

# Translation Theory

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*Interpreting is not everybody's art*

□ *Interpreting*

□ *Translation*



**Interpreting** *is oral translation*

**Translation** 1. **as a process**

*is a transformation of  
text 1 into text 2*

2. **as a result**

*is text 2*



# Common language

- 1. Source language
- 2. Source text
- 3. Target language
- 4. Target text



# Common language

Translation is done

Source language → Target language

Source text → Target text



# Common language

- 1. **Source language** *is the language from which the translation is done*
- 2. **Source text** *is the text translated*
- 3. **Target language** *is the language into which the translation is done*
- 4. **Target text** *is the text as a result of the translation*



# PROFESSIONALISM

- Translators aim to produce a text that is as faithful to the original as circumstances require or permit.
- Translators aim to to be “invisible people”- transferring content without drawing attention to the considerable artistic and technical skills involved in the process.



# PROFESSIONALISM

Some countries view translations as a **clerk task** and pay their translators accordingly.

Others (such as Japanese) regard it as a **major intellectual discipline**



Translators not only need to know their **source language** well.

They must also have a thorough understanding of the

- **field of knowledge** covered by the source language,
- **social**,
- **cultural** or
- **emotional** connotations that need to be specified in the target language.





The translation aims at  
**semantic equivalence**  
btw source & target language.

Exact equivalence is impossible.



# No perfect parallel

No translator could provide a translation that was a perfect parallel to the source text, in such aspects as

- rhythm,
- sound symbolism,
- puns, and
- cultural allusions .



# LEVELS OF TRANSLATIONS

□ *WORD-FOR-WORD*

□ *LITERAL TRANSLATION*

□ *FREE TRANSLATION*



# WORD-FOR-WORD

Each word in the source language is translated by a word (or morpheme) in the Target language.

The result often makes no sense, especially when idiomatic constructions are used:

*It's raining cats and dogs -*

*She is a sweet tooth*



# *LITERAL TRANSLATION*

The linguistic structure of the source text is followed, but is normalized according to the rules of the target language:

*It's raining cats and dogs*

*Идет дождь кошками и собаками.*



# ***FREE TRANSLATION***

The linguistic structure of the source language is ignored, and an equivalent is found based on the meaning it conveys

*It's raining cats and dogs.*



# WAYS TO TEST THE QUALITY OF A TRANSLATION

□ *BACK TRANSLATION*

□ *KNOWLEADGE TESTING*

□ *PERFORMANCE TESTING*



# BACK TRANSLATION

- one translates a text from language A into language B;
- a different translator then turns the B text back into A and
- the resulting A text is compared with the original A text.

If the texts are virtually identical, it is a strong evidence that the original translation was of high quality

*(through not incontrovertible evidence, because the second translator might have improved upon the work of the first in the reverse process)*





# KNOWLEADGE TESTING

- speakers of language B are tested about the content of the translation (e.g. a questionnaire)
- the source questions are put to speakers of A.

*If the results correspond, the translation is efficient.*



# PERFORMANCE TESTING

- speakers of language B are asked to carry out actions based on the text (e.g. in a repair manual)
- speakers of language A are asked to carry out actions based on the text
- the results are compared to determine translation efficiency.

*This is a very time consuming process, however requires expert supervision if clear results are to be obtained.*



There is always some  
loss of information.

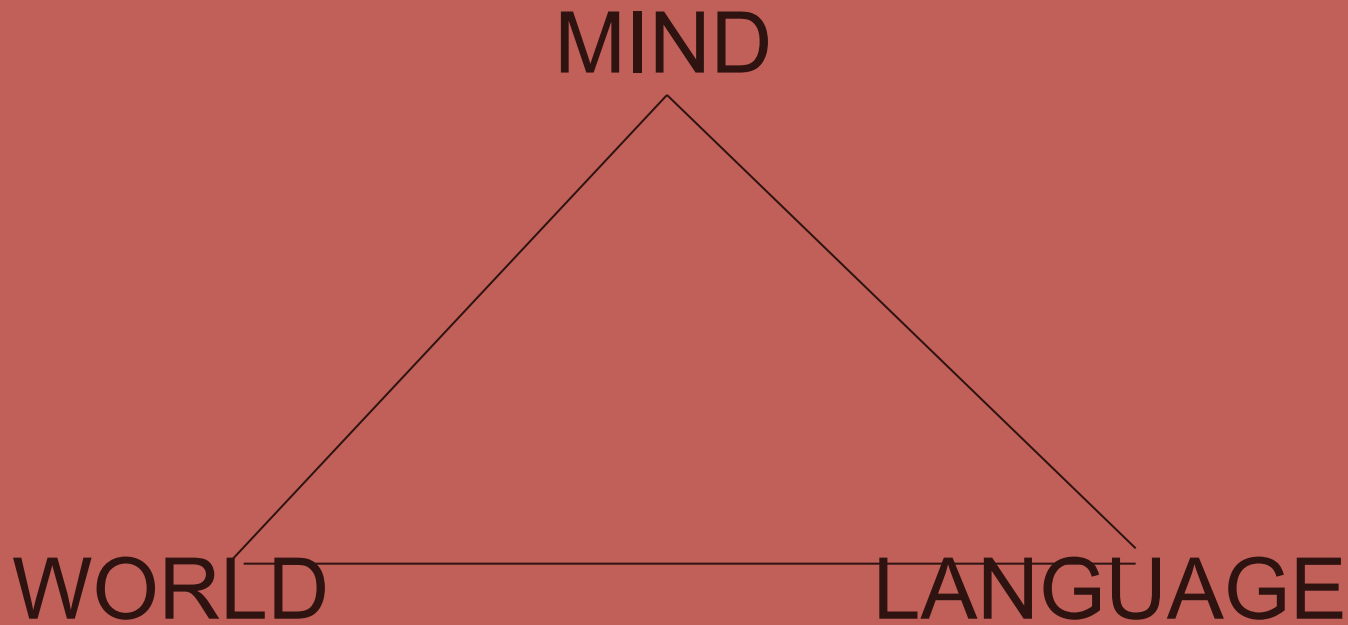
WHY?

