

Practical 5 Tutor notes

The vital question of the purpose and genre of texts has already arisen a number of times. In this chapter, it is the focus of attention. In discussing the chapter, it should be stressed to students that any generic categorization is arbitrary. We have found that ours works well in practice, but it is not the only one possible. Another point to stress is that each of the five genre types can be virtually endlessly subdivided. It quickly becomes pointless to try to find a separate label for every sub-category, sub-sub-category, etc. As with degrees of freedom and connotation (Chapter 10), ends should not be confused with means. The important thing is to be able to see what the purpose of the text is and how typical an example it is of texts having such a purpose. Related to this point is another: the more the categories subdivide, the more likely a text is to have characteristics of several different categories. This point is made in the coursebook (pp. 53, 56), and it is a good idea to draw attention to it in class. The reason this is important is that students do at first tend to oversimplify the question of genre, and to put the cart before the horse: instead of examining the text and seeing what generic features it actually has, they assign it a priori to one of the five genre categories, and then deduce from this category what features it must have. The result is that they often miss things that are vital. At the same time, though, students can be reassured that, especially in a professional specialist situation, the translator will know in advance what genre most STs are likely to belong to, so that only a quick look at the text will be needed to confirm this. At the training stage, of course, it will take some time to learn what features signal the genre and – just as important – what the TL expectations are for that genre. Chapters 11 and 12 are an introduction to these considerations in respect of some genre categories in which translators commonly find themselves working.

The four assignments are so different from one another that it is worth doing them all, if time allows. This would take two classes and associated homework, however. The aim is to give a sample of a variety of genres, as an introduction to as wide a range as possible of the translation issues likely to be encountered. It should be stressed, however, that common to all these assignments – most obviously in 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4 – is the need to research and master a specific terminology. Practical 5 is thus a good opportunity to remind students of a truth universally acknowledged among professionals: a translator should never be too proud or embarrassed to ask for help from specialist colleagues – a point reiterated in Chapter 11 (p. 139).

5.1 Genre and translation

This assignment is a good example of the fact that specialist jargon is not confined to technological texts, but is a mark of very many genres. The text can be tackled by anyone, although it helps either to know something about classical music or to consult

someone who does – most strategies will require the technical terms to be translated with their precise TL counterparts. In looking at the published TT, due attention should be paid to these terms, but also to how idiomatic the text is. Looking forward to Chapter 7, the rearrangement of lines 7–15 of the ST bears brief consideration, as does the paragraphing of the TT.

5.2 Genre and translation

Another non-technological text containing specialist terms. Students not reading management or accountancy will need to consult others who are; it may in any case be a good idea to set this assignment as group work. The touch of persuasive function in the text should be given due attention.

5.3 Genre and translation

A hybrid text incorporating consumer-oriented, empirical and persuasive features. Due attention needs to be given to cultural features as well. In respect of genre, the text compares interestingly with the ST in Practical 11.1, an uncompromisingly specialist text on the planned engineering of this selfsame tunnel.

5.4 Genre and translation

A literary text with satirical genre-mixing. For the satire to be convincing, the translator has to be a competent parodist, but also to be confident about submariners' jargon.

PRACTICAL 5.1 CLASS HANDOUT

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER TT

Compare your TT with the published one:

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER'S LEGACY

The distinguished German music critic K.H. Ruppel (1900–80) wrote in a memoir of the conductor in 1961: 'Haydn was the only one of the Classics with whom Furtwängler abandoned himself to a relaxed balancing of the forces; even there, however, (in the Largo and the Trio of the Symphony no. 88, for example) a perceptible element remains that might almost be called dramatic, though it is quickly calmed.'

The Austrian musicologist Leopold Nowak, a leading Bruckner expert, wrote in his biography of Haydn: 'There is a melody which rises and falls in the Largo of No. 88 – weighty, reflective, but not without an inner resiliency. It brings to mind a folk song from the Burgenland, *Am Sonntag auf d'Nacht, i geh' zu mei'm Schatz* ('Of a Sunday night I go to see my sweetheart'). The theme is heard seven times, transposed to different keys and with increasingly rich figuration and instrumentation – like a foretaste of the building towards the climax in one of Bruckner's Adagios. Not as heavy, not as mighty, but essentially like a Brucknerian development in its deliberateness.' That Brucknerian quality in Haydn's Largo is precisely what Furtwängler realizes.

