Newmark's Approaches to Translation (1981) and A Textbook of Translation (1988) have been widely used on translator training courses and combine a wealth of practical examples of linguistic theories of meaning with practical applications for translation. Yet Newmark departs from Nida's receptor-oriented line, feeling that the success of equivalent effect is 'illusory' and that 'the conflict of loyalties, the gap between emphasis on source and target language will always remain as the overriding problem in translation theory and practice' (Newmark 1981: 38). Newmark suggests narrowing the gap by replacing the old terms with those of 'semantic' and 'communicative' translation:

Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original.

(Newmark 1981: 39)

This description of communicative translation resembles Nida's dynamic equivalence in the effect it is trying to create on the TT reader, while semantic translation has similarities to Nida's formal equivalence. However, Newmark distances himself from the full principle of equivalent effect, since that effect 'is inoperant if the text is out of TL space and time' (1981: 69). An example would be a modern British English translation of Homer. The translator (indeed any modern translator, no matter what the TL) cannot possibly hope or expect to produce the same effect on the TT reader as the ST had on listeners in ancient Greece. Newmark (p. 51) also raises further questions concerning the readers to whom Nida directs his dynamic equivalence, asking if they are 'to be handed everything on a plate', with everything explained for them.

Newmark's definitions (1981: 39-69) of his own terms reveal other differences; table 3.1 summarizes these definitions. Newmark (p. 63) indicates that semantic translation differs from literal translation in that it ‘respects context’, interprets and even explains (metaphors, for instance). Literal translation, on the other hand, as we saw in chapter 2, means word-for-word in its extreme version and, even in its weaker form, sticks very closely to ST lexis and syntax.

Importantly, literal translation is held to be the best approach in both semantic and communicative translation:

In communicative as in semantic translation, provided that equivalent effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, it is the only valid method of translation.

(Newmark 1981: 39)

This assertion can be related to what other theorists (e.g. Levy 1967/2000)
Toury (1995) have said about the translator’s work, where the constraints of time and working conditions often mean that the translator has to maximize the efficiency of the cognitive processes by concentrating energy on especially difficult problems, devoting less effort to those parts of the text which produce a reasonable translation by the ‘literal’ procedure. However, if there is a conflict between the two forms of translation (namely if semantic translation would result in an ‘abnormal’ TT or would not secure equivalent effect in the TL) then communicative translation should win out. An example of this, provided by Newmark (1981: 39), is the common sign *bissiger Hund* and *chien méchant*, translated communicatively as *beware the dog!* in order to communicate the message, not semantically as *dog that bites!* and *bad dog!*

### 3.3.1 Discussion of Newmark

Newmark’s terms semantic translation and communicative translation have often been quoted in the literature of translation theory, but they have generally received far less discussion than Nida’s formal and dynamic equivalence. This may be because, despite Newmark’s relevant criticisms of equivalent effect, they raise some of the same points concerning the translation process and the importance of the TT reader. One of the difficulties encountered by translation studies in systematically following up advances in theory may indeed be partly attributable to the overabundance of terminology. Newmark himself, for instance (1981: 52), defines Juliane House’s pair of ‘overt’ and ‘covert’ translation (see chapter 6) in terms of his own semantic and communicative translation.

Newmark has been criticized for his strong prescriptivism, and the language of his evaluations still bears traces of what he himself calls the ‘pre-linguistics era’ of translation studies: translations are ‘smooth’ or ‘awkward’, while translation itself is an ‘art’ (if semantic) or a ‘craft’ (if communicative). Nonetheless, the large number of examples in Newmark’s work provide ample guidance and advice for the trainee and many of the questions he tackles are of important practical relevance to translation.

### Catford and translation ‘shifts’

Although Vinay and Darbelnet do not use the word ‘shift’, in discussing translation shift, that is in effect what they are describing. The term itself seems to originate in Catford’s *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965), where he devotes a chapter to the subject. Catford (1965: 20) follows the Firthian and Flallidayan linguistic model, which analyzes language as communication, operating...
functionally in context and on a range of different levels (e.g. phonology, graphology, grammar, lexis) and ranks (sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme, etc.).

As far as translation is concerned, Catford makes an important distinction between formal correspondence and textual equivalence, which was later to be developed by Koller (see chapter 3):

- A formal correspondent is 'any TL category (unit, class, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the “same” place in the “economy” of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL' (Catford 1965: 27).
- A textual equivalent is 'any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion ... to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text'.

Textual equivalence is thus tied to a particular ST-TT pair, while formal equivalence is a more general system-based concept between a pair of languages. When the two concepts diverge, a translation shift is deemed to have occurred. In Catford's own words (2000: 141), translation shifts are thus 'departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL'.

Catford considers two kinds of shift: (1) shift of level and (2) shift of category:

1. A level shift (2000: 141-3) would be something which is expressed by grammar in one language and lexis in another; this could, for example, be:
   - by aspect in Russian being translated by a lexical verb in English: e.g. igrat' (to play) and sigrat' (to finish playing),
   - or cases where the French conditional corresponds to a lexical item in English: e.g. 'trois touristes auraient été tués' [lit. ‘three tourists would have been killed’] = ‘three tourists have been reported killed’.

