

5.3.8. Focus can be placed on the verb in English by means of the emphatic operators *do/did*. This kind of emphasis often implies a contrast, usually a refutation of a previous observation. It therefore relies on a previous statement in the co-text or on shared contextual information for its logical interpretation.

*Nel discorso Ciccotto la vinceva lui, e le donne grasse, che non escono e se ne stanno alla finestra a rinfrescarsi, ci dicevano sulla porta di tornare a trovarle la domenica dopo.*

*Ci tornavamo. Ma a nostro gusto, uno o due mesi dopo.*

(Cesare Pavese, *Le case*)

Ciccotto was always master of the conversation, and those fat women who don't go out and stand at the window to cool off told us at the door to come back to see them the following Sunday.

We did come back. But in our own good time, a month or two later.

Alternatively *do/did* may express emotive emphasis such as personal concern, reproach or even petulance, with no contrastive implications. These emphatic operators should be used sparingly in written texts for this purpose, however, as the overall effect might well sound over-emotional.

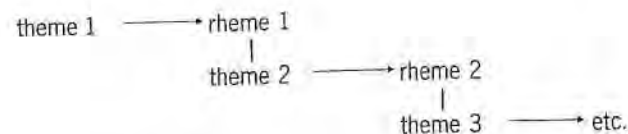
## 5.4. Thematic Progression

The theme/rheme division of a clause contributes to the development of communication since it serves to move the discourse forward. New information is converted into given information in successive clauses and as the text moves forward the known elements contribute less to the advancement of communication than the new ones. Together theme and rheme constitute the *communicative dynamism* of successive sentences in a text (Firbas 1964) with the theme carrying the lowest degree of communicative dynamism and the rheme propelling the communication forward. This functional organisation of the clause in terms of *theme* and *rheme* has come to be referred to as the *functional sentence perspective* or *FSP* approach (Firbas 1964, Danes 1974).

All texts move from theme to rheme in recognisable patterns. As the discourse progresses, previous themes or rhemes are re-employed to fit in with the overall thematic

structure and rhetorical purpose of the text. The choice and ordering of the theme and rheme in relation to superior text units (paragraphs, chapters) and the whole text is referred to as *thematic progression* (Danes 1974). One of the translator's aims is to interpret the thematic progression of the ST in relation to its overall meaning and function and then to reproduce it according to TL conventions in the TT. The most common patterns of thematic progression are described below. Examples a) to d) are from Danes (1974:118-120), while examples e) and f) are from James (1980:115-116).

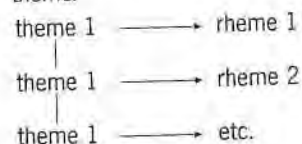
a) Linear thematisation of rhemes, the most basic and straightforward form of thematic progression.



The first of the antibiotics was discovered by Sir Alexander Fleming in 1928. He was busy at the time investigating a certain species of germ which is responsible for boils and other troubles.

The rheme of sentence 1 contains an element Sir Alexander Fleming which is taken up as the theme of sentence 2 (He).

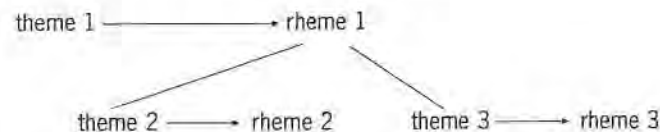
b) Thematic progression with a constant theme: subsequent themes are related to the first theme.



The Rousseauist especially feels an inner kinship with Prometheus and other Titans. He is fascinated by any form of insurgency ... He must show an elementary energy in his explosion against the established order and at the same time a boundless sympathy for the victims of it ... Further the Rousseauist is ever ready to discover beauty of soul in anyone who is under the reprobation of society.

The theme of sentence 1 is the same as the theme of sentence 2 and 3.

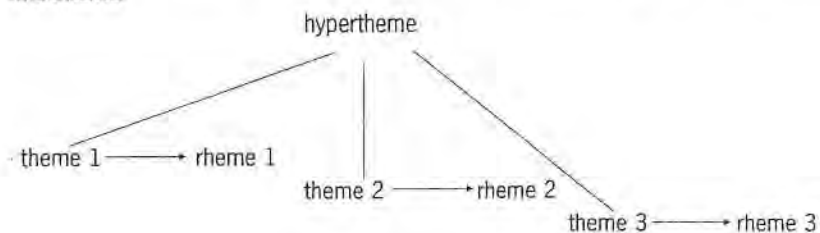
c) Thematic progression by means of a split rheme.



