The overall dance of specialised translation  
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ABSTRACT
Integrating insights from disciplines with relevance to translation theory, namely David Bohm’s theory of wholeness, Michael A.K. Halliday’s “functional grammar”, Peter Newmark’s communicative and semantic translation polarity, and Jacques Derrida’s “deconstruction” (as reading practice), I focus on an understanding of “specialised translation” as enfolding the translator’s awareness of discourse as a meaning creation process, together with his ability to “think grammatically” in order to “act grammatically” in the process of reading and translating both literary and non-literary texts of quality.

KEYWORDS
Derrida, deconstruction, Halliday, functional grammar, holistic paradigm, implicate order, poetical text, rank scale analysis, undecidability, theory of wordings, wholeness.

Language is powered by grammatical energy.  
(Halliday, 2002: 387).

Having focused my research on poetic translation, I was surprised to be invited to contribute a paper to JoSTrans, since literary translation was excluded from among its fields of translation research. However, the JoSTrans’s welcoming of "contributions from related disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy and cultural studies" (always under the condition of touching on issues of “specialised” translation), as well as the favouring of “diversity in theoretical frameworks” appeared to me as a clear manifestation of openness to the new emerging holistic paradigm, in Kuhn’s sense of the word (cf. Kuhn, 1970). It is on this new scientific paradigm that I grounded my research in linguistics (applied to translation). I view my approach as one which develops “thinking grammatically” (Halliday, 2002: 416), in the translation process and in quality assessment of translation, both literary, and non-literary. In fact, and in coherence with the new epistemological paradigm, I regard the conjunct process of reading and translating as an undivided whole, the translation of poetry simply requiring a deeper and fuller perception of such a process in its immense complexity.

The all embracing view of linguistics as the "science of meaning" (information being understood as a subclass of meaning), gathering around it all sciences within its domain (just as those sharing the domain of matter cluster around physics, thus regarded as the "science of matter" (Halliday, 2002: 9), made it possible for me to conduct my inquiry towards integrating insights from different disciplines with relevance to translation theory, namely Bohm’s notion
of an "implicate order" of reality, Halliday’s view of the interaction of the "ideational", "interpersonal" and "textual" meaning components and his most fruitful "theory of wordings", Newmark’s insightful concepts of "communicative and semantic translation" (Newmark, 1988: 62), and Derrida’s creative inceptions of différance and "deconstruction".

These trends from disciplines related to translation studies come to re-enforce my view of the translation process as a totality, whatever the kind of text to be translated and its degree of specialisation. I became more aware of what 'specialisation' is when I met Maria Teresa Roberto, professor at the University of Aveiro, who supervised my work on the translation of poetry, and was, at the same time, engaged in her own research in specialised non-literary functional translation. I soon realised that, taken as discourse, the various text types, ranging from the most technical, functional, non-literary texts to the most poetical literary ones might be seen as forming an unbroken continuum in what concerns the creation of meaning, rather than flocking around either pole of a duality, demanding clear-cut divergent translation approaches.

Taking up Walter Benjamin’s metaphor of translation as "transplantation" (cf. Benjamin, 1981: 15), I would lay the emphasis on the gardener’s task as that of taking the plant out of its own ground to plant it in a new one, making sure it will adapt to its new habitat. The lines of Goethe’s well-known poem below might be read as a symbol for the process (that of the translation of poetry, but also of any other utterance as such).

Ich grub’s mit allen
   den Würzlein aus.
   (...)             trans.: I took it from the earth
   Und pflanzt’ es wieder
   Am stillen Ort;
   Nun zweigt es immer
   Und blüht so fort.

Although it is true that there are different kinds of plants, demanding lesser or greater care in the transplantation, it is also true that all of them will better survive, adapt and develop if the work is done by an expert, i.e., a 'specialised' gardener.

It is in this context that I understand the generalized need for 'specialised translation', as carried out by experts. JoSTrans makes
use of the adjectives 'specialised', 'non-literary' as classifiers\(^1\) of the required translation research; 'specialised' referring to a larger category than the one referred to by 'non-literary', the past participle 'specialised' cannot be understood as a synonym of 'technical' (there being no such thing as 'technical literary translation'). One might, of course, interpret 'specialised' as an epithet, admitting degrees of 'specialisation' (which is not the case with categories such as 'literary' or 'non-literary', despite the fuzziness of their frontiers). I must explain that I have been practising deconstruction on the word group 'specialised, non-literary translation' using Halliday's analysis of the nominal group into its functional constituents (classifier, epithet) as a tool.