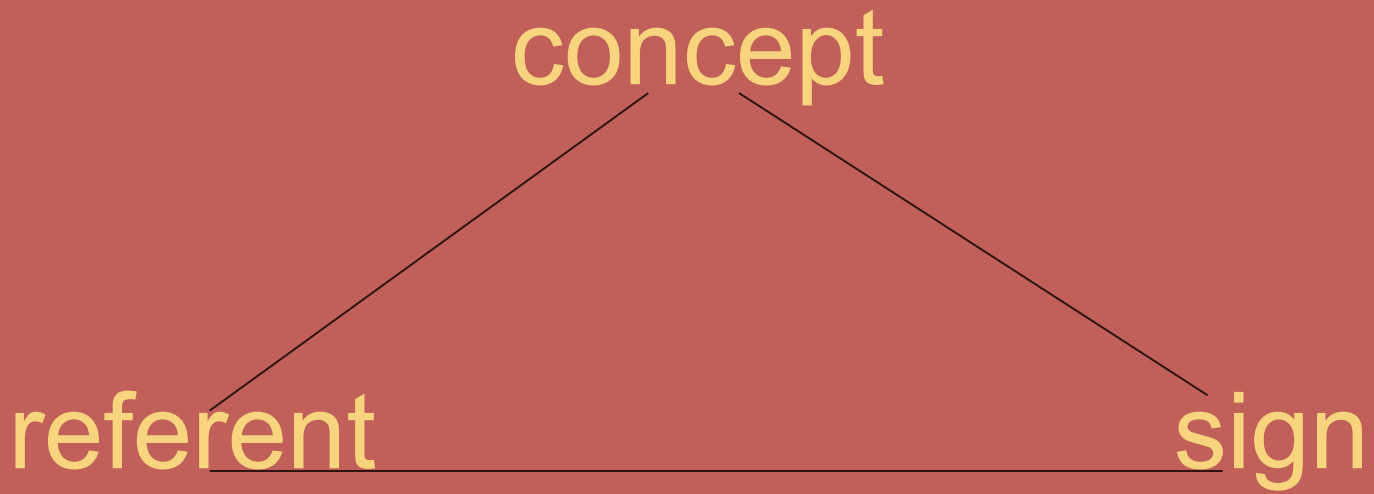
What do we translate?

What is language?



# C.K. Ogden, Ivor A. Richards





# C.K. Ogden, Ivor A. Richards' Triangle

a **sign** is a language unit (**Tower, -tion**)

a **concept** is a mental unit

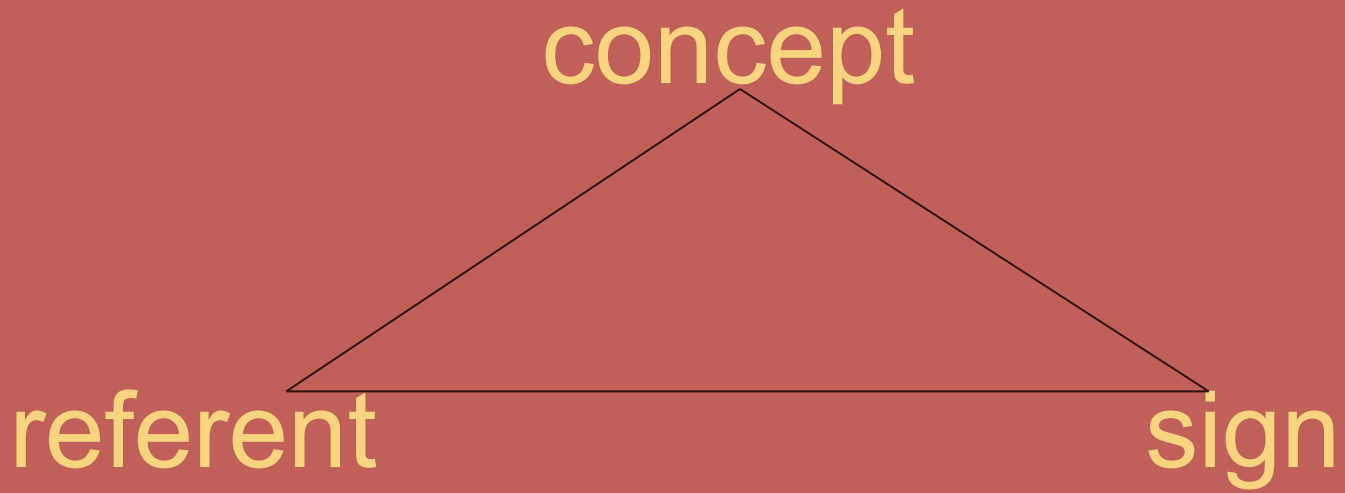
a **referent** is an object of real and unreal world



# NO direct link

According to common scientific opinion there may never be a direct link between the sign, the object and the referent.







# Ambiguity

the property of  
language units to  
bear several  
**different** meanings.



*Какие женщины на нас*

*бросают взоры.*



*A bare conductor  
ran in the car.*

- bare голый
- conductor  
кондуктор
- ran бегал
- car машина



*A bare  
conductor  
ran in the car.*

- bare оголенный
- conductor провод
- ran был проложен
- car вагон

