

*Yvonne Griesel (Berlin)*

# Surtitles and Translation

## Towards an Integrative View of Theater Translation

### Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Theater Translation (TT)
- 3 Surtitling
- 4 Are subtitles an adequate mode of translation?
- 5 Concluding Remarks and Outlook
- 6 References

### Abstract

Theater translation (TT)<sup>1</sup> is realized by way of surtitling, simultaneous interpreting, summarizing translation and other modes of translation. It does not appear as a research topic in the literature before Griesel (2000). Its object is to investigate different ways of interlingual transfer characterized by the fact that the boundaries between interpreting and translation are blurred. In contrast to drama translation, the production as a whole constitutes the 'source text'. It has a multidimensional dimension in that translation modes are blurred and in that the target text may be presented in both written and/or oral form. The article will present an outline of the research area of TT and shows how it constitutes an autonomous area of research that deserves to be treated independently of drama translation, subtitling and surtitling in the opera. From a translational point of view it is interesting because it combines and integrates different modes of translation.

This paper will discuss the possibilities of an adequate transfer of a French-speaking production by means of subtitles without destroying the complex semiotic structure of the theatrical work of art. It will also show the limits of surtitling in the theater and the need to consider theater translation as a whole in order to produce adequate target texts.

TT may be provided by subtitles, simultaneous interpreting, written synopses or other, alternative forms and thus falls within the framework of multidimensional translation.

## 1 Introduction

This article explores the following questions:

1. Is it possible - using subtitles - to transfer a French-language production adequately into German without destroying the complex semiotic structure<sup>2</sup> of the theatrical performance?
2. Where are the limits of surtitling in the theater ?
3. Why it is essential to consider theater translation as a whole, in order to produce an adequate<sup>3</sup> target text?

I begin by briefly sketching what TT is, then take a closer look at surtitling and its specifics, using a few examples to illustrate how they are made up, and finally turn to the central

---

<sup>1</sup> The following article and terminology is based on Griesel (2000: 13)

<sup>2</sup> Fischer-Lichte (1998: 27-28)

<sup>3</sup> I use the word in the sense proposed by Reiß (1995: 107ff.).

question of whether surtitles are an adequate method of translation for foreign-language theatrical productions. I will make my arguments more explicit by means of presenting a TT model and will close with a summary.

## 2 Theater Translation (TT)

Research on TT began in 2000 and refers to the oral and written translation of foreign language theatrical productions to be shown to audiences of different languages. This form of translation can be found mainly at international theater festivals such as those held in Avignon, Edinburgh or Vienna<sup>4</sup>.

Within TT, the 'source text' is the production as a whole which needs to be taken into account when translating. One of the distinctive features of TT is that it is experienced only once at a particular moment and time.

The translation process involves translation outside of the specific theatrical performance in that translations are inserted into surtitle lists, taken into the interpreter's booth or distributed to the audience as synopses<sup>5</sup>.

What is specific to TT is that the source text is the performance rather than the written text of the drama. Thus the problems involved are quite different to those of a translation of a play or a literary text. The performance takes place within a limited temporal framework. Theater translation depends on the given situative context, and has much in common with the interpreting process. The translation of a specific production must function within the allotted temporal framework.

When a foreign-language production comes to the stage, whether as part of a festival or a guest performance, a translation process is necessary if the play is strongly text-based. This process can occur in several ways, including:

1. A summarizing translation: Before the performance, the audience receives a written synopsis of the play and watches the play without further translation.
2. Surtitles: Surtitles present text passages in a condensed, translated form and are manually projected onto the stage.
3. Simultaneous interpretation: The audience is provided with headphones and listens to a simultaneous live interpreting during the performance.

---

<sup>4</sup> This very new field of research has only attracted attention in the past ten years. It is a rapidly changing field because of technological advances and is becoming increasingly important with the number of international festivals increasing in the past ten years (cf. the annual festival calendar in the *theaterheute* issues between 1995- 2005, nos. 5 and 6).

<sup>5</sup> 'A summarizing translation of a foreign-language production is comparable to an abstract. (according to Oldenburg's definition "abstracts should be 'autonomous', i.e., comprehensible without any knowledge of the reference text" (1992: 77). Cf. also the German National Standards Organisation (DIN): "The abstract provides a brief and clear account of the contents of a document. It should be informative without interpreting or evaluating... and understandable without the original". (DIN 1426: 2) The term 'abstract' can only be used for the ideal-typical form of a summarizing translation, some examples, (the synopsis of the production *Oh les beaux jours* by Peter Brook) deviate from the definition of an abstract to the extent that they offer additional explanations and interpretations, and thus are better categorized as "summaries that make arguments and draw conclusions" (see Oldenburg 1992: 105). The translation must be kept short enough for the audience to be able to read it before the performance, either in total, or at least parts of it, e.g. the text up to the interval.-Translations in the form of abstracts are very inexpensive, and frequently used options in foreign-language productions. There are various types of summarizing translation – shorter, longer, in book or booklet form or as a simple A 4 sheet'. (cf. Griesel 2000:44).

4. Alternative forms: for example, a translator integrated into the performance interprets, or the TT is rendered by other, experimental means of translation on the stage.

This list does not claim to be exhaustive but is based on observations during the years 1995 to 2005 (cf. Griesel, 2000: 13). Currently, surtitling is the dominant mode of TT and it is increasingly gaining in popularity.