All substances can be divided into two classes: elementary substances and compounds. An elementary substance is a substance which consists of atoms of only one kind. ... A compound is a substance which consists of atoms of two or more kinds.

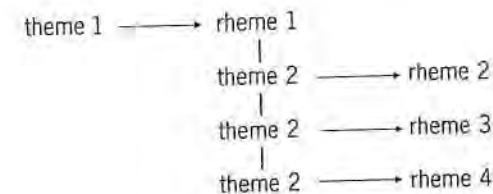
This third type of patterning is slightly more complex since the rheme of sentence 1 contains two elements which become the themes of the two subsequent sentences.

d) Thematic progression with subsequent themes derived from a *hypertheme* or *metatheme*.



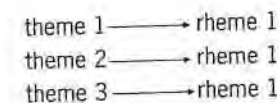
New Jersey is flat along the coast and southern portion; the north-western region is mountainous. The coastal climate is mild, but there is considerable cold in the mountain areas during the winter months. Summers are fairly hot. The leading industrial production includes chemicals, processed food, coal, petroleum, metals and electrical equipment. The most important cities are Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, Camden. Vacation districts include Asbury Park, Lakewood, Cape May, and others.

e) Thematic progression with subsequent constant themes related to the first rheme.



Cats eat rats. Rats live in holes. Rats are bigger than mice. Rats are hard to catch.

f) Thematic progression with subsequent new themes related to a constant rheme.



Cats eat rats. Dogs eat rats. Snakes eat rats.

An author's decision systematically to foreground certain elements in the text is an important factor in translation. Each syntactic variation of theme and rheme is a strategic device on the part of the author to focus the reader's attention on some piece of information rather than another within the framework of the *whole* text. And it is the distribution of foregrounded elements in relation to the entire text that has to be taken into account in translation. Thematic sequencing is not a random occurrence: it depends very much on discourse genre and rhetorical purpose and it plays a fundamental role in text construction. Consider, for instance, the effect of the recurrent thematisation of they (introduced by Italian designers – *gli stilisti italiani*) in the following texts:

*Gli stilisti italiani ora operano senza frontiere, hanno boutiques personali nelle più importanti e strategiche città del mondo, presentano le loro collezioni con degli appuntamenti che diventano eventi internazionali: sono il volto nuovo dell'Italia, sono noti, acclamati e ricercati. Qualcuno li ha battezzati i nuovi mecenati del rinascimento di fine secolo.*  
(Pia Soli, "Defilé che passione", *Arrivederci*, n. 22, 1991)

Italian designers are by now unaffected by national boundaries. **They** have their own boutiques in the biggest and most important cities in the world. The presentations of their collections have become international events of note. **They** are the new side of Italy. **They** are famous, acclaimed and sought after. **They** have been described as the new fin-de-siècle, Renaissance-style patrons.

The crucial point is that the way themes or rhemes are re-used in subsequent discourse depends on the writer's overall text-plan and audience-orientation. In advertisements there is a tendency to return to the same theme in successive clauses, usually the brand name:

Timotei is both mild to your hair and to your scalp – so mild you can wash your hair as often as you like. Timotei cleans your hair gently, leaving it soft and shiny, with a fresh smell of summer meadows.

A travel brochure systematically uses place adverbials as themes.

There are many exciting destinations you can choose from:

Rome, the eternal city on its seven hills, with a wealth of history and culture; the Colliseum, the Vatican City, the Trevi Fountains.

Florence, renowned for its breathtaking architecture and art. Picture yourself on the Ponte Vecchio!

Venice, perhaps the most romantic of all destinations. Take a gondola-taxi to your hotel, wander through the winding streets and emerge into the magnificence of St Mark's Square.

Milan, with its fashionable shops and the opera, La Scala.

The splendour of every part of the country will enchant you; it's yours to enjoy with ease and comfort when you travel to Italy with British Rail International.

