ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR COLLEAGUE!
EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS' GUESSES

By
Sergio Viaggio
United Nation Office, Vienna

Sigmund Freud (into whose Viennese study Dr Watson has tricked Sherlock Holmes): 'Who am I?' Holmes: 'Beyond the fact that you are a brilliant Jewish physician who was born in Hungary and studied in Paris, and that some radical theories of yours have alienated the respectable medical community so that you have severed your connections with various hospitals and branches of the medical fraternity — beyond the fact that you have ceased to practice medicine as a result, I can deduce little. You are married, possess a sense of honour, enjoy playing cards and reading Shakespeare and a Russian author whose name I am unable to pronounce. I can say little besides that will be of interest to you.'
Nicholas Meyer, The Seven-Per-Cent Solution, p. 92-93.

It is by now an axiom that translation and interpretation are forms of mediated interlingual communication, whereby both analysis of the original and production of the target text are governed by hypertextual (in the skopostheorie sense of the term) and macrotextual analyses based upon the relevant features of the situation. A crucial component of such analyses is the structure of explicatures and implicatures and, more relevantly, the way that, within the limits of his rhetorical competence, a writer/speaker chooses his explicitations as a function of what he assumes is a) not necessary to make explicit, b) not advisable to make explicit — and vice versa. The author is counting on his addressees to put the two they read/hear and the two they know/assume/can infer together in order to apprehend his intended sense (see Viaggio 1996 forthcoming). Ideally, the translator/interpreter should have access to both pairs: the linguistically explicit by the author, and the relevant knowledge/assumptions/inferences brought to bear by the addressees, lest he fail to come up with the needed four and, failing fully to apprehend sense himself, fail also to convey it adequately. In other words, the translator/interpreter needs access to the

1 The aficionado will find that these pages are interspersed with Holmsian quotations.
relevant bits of shared knowledge between author and addressees in order to be able himself to bring to bear in general and specifically at each time the same sets of presuppositions. In face-to-face verbal communication, many of the assumptions are based on shared situationality, which is the main reason why interpreters demand being there with full view of and access to the participants, the meeting room, the relevant background documentation, etc.

As the reality of professional practice would have it, though, interpreters as a rule do not have all the relevant pieces of information available from the outset, but must try and build the picture of the situation in situ and on the go, searching, as it were, for all manner of clues as to 'what it is all about'. Aware that the linguistically explicit meaning of an utterance is but circumstantial evidence of the speaker's intended sense, their main quest is for the latter. In this light, the essential task is the gradual inference of the implicit knowledge and assumptions that the participants are bringing to bear in communicating with each other. For this, induction and deduction — i.e. insightful conjecture (what Chernov 1978 and 1987 calls probability prognosis) based on a constant interplay of retrospective and prospective analysis — are of the essence. It is here that the interpreter's intelligence plays its decisive role. My cognitive clozing and sight-translation exercises (Viaggio 1992 and 1995) aimed at developing these analytical skills by variously manipulating the respective linguistic surfaces of the original and target texts. With the exercise I am about to present, the surface is left alone, and all the work is strictly at the intended-sense level (both direct and indirect). Of all three, this is the one that need not be coupled with production of a text (whether in the target or the original languages).

I developed it by sheer serendipity. In March 1996, I was invited by the Centro Internacional de Conferencias, Buenos Aires, to teach two one-week intensive seminars to interpreters seeking to perfect their skills. Looking for material of suitable length and complexity, I simply chanced upon a speech in

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2 As mediator, the translator/interpreter needs more, however: He must be aware of the way presuppositions, assumptions, knowledge and inferences may differ between speaker and addressees (be it of the original or of the translation), in order to introduce, if apt from the skopos perspective, the necessary modifications in his target text. Let us always remind our students that meinen and verstehen, meaning (in the sense of vouloir dire) and understanding are different — different processes, with different objectives, that follow different strategies (Hörmann 1976).