### 3 Surtitling

Surtitling in the theater is surely not an everyday phenomenon. Its complexity makes it an extremely interesting field of research and makes it an appropriate touchstone for translational insights.

Theatrical productions are transitory and in order to judge a translation, one needs to take notes during the individual performance<sup>6</sup>. Since the lighting often makes it impossible to film the events on stage and render the surtitles in visible form, it is frequently necessary to painfully piece together a source text<sup>7</sup> of notes taken during the performance and from memory as well as from surtitle lists and books. Thanks to digital technology, I was able to record five French-language performances in such a way that I was able to analyze the entire source text.

Since decisions for or against various means of transmission often follows highly subjective criteria, I have tried to objectivize surtitling by assembling a diachronic corpus that incorporates the development of surtitling over the past decade on the one hand and that takes into consideration the complexity of the texts on the other hand. I consider both classical and contemporary plays, which I have attempted to organize into a typology.

As the model in Figure 1 illustrates, also included in the analysis are the translated dramas, which exist on the reference level as part of the source text.

The model applies to the language pair French – German on three levels. On the one hand, we have the German surtitles, which are visible to the audience, and on the other the performance level, on which the French-language productions are watched and heard. I have distinguished between four types of texts:

1. the canonical original dramatic text (ODT)
2. the non-canonical original dramatic text (ODT)
3. the canonical translation of the drama (DT)
4. the non-canonical translation of the drama (DT)

These categories do not claim to be comprehensive. The open arrows indicate further possibilities. The analysis of my corpus<sup>8</sup> revealed that such a differentiation is necessary for TT, because it entails various translation approaches. This can be noticed on the reference level, which contains texts that either enter the surtitles directly or play a decisive role in the process.

---

<sup>6</sup> The problems of note-taking in TT hardly differ from those used in analyses of performances in the field of theater studies (cf. Fischer-Lichte 1999: 112ff.). Sometimes there is even less willingness to co-operate when it comes to TT, since surtitling is regarded as a rather unimportant part of the production and its treatment is thus considered superfluous.

<sup>7</sup> I use the term 'source text' to refer not just to the entire production as a semiotic unit as defined by Fischer-Lichte (1998:27-28), but rather to "any more or less clearly distinguishable and interpretable quantity of signs that serve as the basis of information for a translation" (Prunč 2003: 29), which includes the translated dramas existing on the level of reference.

<sup>8</sup> I analysed eight French-language, German surtitled performances from the period between 1996 and 2004, and the distinction between these four types of text proved useful (cf. Griesel 2000).

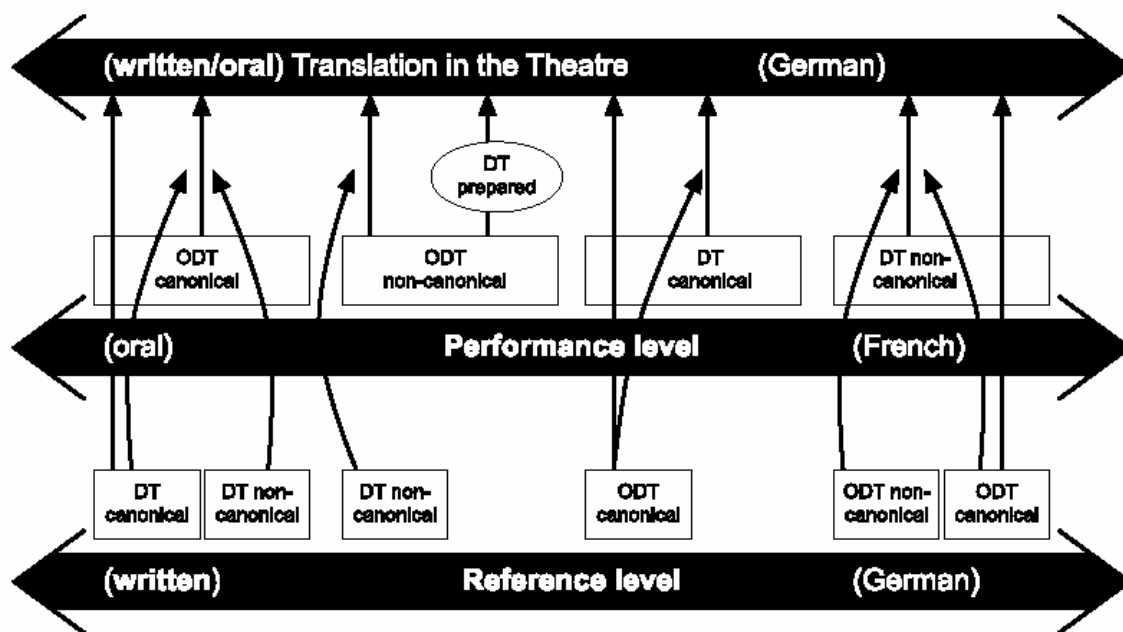


Figure 1: Reference Level influences on TT

A few examples may serve to illustrate the model. An original text has the greatest weight on the reference level. This means that when, for example, a French translation of a German play, whether by Goethe, Brecht or in my case by Grabbe, is performed in Germany, the original German text appears again in the surtitles and resists any compression. The following example from Bernard Sobel's production of *Napoléon ou les Cent Jours*, performed on 26 September 1996 at the *Hebbel Theater* in Berlin, and subtitled by Caroline Elias, underlines this clearly.