The following Italian text and its English translation contain a spatial description and so spatial orientation of the reader is important. The writer highlights this fact through the systematic thematisation of adverbials:

*Da due lati ci sono precipizi: ad Est il baratro buio che muore nel torrente Felizon. A Sud-Ovest una serie di pareti rocciose inaccessibili fino al greto del torrente Boite. Laggiù in basso arrivava da Ampezzo la strada che poi con stretti tornanti saliva rapidissima immettendosi nel castello, dominata da questo dal principio alla fine. Il tracciato attuale, scavato nella roccia, risale ai primi anni del secolo scorso, ma anche di questo parleremo più avanti. Le pareti rocciose sono state bucate da gallerie al tempo della prima guerra mondiale; in quel periodo scomparvero anche gli ultimi avanzi di costruzione che ancora emergevano dal terreno. Sul lato Nord, dove ora è cresciuto il bosco, c'era il castello, con le abitazioni per il capitano ed i soldati, una cappella, l'alloggio del cappellano, un cortile per le manovre d'armi. Nel centro del torrione era scavato un pozzo con grandiosa cisterna per l'acqua piovana che vi veniva convogliata attraverso canalette di legno e pietra dal dislivello dei tetti.*

(Mario Ferruccio Belli, "Il castello dei Misteri", *Cortina Magazine*, n. 12, 1990)

On two sides of the castle there are precipices. To the east the dark abyss that disappears into the River Felizon and to the south-west a series of inaccessible rock faces which fall away to the shores of the Boite. From the valley, dominated by the castle above, came the road from Ampezzo, narrowing into a series of hairpin bends as it climbed steeply to arrive at the castle. The present road, carved out of the rock, dates back to the beginning of the last century, and the rock face is pitted with holes from the time of the first world war. Also during that period the last remnants of the building which were still standing finally disappeared.

On the north side, where a forest has now grown, stood the castle with the captain's and the soldiers' quarters, a chapel, lodgings for the chaplain and a courtyard for military manoeuvres. A huge tank dug into the centre of the keep caught rainwater which ran from the roofs down wooden and stone pipes.

The thematisation of time adverbials, on the other hand, has been observed as being characteristic of detective stories (Brown and Yule 1983).

## 5.5. Sentence Structure and Textuality

Further strategies that ST authors have at their disposal to create textuality are related to sentence structure and sequencing. Whether they choose to vary the structure of successive sentences and the sequence they give to main and dependent clauses within the sentence are prominent features of textuality. A different focus of information can be created by positioning clauses in the sentence, and sentences in the text in relation to the general text plan.

5.5.1. One device that ST authors can use to foreground elements of their message is known as *parallelism*. This refers to the use of parallel structures to highlight the functional relationship between different segments of discourse. Neighbouring sentences that share the same sentence pattern, usually endorsed lexically, give a strong impression of being connected since they are interpreted by the reader as one cohesive entity. The use of parallel structures therefore contributes towards textuality and reinforces the message being conveyed.

Proudly, the captain hoisted the flag. Softly, a bugle sounded.

**How exciting** it would be **to attend** a performance of *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet* for the first time without having been painstakingly prepared beforehand. **To receive** one's own unadulterated impression, **to applaud or condemn** with as open a mind as the playgoers of Shakespeare's age. **How rewarding to read** a great novel for no better reason than the fun of wanting to know what was going to happen next.

*Cavalcanti, soffermandosi su quanto si può cogliere "esteriormente" nei paesi arbëreshë, faceva riferimento, fra l'altro, "ai falò di Natale e a quelli dei primi tre giorni di maggio (Kaminet) a Civita; alle Vallje (balli popolari che uniscono alla coreutica tradizionale balcanica i movimenti avvolgenti ideati da Skanderberg per combattere i Turchi) del martedì di Pasqua a Civita, Frascineto, S. Basile; alle danze eseguite a Sofia d'Epiro nella prima domenica di maggio da gruppi folkloristici di diversa provenienza; ai balli e ai canti eseguiti il 29 luglio davanti alla chiesa di S. Anna tra Acquaformosa e Lungro; al Mercato e alla festa di S. Domenico Corone, nella ricorrenza di S. Adriano; alla spettacolare liturgia per la celebrazione dei matrimoni (incoronazione degli sposi; passeggiata in cerchi di tutto il corteo per tre volte intorno all'altare, ecc.) e a quella di S. Giovanni Crisostomo, che si svolge a Lungro (sede della diocesi di tutte le parrocchie di rito bizantino) il 15 agosto di ogni anno".*