3 In Viaggio 1996 I define intended sense as the overall sense — including the intentional secondary illocutionary acts — that the sender wishes to confer upon his utterance. Within it, I distinguish direct intended sense from indirect intended sense (for instance, allegorical).
which the speaker never mentions who he is, or what he is, or what Organisation he works for, nor does he state when or where he is speaking, and I had it recorded by an American colleague. My intention was, of course, to give my students all the relevant background information; but at the last moment I paused: What, I asked myself, can an interpreter do when he does not have a hint about the coordinates of the communicative act he is supposed to mediate in? Will any interpreter ever have to work completely blindfolded? I doubt it, but it is my conviction that, to be maximally effective, the training of a soldier ought to be more difficult than war (except that it is quite impossible, since even the most strenuous and demanding training is never really war). I tried the exercise for a second time at the SSLM the following month. This time around, I had to deal with students of interpretation rather than professional interpreters seeking to upgrade their skills, so instead of having them do the speech, I put on the tape over the loudspeakers, stopped it at relevant places, and posed questions with the aim of prompting and orienting their collective inferences. At times these were but conjectures with varying degrees of probability, at times they all but imposed themselves. As sense was being made out, we also analyzed the redundant information in the text, with a view to its eventual condensation in a the target language.

In both instances, the experiment proved quite successful. Neither the professional interpreters in Buenos Aires nor the students at Trieste found that the task was beyond their means, and, to judge from their reactions, they actually enjoyed the challenge and novelty of it all. At the SSLM, several faculty members were also present, and I am sure that they will come up with all manner of improvements.

As an introduction, I described the scene above in Nicholas Meyer's delightful The Seven-Per-Cent Solution — adapted to brilliant effect in the most entertaining film based upon it⁴ — which I find most illustrative of what the exercise is about: Holmes has turned into a fully-fledged cocaine addict (diluted in a 7% solution). Alarmed, Dr Watson enlists the help of Sigmund Freud and tricks his detective friend into following Dr Moriarty's fake trail to Vienna, which leads straight up into Dr Freud's study. Holmes, does not know where he is or why, but he can tell a lot about his host by sheer dint of keen observation, unfailing discrimination between relevant and irrelevant details, disciplined induction, bold imagination and cautious abduction (in the Peircean sense of

⁴ With a dream of a cast: Holmes — Nicol Williamson, Watson — Robert Duvall (!), Freud — Alan Arkin, Professor Moriarty — Lawrence Olivier; with Vanessa Redgrave, Joel Gray and Samantha Eggar thrown in for good measure! The scene described is a gem, and Holmes deductions are more than I have consigned.
inferring a specific case from general rules and available evidence\(^5\), all governed by penetrating intelligence. His is a feat of minute analysis and creative synthesis\(^6\). This is what thorough understanding — of an utterance, of a fellow

5 As Gorlée 1994 (p. 40 and foll.) explains, if deduction is merely the application of general rules to particular cases, and induction is generalising from a number of cases, abduction is instinctive reasoning, meant to formulate and adopt certain hypotheses on which further to build the argumentation. Deduction proves that something must be; induction shows that something actually is operative; abduction merely suggests that something may be. For Peirce, abduction is the sheet anchor of science — the tentative explanation of a puzzling fact observed.

6 Here is — very much shorn of wonderfully insightful detail — Holmes explanation: 'I never guess. It is an appalling habit, destructive of the logical faculty. A private study is an ideal place for observing facets of a human character. When a man is interested in religion he generally keeps all books on such a subject in one place. Your editions of the Koran, the King James Bible [but how come Dr Freud has an English King James rather than a German Luther bible, my dear Holmes? S.V.], and various other works of a similar nature are separate from your handsomely bound copy of the Talmud and the Hebrew Bible. These, therefore, constitute some special importance on their own. Your studies in France are to be inferred from the great many medical works you posses in French. Medicine is complex enough already and not to be studied in a foreign language for one's private amusement. It is a longer shot, but the particularly dog-eared appearance of those works of Charcot makes me venture to suggest that he was your teacher; either that, or his writing had some special appeal for you, connected with the development of your own ideas. That you read Shakespeare is to be deduced from the fact that the book has been replaced upside-down. You can scarcely miss it, but the fact that you have not adjusted the volume suggests to my mind that you no doubt intend pulling it out again in the near future, which leads me to believe that you are fond of reading it. As for the Russian author [Dostoevsky], the lack of dust on that volume proclaims your consistent interest in it. That you are a physician is obvious; that you no longer practice medicine is evident by your presence here at home in the middle of the day. Your separation from various societies is indicated by those spaces on the wall, clearly meant to display additional certificates. Some position you have taken has discredited you in their eyes and they have in response asked you to leave. Therefore I take the liberty of postulating some sort of radical theory, too advanced or too shocking. That is not certain. Your marriage is, however, from your ring. Your accent hints at Hungary. Your sense of honour I inferred from the fact that you bothered to remove the testimonials of those societies that have ceased to recognise you. As to your love of cards, that is a point of greater subtlety still and I will not insult your intelligence by describing now how I came to know it.' [I have looked and looked for the clues, but I still cannot
human being, of a phenomenon, of a situation, of the world — demands. This is what the booth calls for; and this is what my exercise is meant to help bring forth and develop. It consists simply in playing Sherlock Holmes with the speaker.7