As I pointed out above, I would rather not view literary and non-literary translation as the two poles of a duality, but as comparable to a field in physics, across which the translator is supposed to freely move. Instead of trying to cope with fuzziness when defining frontiers, I would rather not define frontiers at all and work with the whole. In other words, instead of accepting the self-evident fact of fuzzy, merging frontiers around categories, I prefer to mentally represent the whole as a *continuum*, ranging from a minimal to a maximal degree of meaning creation potential, as enfolded (or "implicate") in the "wordings", *i.e.* the abstract product of what Halliday calls the "lexicogrammar" (in Halliday's model of language, lexis and grammar are seen as complementary). The "phase of wording", wording being the product of the lexicogrammar, is, thus, the intermediate phase of language processing in which meaning is created; in fact, "there are no meanings waiting around to be encoded; the meaning is created in language" (Halliday, 1994: xii).

The diagram below (Fig.1) shows the functioning of language in my interpretation of Halliday's theory of wordings (the arrows represent a relation of mutual implication between the phases: merely potential holistic meaning is realised as wording, the still abstract product of the lexicogrammar, which is to be materialised in linguistic forms in the phase of expression):

\(^1\) Capitalization is used for Halliday’s terminology when referring to functional constituents at every rank of the scale (*e.g.*, in the nominal group, Deictic, Classifier, Thing, Qualifier, etc.)
Halliday made it clear that there is this "distinct phase of wording, serving as the base for the construction of meaning" (Halliday, 2002: 387), thus re-enforcing his former position: "The wording 'realizes' the meaning. The wording in turn is 'realized' by sound or writing" (Halliday, (1985) 1994: xx). Meanings being realized through wordings, "without a theory of wordings – that is, a grammar – there is no way of making explicit one’s interpretation of the meaning of a text." (ibid.: xvi)

The openness of the text to meaning creation in discourse, i.e., in the reading process as such – "undecidability" or "the invention of the other", among other Derridean formulations, – can be tracked down in the wordings. Manifesting itself as meaning indeterminacy, undecidability can occur at any rank of the scale, from the text to the word (the whole being in the part). Its evidence as openness to different interpretations ("invention" of the "other" in the etymological sense of the words – the coming in of that which is no longer the same –, due to that dynamic essence of reality which Derrida calls *différance*) can be regarded as that which gives the literary text its communicativeness or poetical quality.

The translator must be aware of undecidability in the reading process, either to solve it, in case it appears as non-desirable ambiguity or obscurity in the specialised, non-literary, functional text, or not to solve it, in the case of the poetical text. This issue is shown in the diagram below (Fig. 2):
As translators take the text they are translating into account, both in its original context (as recreated in the reading process) and in the context of the translated version (as recreated in its reading in the target language), they must be conscious of the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of meaning in the wording: interpersonal (as an utterance), ideational (as a representation of experience) and textual (as a text). It is the interplay of the semantic dimensions that is ultimately responsible for undecidability, both at the level of the text in context, and at every rank in the scale (ranging, top down, from the text to the word and morpheme, passing through the sentence, the clause and the phrase/group). The diagram below (Fig. 3) represents the interconnectedness of the semantic dimensions, not directly in the "explicate order" (as related by causality), but rather indirectly through the "implicate order" of discourse; the triangle symbolizes the wording, seen both as the process and the product of their interacting:
It is the awareness of this dynamics that will enable the translator to consciously decide whether to translate semantically or communicatively, always departing from the text as a whole when focusing on one particular unit, *i.e.*, focusing on it as a sub-totality in a larger totality.

The translator must also be conscious of the fact that, in the reading process, the text, whatever its type, becomes discourse again, being added a semantic "supplement" in the process, which, in various degrees (in a very high degree in the case of the literary, poetic text), will make it different, *i.e.*, no longer the same as it was at the moment it was produced, nothing having, however, been materially changed in it (what Derrida calls *différance* is "implicate" in this process as its dynamic essence).