2. Most of Catford’s analysis is given over to category shifts (2000: 143-7). These are subdivided into four kinds:
   - (a) Structural shifts: These are said by Catford to be the most common form of shift and to involve mostly a shift in grammatical structure. For example, the subject pronoun + verb + direct object structures of I like jazz and j'aime le jazz in English and French are translated by an indirect object pronoun + verb + subject noun structure in Spanish (me gusta el jazz) and in Italian (mi piace il jazz).
   - (b) Class shifts: These comprise shifts from one part of speech to another. An example given by Catford is the English a medical student and the French un étudiant en médecine, where the English pre-modifying adjective medical is translated by the adverbial qualifying phrase en médecine.
   - (c) Unit shifts or rank shifts: These are shifts where the translation equivalent in the TL is at a different rank to the SL. ‘Rank’ here refers to the hierarchical linguistic units of sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme.
   - (d) Intra-system shifts: These are shifts that take place when the SL and TL possess approximately corresponding systems but where 'the translation involves selection of a non-corresponding term in the TL system' (2000: 146). Examples given between French and English are number and article systems, where, although similar systems operate in the two languages, they do not always correspond. Thus, advice (singular) in English becomes des conseils (plural) in French, and the French definite article la in ‘Il a la jambe cassée’ corresponds to the English indefinite article a in ‘He has a broken leg’.

Catford's book is an important attempt to apply to translation advances in linguistics in a systematic fashion. However, his analysis of intra-system shifts betrays some of the weaknesses of his approach. From his comparison of the use of French and English article systems in short parallel texts, Catford concludes (1965: 81-2) that French le/la/les 'will have English the as its translation equivalent with probability .65', supporting his statement that 'translation equivalence does not entirely match formal correspondence'. This kind of scientific-like statement of probability, which characterizes Catford's whole approach and was linked to the growing interest in machine translation at the time, was later heavily criticized by, amongst others, Delisle (1982) for its static comparative linguistic approach. Henry (1984), revisiting Catford's book twenty years after publication, considers the work to be 'by and large of historical academic interest' only (p. 157). He does, however, (p. 155) point out the usefulness of Catford's final chapter, on the limits of translatability. Of particular interest is Catford's assertion that translation equivalence depends on communicative features such as function, relevance, situation and culture rather than just on formal linguistic criteria. However, as Catford himself notes (p. 94), deciding what is 'functionally relevant' in a given situation is inevitably 'a matter of opinion'.

Despite the steps taken by Catford to consider the communicative function of the SL item and despite the basis of his terminology being founded on a functional approach to language, the main criticism of Catford's book is that his examples are almost all idealized (i.e. invented and not taken from actual translations) and decontextualized. He never looks at whole texts, nor even above the level of the sentence.

S.2.1 Discussion of the model of translational action

The value of Holz-Manttari's work is the placing of translation (or at least the professional non-literary translation which she describes) within its sociocultural context, including the interplay between the translator and the initiating institution. She later also describes the 'professional profile' of the translator (Holz-Manttari 1986). Some scholars offer fulsome praise:

Holz-Manttari's concept of translatorial action is considered relevant for all types of translation and the theory is held to provide guidelines for every decision to be taken by the translator.

(Schaffner 1997: 5)

The inclusion of real-world commercial translation constraints is welcome in addressing some of the decisions faced by translators. However, the model could be criticized, not least for the complexity of its jargon (for example mej'sage-crammitter compounds), which does little to explain practical translation situations for the individual translator. Also, since one of the aims of
the model is to offer guidelines for intercultural transfer, it is disappointing that it fails to consider cultural difference in more detail or in the kinds of terms proposed by the culturally oriented models discussed in chapters 8 and 9.

Nord (1991: 28) also takes issue with Holz-Manttari’s disregard of the ST. She stresses that, while ‘functionality is the most important criterion for a translation’, this does not allow the translator absolute licence. There needs to be a relationship between ST and TT, and the nature of this relationship is determined by the purpose or skopos.

**Skopos theory**

*Skopos* is the Greek word for ‘aim’ or ‘purpose’ and was introduced into translation theory in the 1970s by Hans J. Vermeer as a technical term for the purpose of a translation and of the action of translating. The major work on skopos theory (*Skopostheorie*) is *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* (‘Groundwork for a General Theory of Translation’), a book Vermeer co-authored with Katharina Reiss (Reiss and Vermeer 1984). Although skopos theory predates Holz-Manttari’s theory of translational action, it can be considered to be part of the same theory, as it deals with a translational action which is ST-based, which has to be negotiated and performed, and which has a purpose and a result (Vermeer 1989/2000: 221). Skopos theory focuses above all on the purpose of the translation, which determines the translation methods and strategies that are to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. This result is the TT, which Vermeer calls the *translatum*. Therefore, in skopos theory, knowing why an ST is to be translated and what the function of the TT will be are crucial for the translator.