In order to place the exercise within a plausible real-life context, I gave my (mostly female) students the following background: Wednesday morning you are having breakfast when the phone rings. A colleague is in distress: she has just received a call from the school; her son has had an accident and she is rushing off. Can you please replace her at the meeting she is doing at Hotel X at 9 o’clock? Thank you. Click! You look at your watch: it is 8:30. You dash out of your home, hail a cab and do your make-up at the traffic lights. The car pulls up; you throw the money at the cabby, and, without waiting for the change, rush into the room where the meeting is just about to start; you don the earphones, and before your bottom has fully settled into the seat, the speaker — whom you cannot yet see — begins his speech. All you know as you hear him say ‘Good morning ladies and gentlemen’ is that he is a man... And from this moment on, the game’s afoot!

I appreciate the opportunity to address some of the matters before the Board.

So it is the meeting of a Board. But what Board? What kinds of institutions have boards? Companies, of course. All the students follow the same seemingly correct line of reasoning: the meeting, I said (wrong background information, mea culpa), takes place at a Hotel, therefore, it must be some kind of private market gathering. All, except one. Shyly, as if she were afraid to be caught cheating, she ventures that since I work at the UN in Vienna, and all the other speeches have come from there, this one must come from there too. Indeed! And that was not cheating at all: her only real clue about the speaker is that it is I who brought the tape. Elementary! Yes, a Vienna speech alright; but what UN system agencies meet in Vienna? Who would the members of the Board be? And, last but not least, who is addressing it? (Needless to say, some students had a better idea than others — especially the Italians, who by now have been very

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7 As Dr Freud himself remarks, his methods and Holmes’s are very similar. As someone thoroughly exposed to psychoanalysis, I can vouch for that and more: my own de-construction of sense into objective, direct-intended, indirect-intended and deep (Viaggio 1996 forthcoming) is but a by-product of such an exposure.
exposed to speeches descending upon them from Vienna — but for some reason, nobody could guess it until later.)

*I am leaving some items to be introduced by the Deputy Directors General, but I should like to begin, myself, commenting on the financial situation of the Agency.*

So it is the Board of an institution that obviously calls itself an **Agency**. The speaker is leaving the **introduction** of other items to **Deputy Directors General**, while he is going to refer to some matters, including finances. We are, thus, at the very beginning of a meeting, where items are being introduced; this is, apparently, the first such item, and it is being introduced by some one ranking **above** Deputy Director General level, otherwise he would have referred to **my** fellow DDGs, or **other** DDGs. Who pecks down on Deputy Directors General? Why the Director General **himself**, whence the **myself** above — our first purely linguistic clue. We have also heard the title, or **theme**, of the first part of the speech: **The Agency's financial situation**. Until further notice, all that is to ensue will be but a sequence of **rhemes** to that main theme.

**The Agency remains financially afloat — but not more...**

Is that good or bad? Both — with pros and cons, possibly with heroes of the half-salvaging and culprits of the half-sinking, likely to be mentioned or hinted at later, together with details of both phenomena.

**If we had not taken steps at the beginning of the year to reduce expenses for 1992 by 13%, the Agency would have been in crisis...**

Who is **we**? How long since the beginning of what year? What crisis was looming? Through whose fault? Whoever **we** is, they are the heroes, and the speaker clearly places himself among them. They, headed by the speaker, have been in a position to reduce the Agency's expenses, **ergo** they are its managers: it is thus the Administration which is now intervening before the Board. The Administration has saved the Agency from a crisis (that is why the latter is still afloat) that would have otherwise caused it to go under. But the ship is still not fully seaworthy; therefore, the crisis, though contained, is still lurking. If the Administration is to be thanked for the salvaging, who is to be blamed for the sinking? Either external circumstances (a devalued US dollar; an unexpected growth in obligations?) or internal disarray (mismanagement; lack of cooperation from membership?). Mismanagement would place the blame back on the Administration's shoulders, so it is the least plausible hypothesis — though
not to be totally discarded out of hand: a self-criticism may still be somewhere in the offing. As to the date, at the latest end, the speech is being delivered in March/April 1996 (when our exercise is actually taking place), and, at the earliest, either late 1992 (the figures would not have been ready otherwise) or early 1993. Since it is unlikely that nothing worth mentioning happened in 1993, 1994, and 1995, the earlier dates are the safest bet.