His conception of Schubert corresponded to the era in which he felt himself most at home – the late 19th century. He passed over the six early symphonies to concentrate on the great orchestral works, the 'Unfinished' and the C major Symphony D 944, which was then still thought to have been composed in the last year of Schubert's life. Like Toscanini, his antipode, and other conductors of their generation, he regarded the 'Great C major' Symphony as Schubert's orchestral *summum opus*, the pinnacle of his instrumental output. K.H. Ruppel again: 'If there was still an *anima naturaliter tragica* among the great musicians of our day it was Furtwängler. Anyone who ever experienced it knows how overwhelmingly he would intuitively recreate the violence of a sonata-form movement's dualistic tension when he returned to the recapitulation after the development. No sense, here, of transition, of pacification of the powers which had wrestled with each other in the development; rather, they were gathered tautly together for an immense, dramatic peripeteia, after which the release which came with the return of the first subject felt like redemption as well . . . No one had a more monumental conception of Schubert's 'Great C major' Symphony or of Schumann's Op. 120, or a clearer understanding of their 'Dionysian' core, no one felt their rhythmic energies more dramatically, or explored the tensions in their sonorities more searchingly, than he.'

(Schumann 1995b: 2)

PRACTICAL 5.2 CLASS HANDOUT

'WERTMANAGEMENT DER BASF' TT

Compare your TT with the published one:

BASF VALUE-BASED MANAGEMENT

Our primary goal is to increase and sustain our corporate value. We therefore measure business decisions and performance against the returns expected by our investors, in other words against the cost of capital. Our aim is to achieve a premium on our cost of capital.

5 As of 2004, we have therefore introduced EBIT (income from operations before interest and taxes) after cost of capital as the key performance and management indicator for our operating divisions and business units. The divisions must achieve a minimum EBIT of 10% on operational assets to satisfy the returns expected by both internal and external providers of equity and debt capital, and to cover the required
10 taxes. Based on planned operational assets of €28 billion in 2004, this corresponds to a minimum EBIT of €2.8 billion for the BASF group.

This cost of capital percentage before interest and taxes of 10% corresponds to a weighted average cost of capital (WACC) of approximately 6% after interests and taxes. Our target is therefore an ambitious one. The WACC calculation is an
15 internationally recognized method of determining a company's cost of capital. It is used to determine and to evaluate shareholders' return expectations and interest rates on debt capital. We calculate our cost of equity on the basis of the market value of BASF shares.

We can earn a premium on our cost of capital both by improving EBIT and by
20 making optimal use of capital employed. The key performance indicator thus supports us in our efforts to improve cost structures, achieve profitable growth and exercise even greater capital discipline.

Incorporating value management in target agreements

As a result, we also employ EBIT after cost of capital as the value-creation indicator on
25 which we base the performance-related compensation of our executives. The Board of Executive Directors uses this key performance indicator in its operational planning to set targets for the whole BASF Group, and hence for the individual divisions and business units. Target achievement plays an important role in setting the level of variable compensation.

30 In areas such as production, marketing, sales and supply chain management, we have also created a system of key financial ratios that enables our employees to identify their personal contribution to added value and helps them act accordingly. Improved value-based management promotes entrepreneurial thinking at all levels of BASF.

(BASF 2004b: 19)

PRACTICAL 5.3 CLASS HANDOUT

‘DER RENNSTEIG TUNNEL’ TT AND COMMENTARY

(i) *Strategic decisions*

The ST begins like an empirical newspaper report, underlain with persuasive features typical of consumer-oriented texts aimed at potential tourists (this is a ‘Jahrhundertbauwerk’, it’s the longest motorway tunnel in Germany, 100,000 people came to see it in one day, etc.). The ‘Zahlen und Fakten’ section is more purely informative, but even these empirical data are meant to impress and attract, witness the quasi-anecdotal final paragraph. The text comes from a tourist website which has a range of other pages featuring points of interest or scenic beauty in Thüringen. Since the whole website is to be translated as part of a drive to encourage English-speaking visitors to Germany to come to Thüringen specifically, we are writing for an audience as diverse and essentially non-specialized as the ST one. The text does indeed present few special problems for the translator apart from a certain degree of statistical overload. The facts and figures need to be presented in as digestible a form as possible.