As the title of their 1984 book suggests, Reiss and Vermeer aim at a general translation theory for all texts. The first part sets out a detailed explanation of Vermeer’s skopos theory; the second part, ‘special theories’, adapts Reiss’s functional text-type model to the general theory. In this chapter, for reasons of space, we concentrate on the basic underlying ‘rules’ of the theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984: 119). These are:

1. A *translatum* (or TT) is determined by its skopos.
2. A TT is an offer of information (*Informationsangebot*) in a target culture and TL concerning an offer of information in a source culture and SL.
3. A TT does not initiate an offer of information in a clearly reversible way.
4. A TT must be internally coherent.
5. A TT must be coherent with the ST.
6. The five rules above stand in hierarchical order, with the skopos rule predominating.

Some explanation is required here. Rule 2 is important in that it relates the ST and TT to their function in their respective linguistic and cultural contexts. The translator is once again (as was the case in Holz-Manttari’s theory) the key player in a process of intercultural communication and production of the translatum. The irreversibility in point 3 indicates that the function of a *translatum* in its target culture is not necessarily the same as in the source culture. Rules 4 and 5 touch on general skopos ‘rules’ concerning how the success of the action and information transfer is to be judged: the coherence rule, linked to internal textual coherence, and the fidelity rule, linked to intertextual coherence with the ST.

The coherence rule states that the TT ‘must be interpretable as coherent with the TT receiver’s situation’ (Reiss and Vermeer 1984: 113). In other words, the TT must be translated in such a way that it is coherent for the TT receivers, given their circumstances and knowledge.

The fidelity rule merely states (p. 114) that there must be coherence between the *translatum* and the ST or, more specifically, between: the ST information received by the translator;
- the interpretation the translator makes of this information;
- the information that is encoded for the TT receivers.

However, the hierarchical order of the rules means that intertextual coherence (rule 5) is of less importance than intratextual coherence (rule 4), which, in turn, is subordinate to the skopos (rule 1). This down-playing (or ‘dethroning’, as Vermeer terms it) of the status of the ST is a general fact of both skopos and translational action theory.

An important advantage of skopos theory is that it allows the possibility of the same text being translated in different ways according to the purpose of the TT and the commission which is given to the translator. In Vermeer’s words:

What the skopos states is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text. The theory does not state what the principle is: this must be decided separately in each specific case.

(Vermeer 1989/2000: 228)

So, using Vermeer’s own example, an ambiguity in a will written in French would need to be translated literally, with a footnote or comment, for a foreign lawyer dealing with the case. On the other hand, if the will appeared in a novel, the translator might prefer to find a slightly different ambiguity that works in the TL without the need of a formal footnote, so as not to interrupt the reading process.

In order for the translational action to be appropriate for the specific case, the skopos needs to be stated explicitly or implicitly in the commission (p. 228). Vermeer describes the commission as comprising (1) a goal and (2) the conditions under which that goal should be achieved (including deadline and fee), both of which should be negotiated between the commissioner and the translator. In this way, the translator should, as the expert, be able to advise the commissioner/client on the feasibility of the goal. The nature of the TT ‘is primarily determined by its skopos or commission’ (Vermeer 1989/2000: 230) and adequacy (*Adequatheit*) comes to override equivalence as the measure of the translational action. In Reiss and Vermeer (1984: 139), adequacy describes the relations between ST and TT as a consequence of observing a skopos during the translation process. In other words, if the TT fulfills the skopos outlined by the commission, it is functionally and communicatively adequate. Equivalence is reduced to functional constancy between ST and TT (those cases where the function is the same for both ST and TT). However, functional constancy is seen to be the exception.
5.3.1 Discussion of skopos theory
Nord (1997: 109-22) and Schaffner (1997: 237-8) discuss some of the criticisms that have been made of skopos theory by other scholars. These include the following: What purports to be a ‘general’ theory is in fact only valid for non-literary texts. Literary texts are considered either to have no specific purpose and/or to be far more complex stylistically.

1. Reiss’s text type approach and Vermeer’s skopos theory are in fact considering different functional phenomena and cannot be lumped together.

2. Skopos theory does not pay sufficient attention to the linguistic nature of the ST nor to the reproduction of microlevel features in the TT. Even if the skopos is adequately fulfilled, it may be inadequate at the stylistic or semantic levels of individual segments.

Other possible criticisms are similar to those made of Holz-Manttari, namely that jargon such as *translatum* does little to further translation theory, where workable terms already exist, and that consideration of cultural issues and differences must surely be essential when deciding on how, if at all, the skopos can be achieved.

Vermeer (1989/2000: 224) answers the first point above by stressing that goals, purposes, functions and intentions are ‘attributed to’ actions. Thus, a writer of a poem may have goals of having the resultant *translatum* (poem) published and of keeping copyright over it so as to make money from its reproduction. He or she may also have the intention of creating something that exists for itself (‘art for art’s sake’).

Two points are at issue in the second criticism: to what extent does ST type determine translation method and what is the logic of the link between ST type and translation skopos (compare section 5.1 above). The third criticism in particular is tackled by another functionalist, Christiane Nord, with her model of translation-oriented text analysis.