eds): *Festschrift für Wolfram Wilss*. Tübingen: Günter Narr.

Basnett, S 1991. *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.

Beukes, SM 1993. *Vertaling in Suid-Afrika: 'n Kritiese Perspektief*. DPhil thesis, Rand Afrikaans University.

Brake, T, DM Walker & T Walker 1995. *Doing Business Internationally: The Guide to Cross-cultural Success*. Burr Ridge: Irwin.

Candlin, C 1990. General Editor's Preface. In Hatim, B & I Mason (eds): *Discourse and the Translator*. London: Longman

Dollerup, C & A Loddegaard (eds) 1992. *Teaching Translation and Interpreting*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gentzler, E 1993. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London: Routledge.

Gonzalez, RD, VE Vasquez & H Mikkelson 1991. *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Hall, ET 1982. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.

Hatim, B & I Mason 1990. *Discourse and the Translator*. London: Longman.

Hermans, T (ed) 1985. *The Manipulation of Literature*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Hönig, HG 1991. Holmes' Mapping Theory and the Landscape of Mental Translation Processes. In Van Leuven-Zwart, K, and Naaijkens, T (eds):

Translation Studies: The State of the Art. Proceedings of the First James S Holmes Symposium on Translation Studies. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Katan, D 1999. *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*. London: St Jerome.

Kelly, L 1979. *The True Interpreter*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kruger, A 2000. Lexical Cohesion and Register Variation in Translation: *The Merchant of Venice* in Afrikaans. DLitt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa.

Lefevere, A 1992. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge.

Macnair, I & A Corsellis 2000. *Access to Justice Across Language and Culture*. Brussels: Grotius Seminar.

Newmark, P 1999. Translation Theory or Spoof. Lecture delivered at the SSLMIT: Trieste University, May 1995. In Katan, D (ed): *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*. London: St Jerome.

Neubert, A & GM Shreve 1992. *Translation as Text*. Kent: Kent State University Press.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1994. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Heinemann.

Nida, E & CR Taber 1974. *Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: Brill.

Organisation of African Unity 1986. *Language Plan of Action for Africa*. Addis Ababa: OAU.

Prah, K 1995. *Mother Tongue for Scientific and Technological Development in Africa*. Bonn: German Foundation for International Development.

Reinhardt, T 2000. *Hansard Translation: Problems and Issues in the Translation and Editing of Verbatim Reports of Parliamentary Proceedings*. PhD thesis, Potchefstroom University for CHE.

Richards, IA 1953. Towards a Theory of Translating. In Wright, Arthur F (ed): *Studies in Chinese Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Republic of South Africa 1996. Act 108 of 1996, as adopted on 8 May 1996 and amended on 11 October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly. In: *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Sanders, AL 1989. Libertad and Justicia for All. *Time* May 29:25.

Seelye, H 1978. *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Foreign Language Educators*. Skokie: National Textbook Co.

Snell-Hornby, M 1988. *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T 1988. Multilingualism and the Education of Minority Children. In Skutnabb-Kangas, T & J Cummins (eds): *Minority Education: From Shame to Struggle*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T & R Phillipson 1989. Mother Tongue: The Theoretical and Sociopolitical Construction of a Concept. In Ammon, U (ed): *Status and Function of Languages and Language Varieties*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Steiner, G 1975. *After Babel*. London: Routledge.

Taft, R 1981. The Role and Personality of the Mediator. In Bochner, S (ed): *The Mediating Person: Bridges Between Cultures*. Cambridge: Schenkman.

Trompenaars, F 1993. *Riding the Waves of Culture*. London: The Economist Books.

Vanleuven-Zwart, K-M 1992. *Vertaalwetenschap: Ontwikkelingen en perspectieven*. Muiderberg: Coutinho.

Wallmach, K 1999. *Difference/Derivation: Feminist Translation Under Review*. PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand.