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Hatim, B. & Mason, I. *The Translator As Communicator*  
London: Routledge, 1997

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*The Translator As Communicator* is a book which demands a great deal of previous linguistic knowledge from its readers. It is not, therefore, addressed to 'regular' translators, but to those who, besides being translators, are also scholars and consequently familiar with concepts of linguistics as well as of discourse analysis. Should it ever be adopted in a translation course it should only be recommended to advanced students, and even these would require some further readings in these fields in order to appreciate better the book's content.

The first chapter of the book looks more like an introduction and could have been easily combined with the Preface. As such, it presents the topics which are going to be discussed in the forthcoming chapters, introducing a huge amount of new vocabulary whose definition did not need to be advanced so early. The reader could have become familiar with these new concepts as they ap-

peared throughout the book, instead of being overloaded from the start. This chapter only differs from the Preface when it tries to show that different kinds of translations such as literal, technical and interpreting have certain similarities.

However, the reader who does not have the above-mentioned background only begins to get really desperate in the second chapter, when the book makes it very clear that the framework adopted is one of discourse analysis. Those familiar with the subject feel as if they are reading a Hallidayan text, when faced with vocabulary items such as *field, mode, tenor, texture, structure, intertextuality, semiotic, coherence, genre, discourse, pragmatic, register membership and intentionality*, which appear markedly throughout the whole book.

Chapter 3 is almost a repetition of the previous one, dealing with the processing of text in interpreting. The comment made by the authors that, the teaching of text structure is important for training interpreters how to deal with deviations when they occur, should have been postponed to the

end of the book, as it frustrates more than it stimulates. Also, the length of this chapter is not justified by its content, which is rather repetitive. The next chapter, which focuses on simultaneous interpreting, demands some previous knowledge of syntax. Surprisingly, after dedicating a great amount of time to syntax issues, the authors assume that "source text intonation patterns may be the element of cohesion on which interpreters rely most strongly" (p. 76). This is another statement to be left to the end.

If it were not for the announcement made in the first chapter (which reiterates my opinion that it should be an introduction) that there will be a chapter on "Politeness in Screen Translation", the reader would suspect it was included in this book by mistake, when it should belong to some other publication. Removing the rare allusions made regarding translation, this chapter would be a welcome article on politeness theory to be published in a journal of discourse analysis. Later in the book, when the Arabic version of *Pygmalion* is presented, one starts wondering when examples of translation and inter-

preting in other languages will be shown. Most of the samples studied throughout the whole book are from Arabic, excluding the work of many translators in other languages which could generate valuable material for analysis.

The seventh and eighth chapters, as well as the fifth, are more suitable for publication in journals, rather than in this book. Even though chapter 9 discusses discourse analysis in detail, just like the others, this is the one of most interest to translators, since it deals with issues of translation. The chapter on text-level errors could have been integrated with the others, as the topics raised are closely related to the contents of the previous ones. The book could have finished here. Even though the last two chapters on curriculum design and performance assessment concern teachers as well as students of translation, the approach followed by the authors will interest trainers of translators, rather than trainees themselves.

Therefore, it might be worth raising the question of what audience the authors had in mind when writing this book. Another question to be asked is: Why do some

chapters have a summary at the end while others do not?

I strongly advise Hatim and Mason that if they ever decide to produce a revised edition of *The Translator As Communicator* they should: a) change the title of the

book, which is extremely misleading, to 'The Translator As Discourse Analyst'; and b) condense/remove the above alluded chapters.

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