The diagram below (Fig. 4) represents the process of reading and translating of any text, in the light of my above stated interpretation of Halliday’s theory of wordings and Derrida’s view of reading as deconstruction:
In terms of Halliday’s theory of wordings or semantico-lexico-grammar (Halliday, 1994: xvi), semantic translation faithfulness may be defined as the translator’s success in keeping close to the original wordings, i.e., as close as possible, while coping with the constraints of the target language at the expression level. Associating the semantic pole with literary translation and the communicative pole with non-literary, functional translation, Newmark regards semantic translation as an "art" and communicative translation as a "craft". Art and craft can, of course, be regarded as the two faces of the same reality, just as semantic and communicative translation (the same happening with all other dualisms, such as simplicity and complexity, subjectivity and objectivity, mind and body, spirit and matter). Dualistic views simply stop making sense when envisaged from the point of view of dynamic wholeness.

Halliday’s insight of meaning and of meaning creation in discourse (vide Fig. 1 and 3 above: the phase of wording, in which the three-dimensions of meaning, inseparable as they are, can, however, be separately focused on for the purpose of analysis) appears to me as strikingly in accordance with Bohm’s holistic theory. At the same time, "deconstruction" as a way of taking into account both what the
light (in which analysis is conducted) reveals and what it hides (*i.e.* what lies behind the light), proves a most useful analytical aid in the process of reading and translating (*vide* Fig. 4 above).

All translation must, therefore, be regarded as reader-oriented, the first reader being the translator himself. In semantic translation, faithfulness to the original wordings will be understood as "transplantation" (returning to Benjamin’s metaphor commented on above) not of the semantic components analysed separately, but of their inter-relation, connected as they are in the wordings. Thus, the option for functional or semantic translation in the phase of rewording (with expression in the target language in view) will fundamentally depend on the need to keep sense confined to one interpretation (as in the case of the technical functional text), or, on the contrary, to keep interpretation free by not solving undecidability, thus allowing the reader of the translated text to decide for himself (or not to decide at all), just as the reader of the text in the source language is allowed to do.

When the text is not of a clearly technical, functional type, nor of an equally clearly poetical, literary nature, the translator will move across the *continuum*, towards or away from the centre (to the left or to the right), according to the need to have sense determined or to leave sense just as undecidable as he found it in the source text wordings.

While teaching Comparative Linguistics and Translation, a student of mine brought in an example of the need to closely determine sense at word or group level when translating technical, functional texts: the Portuguese noun 'carroçaria' (from the French 'carosserie'), as a technical term to translate the nominal group 'body structure' in the situational context of car manufacturing. Indeed, the nominal group 'body structure' could otherwise be semantically translated by 'estrutura do corpo' (in French 'structure du corps'), as there is a straight correspondence between the words materialising the thing (structure/estrutura), while those materializing what I interpret as deictic, 'body'/'do corpo', correspond lexically, if not grammatically.

As sense and reference must univocally correspond to each other in a technical language register, the ideational dimension appears as dominant. Where the interpersonal dimension is concerned, modality is expected to be neutral and the third person to be chosen as subject of the clause. The textual dimension must serve both in a 'specialised' way, that is, as choice within a specialised terminology. Languages of a Latin root tend to strengthen this bond, either by means of 'constructs' (built in the language through intra-linguistic procedures of word formation), or by direct inter-linguistic borrowing. The use of
the new words, in both cases, is supposed to be restricted to the one specific semantic field they were brought in to serve.

In the case of the given example, the Portuguese translation is a borrowing from the French word 'carrosserie', spelled, however, as 'carroçaria', a new word used restrictedly in the specific semantic field of car industry, to designate the body structure of a car. The fact of its textually being a derivation from 'carroça' (imported from the Italian carroza), meaning a horse-pulled cart, pejoratively used when referred to a motor-car, was overlooked. This fact clearly shows how, for most users, the awareness of the textual meaning of the word, i.e. of the word as a derivation from an already existent word, is absorbed by its meaning as a technical term. A hesitation in the spelling of the word betrays a subtle consciousness of the textual dimension of the word as a borrowing from the French 'carosserie' and not as a case of intra-linguistic word-formation ['carroça'+'-aria'].