(Luigi M. Lombardi Satriani, "Quando la Penisola diventa un'isola etnica", *Arrivederci*, n.2, 1990)

*L'obiettivo dell'attuale presidente americano è lo stesso che si era prefissato allora Roosevelt: accrescere l'occupazione, espandere l'economia, ottenere un gettito fiscale elevato consentendo contemporaneamente al cittadino di vivere meglio.*

The current American president's aim is the same as the one Roosevelt set himself in his time: to increase employment, boost the economy, get a high tax yield while at the same time enabling the citizen to live better.

Parallel structures are sometimes difficult to translate into another language without losing some of the effect created in the original. Consider the following French text (Cook 1989:15):

*Le Général de Gaulle est mort. La France est veuve.*



The parallelism lies in the repeated grammatical pattern *definite article + proper noun + copula + complement*. Translation into Italian is quite straightforward:

*Il Generale de Gaulle è morto. La Francia è vedova.*

The Italian TT also maintains the semantic link of the contrasted masculine and feminine forms, which reinforces the metaphor of the loss felt by a widow at the death of her husband. Neither of these effects can be wholly carried over into an English TT:

General de Gaulle is dead. France is a widow.

Grammatical parallelism is marred by the need for an indefinite article before *widow* and the omission of the gender-marked definite articles *le* and *la* diminish the impact of the deceased husband/bereaved wife metaphor.

5.5.2. Generally, however, successive sentences exhibit a variety of different structures. It is rare to find a whole text composed entirely of short simple sentences in any language, and English is no exception. Variation in sentence length and type allows the writer to express different degrees of emphasis and thus to focus the reader's attention on different elements of the message. Units within a sentence can be linked by means of *coordination* or *subordination*. But once again the choice is not an arbitrary one. In coordination the units are on the same syntactic level; they are independent and equal ranking.

*... Il primo pensiero fu che finalmente assistevo alla edificazione di un castello scozzese completo di fantasmi. I fantasmi esistevano ma non erano ancora usciti dal loro sonno.*

... My first thought was that I was finally witnessing the building of a Scottish castle, complete with ghosts. The ghosts existed but they had not yet been roused from sleep.

The two clauses *There ghosts existed* and *they had not yet been roused from sleep* are given equal weight and importance in the sentence. If one of the clauses is changed into a dependent clause, the two clauses are no longer autonomous. Only the main clause which contains the independent core idea can stand alone. The information contained in

the dependent clause becomes subordinated and depends for its meaning and interpretation on the information contained in the main clause.

Although the ghosts existed, they had not yet been roused from sleep.

Despite the fact that the ghosts existed, they had not yet been roused from sleep.

As important information is not placed in a subordinate clause in English, translators must be sure that the main point of an Italian ST sentence is actually placed in the main clause in the TT. The use of subordination is mistaken in the above example since important information (The ghosts did actually exist) has been downgraded to a concession clause (although the ghosts existed) which gives it the status of mere subordinate detail.

Main clauses should remain intact in English. They are not generally split up by dependent clauses, which are placed either before or after the main clause. This again differs from Italian conventions.

*I colori del kilim, oltre ad essere l'elemento più affascinante, sono anche quello che maggiormente ci aiuta a determinare la datazione e la provenienza.*

Besides being the most fascinating feature of a kilim, its colours are also what help us most to date it and establish its origins.

*Il Signor Romualdo, informato di quello che accadeva da uno de quei contadini, già suo vecchio servitore, agitava supplichevole il braccio tremante, e piangeva e balbettava parole di disperato sgomento.*

Informed of what was happening by one of those peasants, a former servant of his, Signor Romualdo shook his trembling arm beseechingly, cried and stammered out words in almost speechless desperation.