*The cuts have inevitably had a detrimental effect on programme implementation. Through our early reaction and through improvements in the payment patterns of some Member States, uncontrolled disruptions of the Agency's activities have been avoided...*

In other words, do not blame us (administrators) for such negative impact, but mainly some of yourselves (Member States). Matters would have been much worse had we not reacted early, and had not some of you improved your payment patterns. We now have the culprits: the Member States that have not improved their payment patterns. So in their and others' cases payment patterns left room for improvement in the first place. How can payment patterns be in need of improvement? When debtors fail to pay in full and/or on time. Some Member States have been punctual — those and the Administration are the heroes. Some have been mending their ways — those are the partially redeemed sinners. Some are recalcitrant — those are the real villains of the piece. And we know who you are! Can the students make an educated guess (pace Sherlock Holmes) as to who these villains my be?

*We now expect some encouraging news. I understand that the Governor for the Russian Federation will inform the Board that Russia intends to pay the Agency part of its arrears already before the end of this month and remaining arrears later. This will, indeed, be helpful, and I want to express appreciation.*

Notice the roundabout announcement: the speaker is telling that he has been told that Russia is going to tell. It is obvious that the whole thing has been cooked up before the meeting, and the speaker is not really informing his audience about Russia's intention to pay (it would be improper of him to do so); only for the interpreters is this genuine information: both speaker and audience knew it — now the interpreters know it too. Be that as it may, Russia is redeeming herself and is now to pay her arrears, part now, part later. The part to be paid now is the Agency part. The remaining arrears, therefore, do not correspond to the Agency part. But then to which one(s)? We are talking, after all, about the Agency's financial situation and nobody else's. Let us perk up: we obviously lack crucial information. In any event, is the fact that Russia will pay
the Agency part important? How much, relatively speaking, can the arrears of a
country such as Russia be? Why has such a country not paid fully and promptly
in the first place? (Both answers, I submit, should be obvious to anybody who
is minimally informed about what is going on in the world — anybody who is
not, no matter how skilful linguistically, has no place in a booth.) And whence
the Governor for the Russian Federation? What does the speaker mean by
Governor for? Should it not be of? Is this a relevant linguistic clue or just a
mistake by a non-native (despite his impeccable accent, the man speaks rather
un-idiomatically)? But then does Russia not have a President? Most students
played it safe and variously called the gentleman Ambassador, Delegate and
Representative. Upon discussion, it was subsequently felt that Representative
was the best hyperonym, since whatever his official title (perhaps not
necessarily that of Ambassador), the 'Governor' is obviously representing his
country.

I want also to express appreciation to several other States which, in
reply to my repeated pleas, have come forward with payment of arrears
which had been accumulating in the past. This has been most helpful. I
appeal to all States, which are still in arrears, to pay without further
delay arrears which were due already in January of this year.

There are other redeemed delinquent debtors. Have they paid up gladly? No, it
has taken the speaker repeated pleas. Why are they not mentioned by name?
Probably because the assertion that they have paid up at long last is not
meant — nor will it be taken — altogether as a compliment, and, also, the
money they owe and/or have paid may not be that much — at least compared to
Russia's payment. We can be sure now that the speaker is, indeed, the DG: who
else would be in authority to make repeated pleas to Member States or appeal to
them to pay up? As for the date, can we narrow our possibilities? Late 1992 or
not earlier than March 1993: if it were February, the speaker would
probably have said last month. On a linguistic level, within the general
awkwardness of expression, the idiosyncratic use of which confirms that the man
is not a native speaker of English.

Regrettably, payments that are delayed by over one year may not
always be effectively and fully utilized for the approved programme,
because of a limitation imposed by our financial regulations. To deal
with this problem, however, I plan to submit specific proposals to
you in December.

We have now learned something about the Agency's financial rules: if the
earmarked moneys are not made available within the year, they may not be used
as planned. In other words, unless you pay right away — perhaps even if you
do — it may be too late for the programmes for which such moneys were earmarked. The proposals, incidentally, are forthcoming in December, so we are neither at the very beginning of 1993 — but, remember, still not later than March! — **nor at the very end of 1992**: December is still to come. And then not in November either. Why? Because in the latter case the speaker would have been more likely to say *next month* rather than December.