Surtitle	Stage text	Original drama
- Die Stimme kenn' ich von den Pyramiden her. Mein Hauptmann, seit Ägypten sah ich ihn nicht.	<i>Cette voix – je la connais depuis les Pyramides, quand nous plantions notre drapeau, le tricolore, tout en haut des minarets du Caire, et qu'à nos pieds le Nil roulait ses flots. Mon capitaine, je ne t'ai pas vu depuis l'Égypte.</i>	Die Stimme kenn' ich von den Pyramiden her, als wir da unser Trikolour hoch über Kairos Minarets aufpflanzten, und der Nil zu unsern Füßen rollte. - Mein Hauptmann, seit Ägypten sah' ich dich nicht.

A very high value is placed on the 'sacred original', which remains intact. In the case of original dramatic texts, such as *L'Avare*, which have become part of the international canon, a recognized translation, which sometimes attains a virtually 'sacred' status too, exists on the reference level. One need only think of the German Shakespeare translations by Schlegel and Tieck. Nevertheless, the reference level is treated more freely, as we can see from the analysis of Roger Planchon's production of *L'Avare*, which was staged at the *Deutsches Theater* on 20 June, 1999, with the surtitles by Michel Bataillon based on a translation by Christel Gersch.

Surtitle	Stage text	Reference level
Aber ich bin nicht sicher, daß die anderen meine Gefühle teilen werden.	<i>mais ce n'est pas assez peut-être pour le justifier aux autres, et je ne suis pas sûre qu'on entre dans mes sentiments.</i>	aber vielleicht genügt es nicht, mich vor den anderen freizusprechen; ich bin nicht sicher, daß sie meine Gefühle teilen werden.

The sentence structure is largely maintained, but with interventions: the first clause is removed, but the words *aber* (but) and *die anderen* (the others) are used in the second part. The intervention is minor, but a somewhat more liberal handling of the text on the reference level is evident. Far greater changes are made to texts for which no well-known, let alone canonical, German translation exists. An example is Peter Brook's production of *Le Costume*, which was performed in Berlin in 2000 with surtitles by Uli Menke based on the translation by Isolde Schmitt.

Surtitle	Stage text	Reference level
Philemon ging zur Post,	<i>Philemon alla à la poste de Sophiatown,</i>	Philemon ging zur Post <b>in Sophiatown,</b>
die zwischen Sophiatown und der Stadt der Weißen liegt.	<i>qui se situe exactement entre Sophiatown et la ville des blancs de Westdene.</i>	die genau zwischen Sophiatown und der Stadt der Weissen in <b>Westdene</b> liegt.

As we can see, the surtitler adopted the basic structure, but condensed the content within the sentence structures.

The form that most closely resembles film subtitles is that used for the French-language play *Le Colonel des Zouaves*, of which no German translation exists, and which was presented to the German theater public for the first time in the form of surtitles. Note that in order to further shorten the titles, the adjectives are frequently removed.

Sutitles	text on stage
Der Tunnel mündet vor einer Tudorfassade aus fast grauem Stein,	Après d'innombrables tournants, le tunnel obscur débouche sur une façade Tudor en briques presque grises,
vollgestopft mit wappengeschmückten Fenstern.	boursoufflées de verrières élisabéthaines à vitraux armoriés.

Similarly, adjectives are absorbed by nouns when the information provided by the adjective appears redundant.

I mention this instance to emphasize how important it is to distinguish between different types of theatrical texts, and to underline the central significance of the reference level in this context. One can easily imagine the difficulties a surtitler may have when transforming Goethe's *Faust* into surtitles. An example from the surtitling of the so-called *Urfaust*, however, illustrates the existence of more positive options. At the *Goethe Festival* in Munich in 1999, Ms Spinazzi surtitled a French-language *Faust* with "Hier steh ich nun ... " ("Now here I stand", from Faust's first soliloquy in the play) and simply had Faust continue without further surtitles, since the German-speaking audience could supply the rest themselves.

We must also consider another peculiarity of theater translation, namely, that all forms of transmission are additive forms of translation, which extend the source text by the dimension of translation. The audience is also divided into different groups; the circle of

recipients include native speakers of the target language and of the source language as well as target-language (TL) speakers with a knowledge of the source language (SL)<sup>9</sup>.



This means that between the stage and one segment of the audience, communication is monolingual, while between the stage and the second part of the audience, communication is bilingually mediated. For the third segment of the audience, communication is monolingual, aided by bilingually mediated communication. The peculiarity of theater translation is that these three modes of communication must occur parallel to each other, that is, at the same time and place, and overtly. Thus, the target text is perceived differently,

- either as a source text without translation,
- with occasional reception of the translation
- or as a complete target text, of which the target language segment is the integral component.

#### 4 Are surtitles an adequate mode of translation?

My reflections have centered around the question of whether surtitles are an adequate means of transmitting a production into German, a question which was passionately discussed during all guest performances with other forms of theater translation also tending to be supported or rejected on the basis of rather subjective arguments. My intention was to tone down the heated debate by introducing some objectivity and the results of my research have hopefully provided some food for thought in that they have shown that theater translation is a complex translation process, which can be assessed using objective criteria, and which does not have to rely on subjective reactions by individuals.

Surtitling is a possible, and currently the most common, mode of transmission for guest performances. The study has shown first of all that this complex translation process involves two phases of production: a translation phase and an interpreting phase. The suggested model shows that in order to do justice to the complexity of the surtitling process, we must regard it as 'text design'<sup>10</sup> as Fig. 2 shows.

The model represents the surtitling process using the action-theoretical approach<sup>11</sup>, and consequently the translation process begins with the commissioning of surtitles. Those who commission surtitles, e.g. festival organisers, address the translation issue after inviting the foreign language productions, and assign the task to a translator.

The translator produces a written translation of the source text. Interestingly enough, a prototypical source text<sup>12</sup> is used here. The term 'prototypical source text' refers to a videotape of a specific performance of the production. It may be very similar to the performance to be subtitled, but it may also be rendered quite differently by improvisation, errors, cast changes, etc.

---

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed discussion see 'Die Inszenierung als Translat. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Theaterübertitelung' (Griesel 2007).

<sup>10</sup> This term was coined by Holz-Mänttari 1993.

<sup>11</sup> As proposed by Holz-Mänttari in 1984, cf. also 1986.

<sup>12</sup> With this terminology, I do not refer to prototype semantics, but to a source text that serves as a model for the subsequent translation.

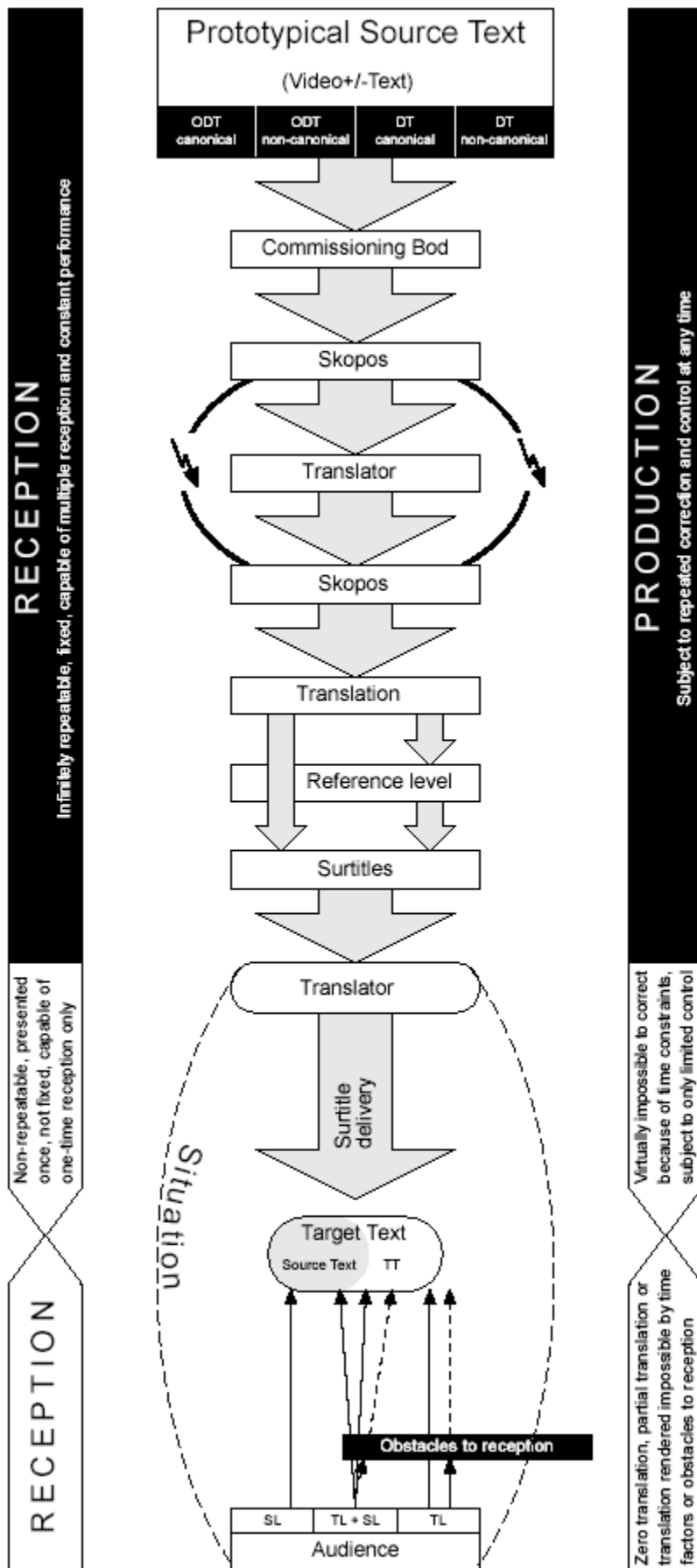


Fig. 2: Theater Translation (TT) Model

Thus, at this stage, the translation process can only approximate the source text of the concrete performance. During surtitling, this pre-existing written translation can only be changed to a very limited extent<sup>13</sup>.

The model represents the surtitling process using the action-theoretical approach<sup>14</sup>, and consequently the translation process begins with the commissioning of surtitles. Those who commission surtitles, e.g. festival organisers, address the translation issue after inviting the foreign language productions, and assign the task to a translator.

The translator produces a written translation of the source text. Interestingly enough, a prototypical source text<sup>15</sup> is used here. The term 'prototypical source text' refers to a videotape of a specific performance of the production. It may be very similar to the performance to be subtitled, but it may also be rendered quite differently by improvisation, errors, cast changes, etc. Thus, at this stage, the translation process can only approximate the source text of the concrete performance. During surtitling, this pre-existing written translation can only be changed to a very limited extent<sup>16</sup>.

The commissioning body decides, sometimes in conjunction with the director, what mode of translation is to be used and thus – in a certain way - establish a *skopos*. For example, they determine which translation to use on the reference level, the degree of abridgement, the possibilities for deletion or condensation, and the like. The translators then prepare surtitles in the target language and specify the *skopos* based on their experience – for example, introduce a higher degree of abridgement, use complete sentence structures within the individual surtitles to ease understanding and reception, etc. It becomes evident here that TT generally operates in a field of tension, encompassing various dichotomies, such as literary versus functional quality, written versus oral, optical versus acoustic reception, etc. The *skopoi* may at times be contradictory and incompatible, and this irreconcilability can prevent an adequate translation. If the *skopoi* are not irreconcilable, the translator's only option may be to refuse the surtitling commission<sup>17</sup>.

The translation that takes place within the specified *skopos* is often similar to an interpreting process, which is highly dependent upon situative factors, but must also rely on previously prepared elements. The reception corresponds to the reception of simultaneous interpreting; it is unique, unrepeatable and exists solely within a prescribed temporal framework<sup>18</sup>. The translation prepared during the initial *skopos* phase is inserted manually to parallel the source text. The surtitlers thus hear the source text acoustically and insert the prepared written elements in the target text optically. In order to do so, they naturally need a firm grasp of both languages. Since changes during this process, as was mentioned above, are almost impossible within the performance setting, the quality of the translation depends heavily on situative factors.

---

<sup>13</sup> The possibilities for changing the order or text of the surtitles during the performance depend strongly on which surtitling software is used. A number of different programs are currently in use, from simple PowerPoint to the Torticoli program recently developed in Avignon especially for the theater, which allows for new surtitles to be added during the performance.

<sup>14</sup> As proposed by Holz-Mänttari in 1984, cf. also 1986.

<sup>15</sup> With this terminology, I do not refer to prototype semantics, but to a source text that serves as a model for the subsequent translation.

<sup>16</sup> The possibilities for changing the order or text of the surtitles during the performance depend strongly on which surtitling software is used. A number of different programs are currently in use, from simple PowerPoint to the Torticoli program recently developed in Avignon especially for the theater, which allows for new surtitles to be added during the performance.

<sup>17</sup> Naturally, when looking at the decision not to translate, which is generally a last resort, one must always keep in mind that financial aspects play a key role in sometimes influencing translators' actions.

<sup>18</sup> The definition of interpreting and translation is based on that of Kade (1968:35), which remains authoritative.



The example that follows<sup>19</sup>, is taken from the production of *Les Nouvelles du Plateau S*<sup>20</sup> and shows clearly that the two phases of the surtitling process described above are interrelated and therefore cannot be considered in isolation from each other.

11.30					11.36
<i>C'est bien pourtant il y a du suspense. C'est idiot. Bonjour. Aah, salut.</i>					
Das ist spannender. - Das ist bescheuert					

11.37					11.44
Eine Freundin. - Aha.					
Sie ist heute gekommen und bleibt etwas im Hotel.					

As becomes evident here, the particular difficulty is that the surtitles continue to be delivered in the programmed order. If the actors skip a line or a whole passage, the target text no longer corresponds to the source text. This is especially striking when, as in this case, the optical part is still visible after the source text can no longer be heard, or vice versa. I chose this production as an example to show what can happen even if the surtitles are, on the whole, very good, and were prepared and delivered by a very experienced surtitler<sup>21</sup>. This is no isolated incident. According to my observations, such irregularities occur nearly every time surtitles are used. The following quotation from the press review of the theater festival *Theater der Welt* in 1999 comments on this phenomenon with a sense of humor.

The most subtly amusing moment came from a technical slip-up, when the surtitles came to a standstill after about two hours. 'We are all vain and useless. I, too, shall remain seated' could be read for several minutes, while on the stage the actors leapt, screwed and screeched quite incomprehensibly. Up to the meta-level with surtitling: Now that's deconstruction. (Kühl 1999:14)

Thus in order to evaluate the overall transmission process, one must take into account that surtitling is neither an interpreting nor a translation process, but rather a hybrid form<sup>22</sup>.

Various other obstacles to reception can also play an important role in TT, to the extent of producing an unintentional zero-translation (Prunč 1997: 37). I refer to such problems as projecting the surtitles too high. In the case of *Les Nouvelles du Plateau S*, surtitles were invisible from the first circle, since they were obscured by a photo frieze belonging to the scenery, only people in the stalls could read them. This was wholly unintentional, however, and the audience was not informed in advance, so that the German speakers sitting in the first circle could not understand the play. Obstacles of this kind are very frequent in theater surtitling, whether the cause is poor lighting, technical failure or something else. Once again, a quotation from the press review from the 1999 *Theater der Welt* festival nicely puts such matters in words:

The charm of the foreign language, too, soon palls. And the mouse wandering hysterically across the screen with the surtitles, which keeps clicking onto the wrong text files, and finally no longer clicks anything at all, does not exactly help to save the evening. (Ammicht 1999: 19)

<sup>19</sup> The tables are organised in such a way that the first line represents the time precisely, down to the second. The second line is the text heard on stage, as temporally precise as possible, and the third line indicates the standing times of the German surtitles.

<sup>20</sup> Laurant Gutmann (Théâtre National de Strasbourg): 'Nouvelles du Plateau S'. 'Perspectives' 2004. Performance: Centre Dramatique de Thionville-Lorraine, Thionville. 26 May 2004.

<sup>21</sup> In general, any analysis in this area must take into account that all of the translations at my disposal can be assumed to have been far better than average, since only good surtitlers would allow their surtitles to be recorded.

<sup>22</sup> I have consciously expanded the definition of translation here to include a third category, since TT involves a mixture of the two categories of (oral) interpreting and (written) translation. (Griesel 2007)

The reception of the surtitles, as the diagram clearly shows, corresponds to simultaneous interpreting with target text production in a written form. The reception of the target text implies different requirements. First, we have the presentation of the target text, which as a surtitle borrows heavily from subtitles. It has become apparent, however, that the results already obtained with subtitling have been applied only intuitively to surtitling in the theater. Minimum projection times are generally maintained, while maximum projection times and the removal of the individual titles are unknown in surtitling. This naturally renders reception far more difficult, sometimes even preventing it, or forces the audience to decide for or against one or more theatrical or translatory signs. A greater awareness of these obstacles to reception could lead to serious improvements in surtitling.

The other point that has emerged is that TT treats different types of texts quite differently. First of all, the reference level contains existing canonical dramas or drama translations and plays a key role in TT. My findings have clearly shown that a German original text performed in French translation, which reappears in its source language in the surtitles enjoys the highest authority. It is treated as a so-called sacred text, and the translator does not dare to make serious interventions in the textual structure, so as not to change the style and language of the original. Since it has become evident, however, that older, classic dramas in particular frequently need to be shortened by more than one-third to ease reception, interventions in the textual structure are necessary. And these plays are generally abridged by removing sentences and phrases. A great deal of information is accordingly lost, making it difficult in some cases for the audience to follow the complex plot structure of classical dramas. The text also appears fragmentary, since a drama is, after all, a unified textual structure. In the case of contemporary plays, surtitlers treat the text more freely, condensing more by means of interventions in the sentence structure. The reason for this is probably the absence of so-called sacred texts on the reference level, and the fact that the plays themselves do not possess such great authority. Paradoxically, however, being presented in a distorted style leads to authors who are unknown abroad, e.g. in Germany and thus to an unintentional but obvious breach of loyalty<sup>23</sup> to the playwright on the part of the translator. The procedure should, in principle, be precisely the opposite.

The degree of abridgement of the source text that is needed to create the target text varies widely. The analysis of my corpus showed that this can range from a scarcely perceptible shortening to losses of nearly 50 %. For generalization purposes one would need to incorporate more plays as well as other language pairs.

One tendency, however, namely that classics are abridged more extensively than contemporary plays, has become obvious. In general it can be said that the degree of abridgement varies widely and depends on the amount of spoken text on the one hand, and on the tempo of speech in the spoken passages on the other. The degree of abridgement arises from the requirement of presenting two-line surtitles, which must remain visible for a certain period of time. Shortening the source text by one-half leads either to a great loss of information or to grave stylistic changes, and both options must be weighed against each other from the outset.

At this point, the central issue that emerged during the analysis becomes more than apparent; Surtitling can be an adequate method of interlingual transmission within the framework of TT. The only problem arises with surtitles as the exclusive method of translation. The initial goal is for translation to take place; the implicit skopos for the translation process is provided by the institution or person commissioning the surtitles, which however frequently contradicts the skopos that the translator chooses on the basis of aspects relevant to translation. Since the relationship is clearly hierarchical, however, and translation

---

<sup>23</sup> I refer here to the definition of loyalty developed by Christiane Nord. (1989).

is often not accepted as the work of experts, the requirements of translation often give way to other concerns, which may prevent an adequate translation.

This shows us how important it is that translators need to be accepted in their role as experts. This means allowing them to undertake an analysis from the translatory viewpoint, and to embed surtitling in TT, implying that they may select the possible form of TT for an adequate translation after an analysis taking into account the perspectives of reception aesthetics, theater studies and translation studies. This today is still very rarely the case. The *Schaubühne* in Berlin, is an exception to this rule, however, in that it has accepted the experienced surtitler Uli Menke in his role as an expert, and now takes him along as an advisor on TT matters when guest performances are given abroad, regardless of the fact that he does not understand the language of the country. The model in Figure 2 is intended to illuminate the rare case in which the translator is deployed as an expert in TT:

This model, unlike the one presented in Fig. 2, represents not simply one translation method, but the entire process of TT. With this integrative model, there are no longer contradictory skopoi. Instead, through consultation, the translator and customer decide upon a common skopos, which in turn determines the choice of translation method. Here, too, the methods are largely translation hybrids, which are subject to the same difficulties as surtitling, and must overcome the same dichotomies. The acceptance of the translator as an expert, however, resolves the tension between conflicting skopoi.