In English, sentences which begin with a subordination (periodic sentences) naturally tend to build-up expectation. The reader is kept in suspense until the full significance of the

sentence is revealed at the end by the main clause, which, in accordance with the principle of end-focus, contains important information. The longer the subordinate clause the greater the anticipation and emphasis created. Translators should only resort to this latter sequence of clauses if they actually intend to draw the reader along to an emphatic conclusion. Compare the two following passages:

*Disponibile oggi in libreria in circa trenta edizioni; con alle spalle trascrizioni cinematografiche (leggendaria quella di Walt Disney) e televisive; tradotto in tutti i paesi del mondo, compreso nella lingua bantu e cinese, avendo annoverato, dopo la Bibbia, il maggior numero di copie vendute, "Pinocchio" troneggia da centosette anni nella nostra letteratura, povera di personaggi, occupando forse il secondo posto dopo il capolavoro nazionale, i manzoniani "Promessi Sposi".*

(Pier Francesco Listri, "Carissimo Pinocchio", *Ulisse 2000*, n. 74, 1990).

*Pinocchio* has held pride of place in Italian literature for a hundred and seven years, second only to Manzoni's masterpiece, *The Betrothed*. Today it is on sale in thirty different editions, there have been film (Walt Disney's has become legendary) and television adaptations of the book, it has been translated into many languages including Bantu and Chinese, and has sold more copies than any other book except the Bible.

Since this is principally an informative text a number of changes have been made in the TT. The climax or suspense that is created in the Italian ST is not actually warranted in this text-type and would sound unnatural and excessively complex in English.

The following text concerns the psychological aspects of Eve, a character in Woody Allen's film *Interiors*:

*... Inoltre, questo suo ricercare ordine cromatico e armonia negli interni in cui vive, corrisponde a una analoga ricerca d'ordine all'interno della propria mente malata e al proprio essere. Che questo altro non è, nella sua ragione più profonda, se non una proiezione dell'io, e l'arredamento una forma indiretta del culto personale, è da tempo stato affermato: Robert de Montesquieu sosteneva che un appartamento è il suo stato d'animo, "i mobili sono i miei sentimenti".*

(Daniele Baroni, "Interiors", *Ottagono*, n. 54, 1974)

... Besides, this searching of hers for order in colours and harmony in the interiors in which she lives corresponds to a similar search for order within her own sick mind and in her very being. That deep down this is nothing but a projection of the self, and the interior design an indirect form of the cult of the self, has long been upheld: Robert de Montesquieu maintained that an apartment was his state of mind, "the pieces of furniture are my feelings".

The ST author has used this particular sentence pattern in conformity with the way he wishes to carry forward the text's information dynamism. The *that*-clause is at the same time a summary and a development of the point made in the previous sentence and therefore has to be in theme position. If the *that*-clause were postponed in the TT and its place filled by an anticipatory pronoun *it*, the information focus of the sentence would be entirely altered; the overall effect would thus be normalised and the function would shift from vocative to informative.

At times it is the text-type itself that conventionally requires periodic sentence structuring: texts like the abstracts of scientific journals, book reviews, legal documents.

To assess the feasibility of left ventricular assist without systematic heparinization, we used a commercially available (Sarns 3M) centrifugal pump with tubing set and cannulas ...  
(*The Annals of Surgery*, vol. 52, No. 2, 1991:245)

If upon the death of a Life Insured there shall be no duly constituted personal representative or nominee or assignee of the Life Insured able and willing to give valid receipt for the sum payable such sum may in the discretion of the Committee of Management be paid to one or more of the next-of-kin of the Life Insured whose receipt shall effectually discharge the Society from all liability under this policy.

A more relaxed effect is created with loose sentences, when the main clause is placed at the beginning and the subordinate clause comes after it. Sentences constructed in this way appear easy and relaxed because the information they contain is easily assimilated: important information is given first, followed by background or supporting information.

Some lenses are made with extremely porous material so they hold a high water content or absorb extra oxygen.

In deciding how to sequence information in a sentence in the TT, translators should always consider the ST type: expressive texts will require translators to take account of what the ST author aimed to achieve by means of sentence structure and to reproduce this in the TT; vocative texts also need to be carefully assessed in this respect, with the fundamental difference, however, that the ST author's intended effect should be couched in a form that is in keeping with TL conventions; informative texts are the most flexible, since the translator's main concern is to convey the message through straightforward syntax.