This is, of course, just an example of how far deconstruction as a reading practice, allied to rank scale analysis, can lead us to track the interplay of the meaning dimensions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) in the process of reading and translating texts of any type.

Any semantic unit, from the top (the text in context) down to the bottom (the word and the morpheme), can be subject to the analysis of the three meaning dimensions. I came across an interesting piece of evidence of how the interaction of the semantic dimensions lies at the core of the rewording process (whatever the text type is) in a typically functional, non-literary text, namely a booklet accompanying a home appliance – a microwave oven –, with the title "instructions for use". Its need for non-literary, functional translation being unquestionable, I wonder how far it could be considered not to require 'specialised translation', intended as it was for the unspecialised users of such home appliance. It is one of the cases in which undecidability must necessarily be solved, just as the case when the text is of a technical, functional type. Is 'specialised translation' to be taken as a synonym of 'technical translation', requiring the mastery of a specialised terminology as such? Or must it be understood as requiring the translator to be specialised in the science of translating? In fact, just as one cannot be considered a linguist merely for being able to express his/her opinion about language, so one cannot be considered a translator for being able to translate. In the light of the 'new science', specialities are to be regarded as sub-totalities within a totality, which is where one starts from. Specialised translation would, in that case, stand for translation as one of the specialised sciences gathering around the 'science of meaning', which together with the 'science of matter', would account for 'reality as a whole'.

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A comparison between the translations of one particularly interesting excerpt made me ponder whether 'specialised' translation (thus understood) should not also be required for these kinds of functional non-literary texts. I took it from a unit bearing the warning "never use metal or metal trimmed utensils in your microwave oven" as a title. I wonder whether this warning would not be enough... Apparently it was not! It is its expansion that proved very interesting when its versions in several languages were compared. In fact, comparison made clear how the interpersonal dimension manifestly interfered in the translators’ options in the rewording process:

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<td>Microwaves cannot penetrate metal. They will bounce off any metal object in the oven and cause arcing, an alarming phenomenon that resembles lightning.</td>
<td>Mikrowellen können Metalle nicht durchdringen. Stattdessen werden sie vom Metal reflektiert, wodurch es zu Entladungen kommt, die Blitze ähneln.</td>
<td>Microgolven kunnen niet in metaal penetreren. Ze zullen van elk metalen object in de oven terugkaatsen en vonken veroorzaken. Het verschijnsel is gevaarlijk en lijkt op weerlichten.</td>
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<td>Les micro-ondes ne peuvent pas traverser le métal. Elles vont rebondir sur l’objet métallique dans le four et peuvent créer un arc électrique, phénomène alarmant qui ressemble à un éclair.</td>
<td>Le microonde non riescono ad attraversare i metalli e rimbalzano, causando scintille, simili ai lampi.</td>
<td>As microondas não conseguem penetrar no metal. Por esse motivo, são reflectidas de qualquer objecto metálico introduzido no forno, produzindo um arco voltaico, um fenômeno alarmante parecido com um raio.</td>
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The writer of the source text – the English version – is supposed to be, of course, as un-individualised and anonymous as the user of the appliance, the language of the original text being equally irrelevant for the purpose. However, the differences between the translations testify how the interpersonal dimension, reflecting different cultural life styles, has remarkable effects on the wording, interacting with the ideational and textual dimensions.

Besides differing in the choice of either a technical term for the phenomenon focused on (from "arcing", "arc électrique", "arco eléctrico", to the most specialised term "arco voltaico") or a more
common word ("scintilla", "Entladungen", "vonken"), translations differ in the realisation of its elaborative expansion accounting: "an alarming phenomenon", "un phénomène alarmant", "um fenómeno alarmante". Striking is the fact that, the Dutch translator presented it as "dangerous", rather than "alarming". S/he also preferred to reword the elaborative expansion as a new sentence reduced to a clause, representing an attributive intensive relational process, in which "gevaarlijk" materialises the attribute: "Het verschijnsel is gevaarlijk". The German and the Italian translators simplified, expanding the thing ("Entladungen", "scintilla") with a qualifier (materialised by a relative clause) stating its similitude to lightning: "die Blitze ähneln", "simili ai lampi".