(ii) *TT*

The Rennsteig Tunnel

On 5 July 2003, amidst large-scale local celebrations,¹ Germany’s longest autobahn² tunnel, the 7.916 km long **Rennsteig Tunnel**, was declared open and formally handed over. Just before 11 a.m. the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, arrived by
5 helicopter³ at the north portal of the Rennsteig Tunnel and drove through the tunnel in a limousine. On arrival at the other end, he delivered his speech and then, together with Secretary of State Iris Gleike and the Thuringian Prime Minister, Dieter Althaus, the Chancellor cut the ceremonial ribbon. At⁴ noon, according to police estimates, about
10 30,000 people poured through the tunnel in both directions on foot, on bicycles, or on inline skates. The flow of visitors persisted all day. Altogether some 100,000 people visited the Rennsteig Tunnel to share in celebrating this unique occasion and to take stock of a historic⁵ feat of construction – in traffic-free peace and quiet.⁶

Facts and figures

The opening of the tunnel represents the completion of a 16.5 km stretch of the A71
15 autobahn between Ilmenau (West)⁷ and Oberhof/Zella-Mehlis. This motorway now provides an uninterrupted link between Erfurt and Meiningen, a distance of 83 km. Total construction costs amounted to approximately 250 million euros. Of that sum, about 50 million went on safety installations alone. The tunnel’s twin bores are monitored by a fully electronic system. This technology makes⁸ the Rennsteig Tunnel
20 one of the safest in the world.⁹

Both bores have a constant supply of fresh air brought in through special adits.¹⁰ To provide this service, two ‘air-exchanging stations’ were constructed – ‘LAZ (=

Luftaustauschzentrale) Flössgraben' and 'LAZ Kehltal'.¹¹ At Flössgraben, the air intake
 25 adit is 135 m long, at Kehltal 129 m. The air-exchanging stations divide the Rennsteig
 Tunnel into three sections for ventilation purposes, each about 2.5 km long. Through-
 ventilation in each section is by means of steel ventilators (30 units per bore). The two
 air-exchange stations suck out the tunnel air, each of them using four axial ventilators
 and expelling air through a shaft 6.2 m in diameter.

30 The tunnel bores each carry two traffic lanes, with connecting cross-passages
 between the bores every 350 m. This gives¹² 25 underground escape routes.

35 The tunnel under the Rennsteig is a technological masterpiece, its interest increased
 by a further remarkable feature. Not far from Oberhof Station, it crosses just above the
 twin-track railway tunnel known as the **Brandleite Tunnel**, which is now some 120
 years old and still in use. No strengthening work¹³ or other alterations were carried out
 on the railway tunnel in connection with the construction work on the new motorway
 tunnel. All that was necessary was to install instruments¹⁴ for monitoring it during
 blasting operations. A mere 6–7 m of solid rock lie between the roof¹⁵ of the railway
 tunnel and the floor of the new Rennsteig Tunnel.

(iii) *Decisions of detail*

1 It is possible, but unlikely, that some sort of local festival was in progress
 independently of the tunnel completion; we have assumed not. The TT does not need to
 commit itself on this point any more than the ST does: 'amidst large-scale local
 celebrations' suggests the opening was the occasion for the celebrations, but does not
 insist.

2 The term 'autobahn' with specific reference to the German motorway network is
 widely recognized and understood in English-speaking countries, and so creates no
 problems for the projected readership. After using the cultural borrowing 'autobahn'
 early in the TT, we use 'motorway' later in contexts where (for UK users at least) this
 term will not confuse, but help identify motorway with autobahn.

3 To translate 'landet' (*sic*, for 'landete') simply as 'landed' would be likely to puzzle
 the reader, because this term is not usual in the absence of earlier reference to the flight
 concerned. 'By helicopter', in the absence of certain knowledge of the facts, is
 somewhat risky; but the vaguer 'arrived by air' would suggest an improbable adjacent
 landing-strip for fixed-wing aircraft.

4 SL 'ab' means literally 'from'. Our 'at' is unlikely to be taken literally by the reader;
 'from' (or 'from [. . .] on') would be possible, but lack the connotations of precision that
 both 'ab' and 'at' possess, and would therefore be less vivid.

5 The prefix 'Jahrhundert-' is a stronger (because more specific) alternative to
 'einmalig' ('unique'). The issue of a literal TL rendering is slightly tricky. A wine
 described as 'ein Jahrhundertwein' is not 'the wine of the century' – although in
 practice, with the TL indefinite article collocationally unavailable, it might be called
 that. Strictly speaking, it is one that will be named among the 'great' vintages of the
 century. In this civil engineering context, the 'greatest of the century' idea is
 accompanied by the connotation of 'lasting for a century or more'. In using 'historic',
 we have explicitly rendered the idea of 'to be long remembered', but that of 'likely to
 be long-lasting' is only implicit; this loss is less serious than would be the addition of an
 extra clause spelling out the implication – the genre requires that the reader should not
 be put off by needless wordiness.