*In una valle chiusa da colline boschive, sorridente nei colori della primavera, s'ergevano una accanto all'altra due grandi case disadorne, pietra e calce. Parevano fatte dalla stessa mano, e anche i giardini chiusi da siepi, posti dinanzi a ciascuna di esse, erano della stessa dimensione e forma. Chi vi abitava non aveva però lo stesso destino.*

(Italo Svevo, *La Madre*)

In a valley enclosed by wooded hills and radiant with the colours of spring, there stood side by side two large, roughly-finished houses, so much stone and mortar. They looked as if they had both been built by the same hand, and even the hedged gardens in front of them were the same size and shape. But those who lived there did not suffer similar fates.

*Nel '79 la Honda, dopo uno stop durato più di dieci anni, torna nei Gran Premi, dove dominano i motori a due tempi, con una rivoluzionaria 500 quattro cilindri quattro tempi il cui motore ha pistoni ovali e ben 32 valvole e raggiunge lo stratosferico regime di 20.000 giri.*

(Paolo Scalera, "Cento anni di brividi 'rossi'")

In 1979, after a pause lasting more than ten years, Honda returned to Grand Prix racing, where two-stroke engines dominated, with a revolutionary 500 four-cylinder, four-stroke machine with oval pistons and 32 valves; it reached the inconceivable level of 20,000 revs.

*L'idea che l'autorità dello Stato si debba fondare sul diritto naturale per trovare legittimazione e consenso nella collettività, non è l'unica eredità che la cultura classica abbia trasmesso alla società medievale. Ma dalle epoche e dalle civiltà che lo precedettero, dalla stessa cultura greca (che pur aveva introdotto un atteggiamento più razionale nei confronti della natura) e dai misteri e culti orientali diffusi in periodo ellenistico nell'impero romano, il Medioevo ricevette anche un vasto repertorio di rituali magici e di scienze occulte.*

(Valerio Castronovo, "Se tutto manca c'è sempre il mago", *La Repubblica*, 13 ottobre 1981).

The idea that State authority should be founded on natural law to become lawful and acceptable to the community is not the only legacy bequeathed to Medieval society by classical culture. The Middle Ages also received a vast repertory of magic rituals and occult sciences from the ages and civilisations that had come before it, from Greek culture itself (which had, however, introduced a more rational attitude towards nature) and from the oriental mysteries and cults which had spread in the Roman Empire in the Hellenistic period.

The use of excessively long and complex sentence structure is rarely acceptable in English. Yet, it is not unusual to come across an overcondensation of main, minor and supporting ideas in one sentence in translations from Italian into English. One reason is probably the difficulty a translator has in transferring the intricate sentence structure encountered in an Italian ST into an English TT. Consider the following example:

*Il 15 ottobre 1815 Napoleone, prigioniero dell'Inghilterra e dell'oceano, arrivò verso mezzodì sul trealberi Northumberland nella rada di James-Town, il porticciolo di S. Elena...*

*Pochi mesi dopo, nella primavera del 1816, l'imperatrice sua moglie, Maria Luisa d'Austria, giungeva anch'essa alla sua terra d'esilio, un esilio dorato che il "caro papà", Francesco I, le aveva fatto ottenere dalle potenze della Coalizione come compenso al sacrificio che la ragion di Stato le aveva imposto. A soli 24 anni, infatti era stata ferita più volte nei sentimenti e nell'orgoglio: di donna e di austriaca quando, ossequiente alla politica di Metternich, dovette andar sposa, riluttante, a Napoleone (l'Orco, come le avevano insegnato a chiamarlo parenti, precettori e dame di compagnia a Schönbrunn, fin da quando il "parvenu d'Europa" era ancora generale di quella repubblica giacobina che aveva fatto cadere sotto la ghigliottina la testa della sua prozia Maria Antonietta), di moglie e di francese quando dovette abbandonarlo nella sventura (anche se, bisogna riconoscerlo, l'aveva fatto con molta ipocrisia e finta devozione), di madre quando fu costretta a lasciare a Vienna, separandosene per sempre senza essere riuscita ad assicurargli la successione al trono, il piccolo "re di Roma", tedescamente ribattezzato col nome di Franz, duca di Reichstad.*

(Pier Maria Paoletti, *La Duchessa del buongoverno, Arrivederci*, n. 22, 1991)

A sequence such as this is not easy to handle: all this information cannot be packed into one sentence in English as it will hinder rather than enhance comprehension. The following example illustrates this point:

At about noon on 15 October 1815, as a prisoner of England on board the three-masted ship *Northumberland*, Napoleon arrived at Jamestown anchorage on the island of St. Helens, his land of exile...