This necessarily brief analysis (not intended to be exhaustive, but simply illustrative, as seven different languages are involved) led me to conclude that the text requires a 'specialised' translation not only where terminology is concerned, but also and in a greater degree where discourse is concerned. The perlocutionary dimension of the utterance must be taken into account, i.e., the predictable effects on the addressee (the user of the appliance) must be pondered in the phase of rewording. There are, in fact, a number of questions that could be raised: is there any reason for the use of such a specialised representatively opaque term as "arco voltaico" in the Portuguese version? Is it supposed to intimidate the addressee, adding a textual complementary enforcement to the ideational and interpersonal meanings of the word "alarming", as materialising the epithet of the super-ordinate "phenomenon" ("alarming" is also interpretable as a qualifier, meaning "which alarms")? Is there any need to describe the phenomenon with such a strong attitudinal epithet/qualifier? Might there not be any danger of inducing curious users to make an experiment just to find out how alarming the "phenomenon" is? Is that the reason why the Italian translator opted for simplifying, using the more common "scintille", and omitting its elaborative expansion as "alarming phenomenon"? The German translator did the same, most probably for another reason: would it not 'sound' strange to the addressee expecting an interpersonally neutral register in such a text type?

Undecidability comes to the fore here, leading to a number of different interpretations of the addresser, the addressee and the relation between them as actualised in the text once turned into discourse again. An awareness of the relevance of the interpersonal semantic dimension at play in the wording would lead the translator to reword from the user’s point of view: the addressee ought to be totally at ease, i.e., quite familiar with the register, so as to obey the warning, feeling discouraged from placing any metal or metal-trimmed object in the oven.
The 'other' enfolds the addressee and the addressee (and their relation) and whatever (in various degrees, of course, according to the text type) makes the text different each time it is actualized (différance being at work). The degree to which 'the other' emerges will determine that of undecidability, at its highest and lowest respectively in the poetic and in the functional text.

Besides the self-evident non-functional, literary texts, such as fiction and poetry, there are non-fictional texts (of the genre 'essay', for example) that require the translator to move along the continuum, either to solve or not to solve undecidability, the addressee being individualised enough to have the text manifest a 'personality' of its own, that personal imprint which Halliday recognises in all texts of quality (Halliday, 1988). David Bohm’s Wholeness and the Implicate Order (Bohm, 1985, 1995), from which I took the excerpt below, can be taken as an illustrative example:

... such comprehension of the totality is not a reflective correspondence between 'thought' and 'reality as a whole'. Rather, it is to be considered as an art form, like poetry, which may dispose us toward order and harmony in the overall 'dance of the mind' (...). (Bohm, 1995: 55-56)

When translating this passage into Portuguese, I felt compelled to reduce undecidability in the rewording of the nominal group "reflective correspondence": instead of keeping the classifier "reflective" (as it is undecidable whether a comparison with the mirror is to be understood), I chose to bring in a qualifier instead – "(uma correspondência ...) no sentido de o pensamento reflectir essa realidade –, specifying the interpretation of "reflective correspondence" as the correspondence between the object and its image in the mirror.

But, when undecidability is inherent to the poetical quality of the wording, as it is the case in the prepositional phrase "in the overall dance of the mind" (is it to be understood within the nominal group as qualifier of "order and harmony", or within the clause as circumstance of space location?), I tried not to solve it by leaving the question open: "is "the overall dance" a symbol for the implicate order, where there is "order and harmony"? In that case how is the classifier “overall” to be interpreted and translated? Is its meaning close to that of such nominal groups as "the whole dance", "the dance as a whole", "the dance in its totality", "the total dance"? Which meaning is the choice of "overall" as classifier of "dance of the mind" closer to?

I can only consider that the excerpt requires a careful, attentive reading and, to a certain extent, a correspondingly 'specialised' translation, appealing as it does to decision-making on the basis of
analysis as deconstruction of this “dance” of the semantic dimensions in the original wordings. Aware of my floating positioning as translator in the continuum of minimal-maximal undecidability, I arrived at the following version in Portuguese:

... tal compreensão da totalidade não pode ser entendida como uma correspondência entre 'pensamento' e 'realidade como um todo' no sentido de o pensamento refletir essa realidade. Antes deve ser considerada uma forma de arte, como a poesia, que pode suscitar em nós uma disposição para a ordem e harmonia da 'dança da mente' na sua globalidade.