This process is not specific to TT, but it solves some of the problems inherent in the complex process of TT. In principle, one can apply it to virtually any translation process.

## 5 Concluding Remarks and Outlook

In conclusion, one can say that surtitling can be a suitable form of transmission for foreign-language productions. One must be aware of certain factors, however, such as changes on the stylistic level, difficulties of reception, contradictory skopoi, the two-phase nature of the production process and working with a prototype, which in the concrete target situation is at the mercy of the performance situation, with all its potential surprises, i.e. the degree and strategies of abridgement, the presentation of the target text, the extent of interventions in the stage set, as well as financial and temporal aspects, and other factors.

All of these aspects must be weighed with respect to the assumed skopos, in order to apply the appropriate method of transmission for the individual production and thus to remain 'truthful' to the author, to oneself, to the commissioning body as well as to the audience.

No doubt there are plays for which surtitling is the appropriate method, since it has its strengths of course, which directors in particular greatly appreciate. It does not intervene too obtrusively in the events on stage, there is no interference from extraneous noise or additional actors, and it provides not the daringly abbreviated form of the printed synopsis, but rather a continuous translation. The danger, however, is that it lacks transparency in that the audience does not realize how strongly, and in what form, the text has been abridged.

It was not my intention to evaluate surtitles but to allow for a few doubts about whether, as many believe, surtitling in the theater is the best mode of transmission for all plays. I also understand my work as an argument in favor of considering translators as experts, for an adequate translation can only be provided when all other means available for a successful translation are considered: the cultural memory to fill in the blanks, the careful insertion of additional information in the translation process and the necessity of making full use of all means of artistic expression. Taken together, these prerequisites for an adequate translation underline the necessity of advisory function and of the transparency of the translation process and show that the ideal form of TT for a production is not any particular form, but rather the suitable one.