A few months later, in the spring of 1816, his wife, the Empress Marie Louise of Hapsburg, also reached her land of exile, a golden exile which her "darling Daddy", Francis I, had been able to obtain for her from the Coalition Powers to compensate for the sacrifice which reasons of State had imposed on her. At just 24 years of age, her feelings and her pride had already been injured a number of times: as a woman and as an Austrian when, in deference to Metternich's policy, she was forced to marry Napoleon, (the "bogeyman", as her relatives, tutors and ladies-in-waiting in Schönbrunn had taught her to call him, when, as the "parvenu of Europe" he was still the general of the Jacobin Republic which had been responsible for having had her great-aunt Marie Antoinette's head cut off on the guillotine), as a wife and a Frenchwoman when she had to abandon Napoleon to his unfortunate destiny (even though it must be admitted that she had done so with a great deal of hypocrisy and feigned devotion), as a mother, when she was forced to leave the little "king of Rome" (later given the German name of Franz, Duke of Reichstad) in Vienna forever, without being able to guarantee his succession to the throne.



The meaning of this sentence in English is far from clear. It is altogether too complex and wordy and needs to be broken down into clearer and more straightforward syntax:

At about noon on 15 October 1815, as a prisoner of England on board the three-masted ship *Northumberland*, Napoleon arrived at Jamestown anchorage on the island of St. Helens, his land of exile...

A few months later, in the spring of 1816, his wife, the Empress Marie Louise of Hapsburg, also reached her land of exile. It was a golden exile which her "darling Daddy", Francis I, had been able to obtain for her from the Coalition Powers to compensate for the sacrifice which reasons of State had imposed on her. At just 24 years of age, her feelings and her pride had already been injured a number of times. She had suffered as a woman and as an Austrian when, in deference to Metternich's policy, she was forced to marry Napoleon, the "bogeyman". This was the name her relatives, tutors and ladies-in-waiting in Schonbrunn had taught her to call him, when, as the "parvenu of Europe" he was still the general of the Jacobin Republic, which had been responsible for having had her great-aunt Marie Antoinette's head cut off on the guillotine. She had suffered as a wife and a Frenchwoman when she had to abandon Napoleon to his unfortunate destiny, even though it must be admitted that she had done so with a great deal of hypocrisy and feigned devotion. She had suffered as a mother, when she was forced to leave the little "king of Rome" (later given the German name of Franz, Duke of Reichstad) in Vienna forever, without being able to guarantee his succession to the throne.

A useful rule of thumb for translators is to state the main idea of the sentence in the main clause and to use subordination for just that – subordinate information.

*L'Harry's Bar, che fu aperto all'inizio degli anni Trenta da Giuseppe Cipriani e trae il nome da un giovane studente americano amante di Venezia, è stato reso celebre da Hemingway, con i famosi cocktails a base di champagne e succo di pesca, ma ha avuto tra i suoi clienti personalità e personaggi di prima grandezza, dalla regina d'Inghilterra a Goebbels, dall'Aga Khan a Orson Welles, da Humphrey Bogart ad Ava Gardner.*

(Costanzo Costantini, "Quando la cultura nasceva nei Caffè")

Harry's Bar, which derives its name from a young American student in love with Venice, was opened in the early 1930s by Giuseppe Cipriani. It was made famous by Hemingway and the famous cocktails made of champagne and fresh peach juice. Harry's clientele has included world-famous personalities, from the Queen of England to Goebbels, from the Aga Khan to Orson Welles, Humphrey Bogart and Ava Gardner.