The next chapter of the book from which I took the excerpt above is entitled "Hidden variables in the quantum theory", and presents a typical example of a text requiring specialised scientific knowledge of both the subject-matter and the terminology. I picked up a random example:

All physical results are to be calculated with the aid of certain 'observables', represented by Hermitian operators, which operate linearly on the wave function. (Bohm, 1995: 66)

No translator unacquainted with theoretical physics or mathematics would dare translate this chapter without assistance. Either s/he would give it up, or ask for the help of specialists in the field. This is what I did to translate the passage as follows:

Todos os resultados físicos devem ser calculados com o auxílio de certas 'observáveis' representadas por operadores hermitianos, que operam linearmente na função de onda.

However, when consulting an expert in the field to have my translation revised, I was surprised to be told that several possibilities were in use to refer to "wave function": "função de onda", but also "função da onda", or "função das ondas". This could be explained by different translations of the nominal group "wave function" in the books of the subject field. I realised that "wave" was differently interpreted, either as a classifier ("de onda"), or as a deictic (raising the two possibilities: "da onda" / "das ondas", meaning "of the wave"/ "of the waves", respectively).

Thinking grammatically made me recognize that the word "wave" in the nominal group "wave function" is materialising a classifier of "function" (which materialises the thing). As such, it should be translated by a prepositional phrase, constituted by a preposition ("de") and nominal group reduced to the thing, i.e., with no deictic element in its structure: "de onda". This illustrates why I maintain that 'specialised translation' reclaims what Halliday calls thinking "grammatically" (Halliday, 2002: 290, 370), a competence which, for scientific, professional translation purposes, would be developed by mastering a "theory of wordings", i.e., "grammar".
A comparison of the titles for the Portuguese and the French translations of Wholeness and the implicate order quoted on the Internet, respectively A Totalidade e a Ordem Implicada (São Paulo, Cultrix) and La Plénitude de l’univers (éditions Le Rocher, 1987) might raise grammatical awareness of the interplay of the semantic dimensions in the wording and of the relevance of this awareness in the translating process, whatever the type of the text.

Wholeness and the Implicate Order can be read as a clause, representing a relational process: "[this book is about] Wholeness and the Implicate Order". The circumstance (as identifier) is realised by a group complex: a nominal group ("Wholeness"), constituted by the thing and no deictic element, expanded by a second one ("the Implicate Order"), in which the thing ("Order") is accompanied by a specific deictic ("the") and a classifier ("Implicate").

This analysis accounts for the textual dimension ("wholeness" being thematic in relation to "the implicate order"; "wholeness" being a nominal derivation of "whole") and for the ideational dimension ("Wholeness", unspecified by any deictic element, representing "reality as a whole"; "order" referring to "order of reality" being specified both by the specific deictic and by the classifier: "implicate", as opposed to "explicate", in the etymological sense (textual meaning) of "enfolded", "folded inward", contrasting with "explicate" ("ex-" + "plica" + "-re"), "to unfold".

However, it is the interpersonal meaning that can explain the option preferred by the French translator for a communicative rewording, “La Plénitude de l’univers” (“The fullness of the universe”) instead of “La Totalité et l’ordre implié”. S/he must have taken a reader-oriented point of view, believing the chosen communicative alternative to be more enticing for the target reader than the purer semantic one. After all, the purpose of the book is supposed to be that of spreading scientific knowledge to a larger public.

With regard to the Portuguese semantic translation, I will only comment on how rigorously semantic it is in the choice of "implicada" as a classifier of "order". As I mentioned above, it is the textual semantic component that is responsible for this choice. It is Bohm himself who accounts for the etymological meaning of "implicate" (contrasting with "explicate") as derived from a Latin root (vide above).

If 'specialised translation' is to be taken in the sense of scientifically accurate, then I insist on its claiming the use of a scientific tool to ensure accuracy. I have illustrated Halliday’s theory of wordings, so insightfully conceived and presented in An Introduction to Functional

Only by "thinking grammatically" can the translator achieve expertise in 'specialised translation', both of literary and non-literary quality texts.

REFERENCES

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