6 The standard translation 'in peace (and quiet)' would court ridicule without the exegetic 'traffic-free'.

7 The ST has 'Ilmenau/West', which suggests that Ilmenau and West are two places, not as close together as Zella and Mehlis, but still fairly close (cf. Oberhof and Zella). Looking at a map, however, confirms that 'West' is not a place, but almost certainly the western autobahn exit for Ilmenau. Our TT corrects the ST for the benefit of the English-speaking tourist – the ultimate purpose of the TT is to attract visitors, not to confuse or discourage them.

8 Here, for 'Damit ist', and again in line 30 ('This gives' for 'dadurch ergeben sich'), the most idiomatic rendering is with a transitive verb.

9 The ST's cumbersome threefold 'tunnel' in lines 21–3 has no expressive function. Reproducing it would be clumsy and off-putting. It can easily and idiomatically be reduced to two in English.

10 Given the TT's tourist website function, the term 'adit' is arguably too technical, and better dropped in favour of e.g. 'shaft'. On the other hand, the emphasis of the text is so strongly factual that it seems perverse not to use the correct term where, as here, the meaning is clear from the context.

11 There is a case for omitting the German acronym in an English TT. However, anglophone visitors to the tunnel, asking directions, need to be aware that 'Kehltal' and 'LAZ Kehltal' are different things, or they will risk being misdirected. 'LAZ Kehltal' has to be asked for by that name. The acronym should therefore be explained in English as succinctly as possible, but not – in this text at least – deleted in its German form, nor translated to an English acronym.

12 See note 8.

13 It would certainly be possible to render 'bautechnisch' by reformulating the TT to include 'structural strengthening [etc.]', but this would not make the text significantly clearer to the lay audience.

14 As with 'bautechnisch verstärkt', SL *verb + adverb* is more idiomatically rendered with a minor grammatical transposition to *subject + transitive verb*.

15 'Gebirgsfeste' and 'Ausbau' are semi-technical terms, the latter particularly difficult because used in different senses even within the construction industries.

PRACTICAL 5.4 CLASS HANDOUT

KATZ UND MAUS TT

Compare your TT with the published one:

Although the lieutenant commander with the hardware on his neck had sunk 250,000 gross register tons, a light cruiser of the *Despatch* class and a heavy destroyer of the *Tribal* class, the details of his exploits took up much less space in his talk than verbose descriptions of nature. No metaphor was too daring. For instance: ‘. . . swaying like a
5 train of priceless, dazzlingly white lace, the foaming wake follows the boat which, swathed like a bride in festive veils of spray, strides onward to the marriage of death.’

The tittering wasn't limited to the pigtail contingent; but in the ensuing metaphor the bride was obliterated: ‘A submarine is like a whale with a hump, but what of its bow wave? It is like the twirling, many times twirled moustaches of a hussar.’ [. . .]

10 When he started brushing in sunsets, it was really embarrassing: ‘And before the Atlantic night descends on us like a flock of ravens transformed by enchantment into a black shroud, the sky takes on colours we never see at home. An orange flares up, fleshy and unnatural, then airy and weightless, bejewelled at the edges as in the paintings of old masters; and in between, feathery clouds; and oh what a strange light
15 over the rolling full-blooded sea!’

Standing there with his sugar candy on his neck, he sounded the colour organ, rising to a roar, descending to a whisper, from watery-blue to cold-glazed lemon yellow to brownish-purple. Poppies blazed in the sky, and in their midst clouds, first silver, then suffused with red: ‘So must it be,’ these were his actual words, ‘when birds and angels
20 bleed to death.’ And suddenly from out of this sky, so daringly described, from out of bucolic little clouds, he conjured up a flying-boat of the *Sunderland* type. It came buzzing toward his U-boat but accomplished nothing. Then with the same orator's mouth but without metaphors, he opened the second part of his lecture. Chopped, dry, matter-of-fact: ‘I'm sitting in the periscope seat. Just scored a hit. Probably a
25 refrigerator ship. Sinks stern first. We take the boat down at one one zero. Destroyer comes in on one seven zero. We come left ten degrees. New course: one two zero, steady on one two zero. Propeller sounds fade, increase, come in at one eight zero, ash cans: six . . . seven . . . eight . . . eleven: lights go out; pitch darkness, then the emergency lighting comes on, and one after another the stations report all clear.
30 Destroyer has stopped. Last bearing one six zero, we come left ten degrees. New course four five . . .’

Unfortunately this really exciting fillet was followed by more prose poems: ‘The Atlantic winter’ or ‘Phosphorescence in the Mediterranean’, and a genre painting: ‘Christmas on a submarine’, with the inevitable broom transformed into a Christmas
35 tree. In conclusion he rose to mythical heights: the homecoming after a successful mission, Ulysses, and at long last: ‘The first sea-gulls tell us that the port is near.’

(Grass 1966: 64–6)