Splitting up sentences can, however, play havoc with thematisation and the overall coherence of a text. The translator needs constantly to make sure that the focus of information has not been subverted and that the theme is carried forward. Look what happens in the translation of the following text for example:

*Sono passati esattamente vent'anni da quando, il 12 aprile 1961, Jurij Gagarin sulla minuscola navicella Vostok mise per la prima volta piede nello spazio. Il ricordo è ormai lontano, sopraffatto da un incalzare di avvenimenti astronautici che, agli inizi, appassionavano (chi non ha trascorso con ansia la notte del 21 luglio 1969 davanti al televisore per accompagnare idealmente Armstrong nella prima passeggiata sulla Luna?) ma poi, soprattutto negli ultimi anni, finivano quasi per non fare più notizia nemmeno sui giornali.*

(Giovanni Caprara, "La navetta rilancia la corsa nel cosmo", *Il Corriere della Sera*, 11 aprile 1981)

Twenty years exactly have gone by since 12 April 1961 when, aboard his tiny space ship, Vostok, Yuri Gagarin first stepped into space. A host of space events have surpassed that moment, which seems far away by now. Excitement was aroused by these events at the beginning – was there anyone who did not spend the night of the 21 July 1969 anxiously watching the T.V. so as to be with Armstrong on his first moon walk? Later, however, especially in recent years, they ended up by almost not being newsworthy any longer, not even to the papers.

Here the overall discourse structure has been compromised due to subversion in theme and rheme elements in successive clauses with a resulting loss in communicative dynamism. The following text still has shorter sentences than the original but succeeds in maintaining thematic progression.

Exactly twenty years have gone by since 12 April 1961 when Yuri Gagarin ventured into space aboard his tiny space ship, Vostok. That moment seems far away by now, surpassed as it has been by a host of other space events. At the beginning these events were exciting – was there anyone who did not spend the night of the 21 July 1969 anxiously watching the T.V. so as to be with Armstrong on his first moon walk? Later, however, especially in recent years, they ended up by almost not being newsworthy any longer, not even to the papers.

5.5.3. Another problem area to look out for when translating from Italian into English is that of the *misrelated* or *dangling modifier*. This occurs when a modifying phrase, introduced by a present (-ing) or a past (-ed) participle, is unconnected to the word it modifies. Consider the following example:

Using a soft material which absorbs water and allows the eyes to gain the oxygen they need, soft lenses provide a high level of comfort.

According to English grammar, the modifying phrase using... should refer to the subject soft lenses. Present and past participles are verbs and, as such, take a subject. A participle is considered to belong to the noun/pronoun which precedes it. If there is no noun/pronoun in this position, the participle is considered to belong to the subject of the main verb, which in this particular case is provide. Obviously this is not what is intended. A participle linked in this way to the wrong noun/pronoun is said to be "misrelated". The result is that the past participle using is left "dangling" and the reader is unclear as to what it should modify. Now look at this corrected version:

Made of a soft material which absorbs water and allows the eyes to gain the oxygen they need, soft lenses provide a high level of comfort.

In the following example(s) notice the position of the subject and the -ing form.

The weather being fine, we went out.

Unlike Italian, the subject of the present participle precedes the -ing participle.

*A fine anno, avendo Andy fatto il bravo nipote, lo zio l'ha portato in vacanza in Florida.*

At the end of the year, Andy having been a good nephew, his uncle took him on holiday to Florida.

Often, however, English prefers a finite clause to a non-finite phrase:

At the end of the year, since Andy had been a good nephew, his uncle took him on holiday to Florida.

A useful hint for the sake of clarity is to keep modifiers as close as possible to what they modify.

## 5.6. Punctuation and Textuality

Punctuation gives the emphasis and expression to writing that pauses, intonation, gestures give to speech. It also contributes towards textuality as it signals the relationships that exist among words, groups of words and sentences. Although punctuation does not substitute logical word order and sentence sequencing, it does complement it. Translators cannot simply reproduce the punctuation of the ST in the TT. When reformulating sentences or clauses in an English TT from a particularly lengthy Italian ST sentence, for instance, translators will have to decide whether to use full stops, semicolons or colons. Their choice will depend not only on textual factors related to communicative dynamism but also on SL and TL conventions since the function of the various forms of punctuation does not always overlap in English and Italian.

5.6.1. The *full stop* is used in the same way as in Italian to mark off separate sentences, the only difference being, perhaps, that it is used more frequently in English. That is not to say, however, that all English writing is made up of short sentences. As we have seen, variation in sentence length and structure contributes to creating textual meaning and orient-