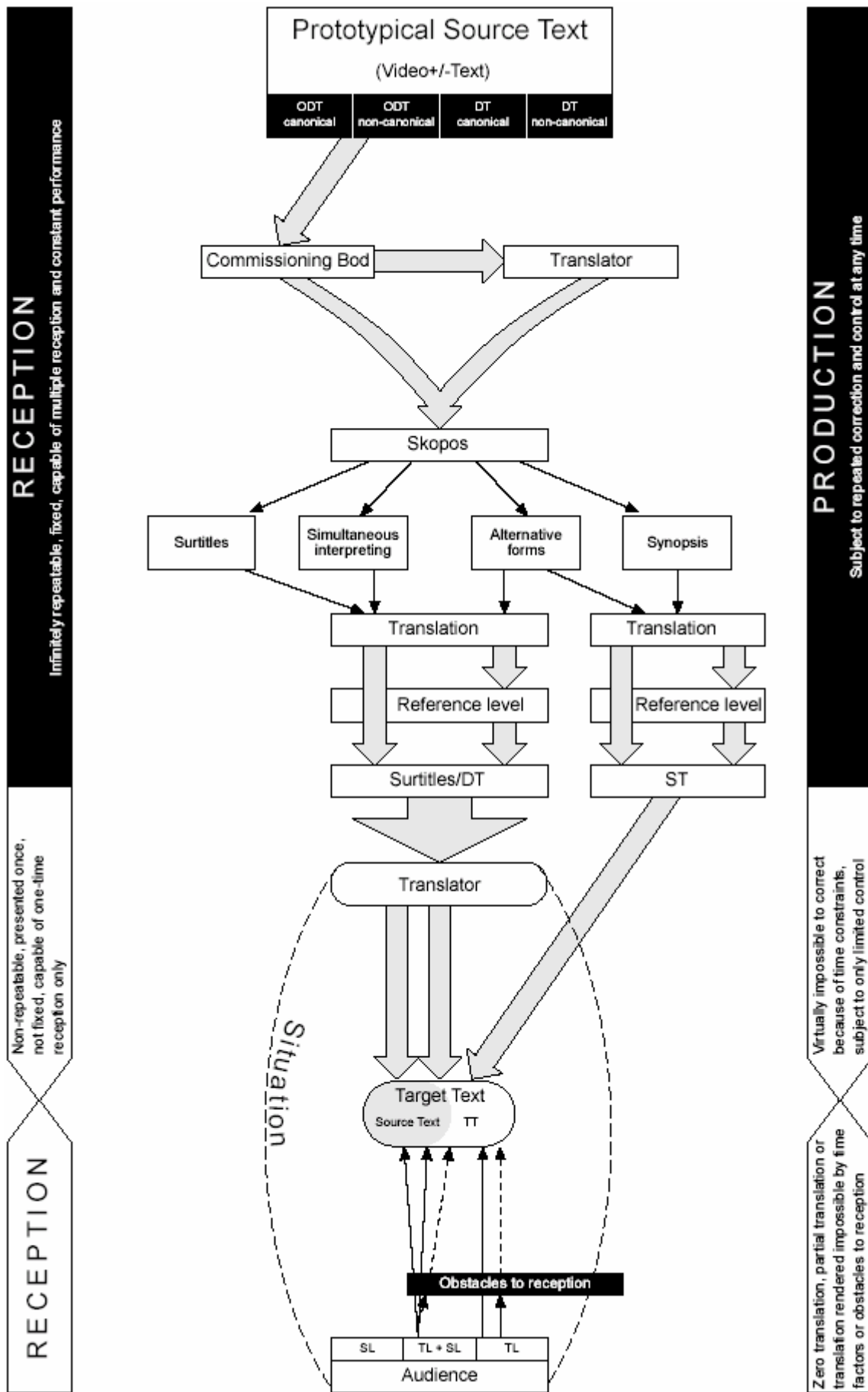


Fig. 3: TT Model with translation expert

The study has shown that far more research is needed in this area. It is a fascinating field of study, which not only touches on the problems of interpreting and translating, but even unites them in a process of producing translation hybrids, a very challenging enterprise indeed. One is often tempted to disengage certain areas of TT from translation studies. The present study has shown, however, that what we are dealing with is most definitely a translation process, which is currently taking place in the theaters of the world, and in the described manner. It is a purposeful process motivated by a dual skopos, which aims to produce the best possible translation. Literary and theater studies will address the aesthetic and artistic aspects of theatrical productions, but the aspect of translation is a matter for translation studies. If the theories of translation studies are too narrow for TT, that only means that they have not yet been conceived broadly enough for certain translation processes, and need to be expanded. A good deal of research remains to be done here, and I understand my work as an invitation to others to explore this interesting field of study.

The preoccupation with TT also shows that an integrative approach is essential for both translation and translation studies. On the one hand, we need to view the forms of TT as potential translation processes, since no adequate translation is conceivable otherwise. Likewise, we need to overcome the separation between translation and interpreting in our theoretical reflections, and also include the explicit as well as the implicit skopos. The co-existence of various skopoi is precisely the point of tension that can hinder translation, if we fail to accept it as the work of experts, and to take advantage of the professional competence of translators and the research that is under way on the operationalization of the translation scopos (cf. Sunwoo 2007).

In this sense TT is a prototypical example for the importance of the research field of multidimensional translation (cf. the other articles in this volume).

## 6 References

- Ammicht, Marion (1999): 'Fluch der Hirschkuh'. *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*. 24 June, p. 19.
- DIN 1426: Inhaltsangaben von Dokumenten. Kurzreferate, Literaturberichte. In: 'Publikationen und Dokumentationen' 2. eds. Deutsches Institut für Normung. Berlin Beuth. (1988). 2-15. (DIN Taschenbuch; 154)
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika (1998): *Semiotik des Theaters. Das System der theatralischen Zeichen*. Volume 1, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika (1999): *Semiotik des Theaters. Die Aufführung als Text*. Volume 3, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Griesel, Yvonne (2000): Translation im Theater. *Die mündliche und schriftliche Übertragung französischsprachiger Inszenierungen ins Deutsche*. Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang.
- Griesel, Yvonne (2007): *Die Inszenierung als Translat. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Theaterübertitelung*. Berlin: Frank und Timme Verlag.
- Holz-Mänttari, Justa (1984): *Translatorisches Handeln. Theorie und Methode*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- Holz-Mänttari, Justa (1986): 'Translatorisches Handeln – theoretisch fundierte Berufsprofile'. In: Snell-Hornby, Mary: *Übersetzungswissenschaft – Eine Neuorientierung*. Tübingen: Franke. 348-374.
- Holz-Mänttari, Justa (1993): 'Bildungsstrukturen und Netzwerk für ein Tätigkeitenfeld Textdesign'. In: *TextconText* 8. 259-93.
- Kade, Otto (1968): *Zufall und Gesetzmäßigkeit in der Übersetzung*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift Fremdsprachen. I. Leipzig: Enzyklopädie.
- Kühl, Christiane (1999): 'Am Ende der Zukunft'. In: *Die Tageszeitung*. Berlin. Edition, 28 June. p. 14.

- Nord, Christiane (1989): 'Loyalität statt Treue. Vorschläge zu einer funktionalen Übersetzungstypologie'. *Lebende Sprachen*, XXXIV (3). 100-105.
- Oldenburg, Hermann (1992): *Angewandte Fachtextlinguistik: „conclusions“ und Zusammenfassungen*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Prunč, Erich (2000): 'Vom Translationsbiedermeier zum Cyber-Translation'. *TEXTconTEXT* 14. 3-75.
- Prunč, Erich (1997a): 'Versuch einer Skopostypologie'. In: Grbić, Nadja & Wolf, Michaela (eds): *Text - Kultur - Kommunikation*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag.
- Reiß, Katharina (1995): 'Adäquatheit und Äquivalenz als Schlüsselbegriffe der Übersetzungstheorie und -praxis'. In: Snell-Hornby, Mary & Kadric, Mira (eds): *Grundfragen der Übersetzungswissenschaft. Wiener Vorlesungen von Katharina Reiß*. Wien: Universitätsverlag.
- Sunwoo, Min (2007): '„Operationalizing the Translation Scopus“'. Paper presented at the MuTra Conference 'LSP Translation Scenarios', 30 April – 4 May 2007, Vienna (to be published in the Proceedings 2007).
- Trilse-Finkelstein, Johann Chr. & Hammer, Klaus (1995): *Lexikon Theater International*. Berlin: Henschel Verlag.