*A sound financial basis for the Agency's technical co-operation activities is of fundamental importance for its mission to help transfer nuclear techniques and know-how.*

So the Agency is engaged in technical co-operation in the nuclear field — and not just horizontally, but between haves and have-nots. It is thus some sort of technical Agency. Moreover, such co-operation is not just one of the Agency's activities, however important, but its very **mission**. It sees itself therefore not mainly as a political body (such as the UN itself); it must then be another Vienna-based international body (but not UNIDO — the United Nations Industrial Development Organization — which is not called Agency!).

* A special report on the subject is before the Board in document **GOV/2611. In respect of the Technical Assistance and Co-operation Fund, I should report to you that as of 31 August 1992, pledges made against the 1992 target of $52.5 million amounted to $37.9 million — or 72% — of which 70% has been paid.**

**GOV/2611.** The document's symbol may be an unexpected clue: the speaker had mentioned the Governor for the Russian Federation. Maybe representatives at this Board **are** called Governors after all! We are also in possession of the figures for August 1992, but not of any later ones; we cannot therefore be in 1993. Which means we must be somewhere after August and before November 1992, and that leaves but September and October. Now we seem to be talking about a different budget, that of the Technical Co-operation Fund. Can that be the **other** or **another** part of Russia's arrears above? We also know what order of magnitude is being discussed. And we know as well that three different sums are at stake: the $52.5 million **target**, the $37.9 million **pledged** (i.e. promised) which represents 72.2% of the target, and a sum equal to 70% of the latter $37.9 (some $28 million) actually **paid**. The DG is asking Member States both to pledge the missing moneys for the target, and to pay the pledges they have already made. How much was then owed at 31 August this year? 30% of $37.9 million, i.e. some $12 million. But that will still be some $14.6 million shy of the target. No wonder the DG is complaining!
At the same date 31 August last year, pledges against the then current year had reached 68% of which 56% had been paid.

So this year they have both pledged and paid more than last year (which, incidentally confirms that this year is 1992)! Then why complain so bitterly? It simply cannot be; and if it cannot be, then it is not — it is impossible, and once the impossible has been ruled out, what remains must be the truth, however improbable. But what remains? Either the speaker misspoke or he is about to refute the point he seems to have made.

This looks like a welcome improvement...

No, he has not misspoken. Even the Board needs an explanation now:

... but I am bound to note that this year the percentage includes contributions by major donors which had not yet been pledged by this date last year, and that the shortfall between target and pledges for 1992 at present amounts to $14.5 million.

So that's it! And who are those major donors? The richest countries, of course. By the way, we know that the shortfall is $14.6 million. The DG is obviously rounding up — or rather down — and should have rather said some $14.5 million — but then he is not a native speaker.

Of the present shortfall, 43% is due to the interruption of pledging in non-convertible currencies by major donors which, in the past, had always fully met the target.

What major donors used to contribute in non-convertible currencies? Obviously the formerly socialist States, who pledged variously in rubles, forints, zlotys and the like, and who as a matter of principle always paid their contributions promptly and fully — in currencies that could only be spent buying goods and services provided by them (which, in the case of highly industrialised countries such as the GDR, the CSSR and the USSR, were eminently serviceable). Mind you, they have not stopped paying, but

8 Here, some prompting can instruct may become indispensable. Someone not altogether familiar with the UN scene may not readily make the necessary connections — even though, at least in the case of professionals who remember the Berlin wall, the relevant pieces of information ought to be there — if dispersed — in the first place: Anybody who travelled to the Eastern bloc knows that he was forced to change his currency into Monopoly money, that had no value outside the country concerned, and little inside.
pledging: unlike others, they are not accused of being delinquent. Moreover, they have not really stopped but interrupted pledging — a strange collocation indeed, and, as such, another linguistic clue. Those are the so-called countries in transition (to a market economy), and the speaker evidently assumes that the interruption is due to the transition, and therefore temporary, witness the payments announced by Russia. These countries have an economic alibi, and the speaker is thus giving them the benefit of the doubt.

While we must hope that this is only a temporary phenomenon, the shortfall in pledges by a number of highly industrialized countries seems more chronic and disconcerting. They account for 38% of the present shortfall.

So, although they account for 43% of the shortfall (around $6.5 million), the former Socialist states are excused, but not the apparently main culprits, a number — how many? — of highly industrialised countries not of the East. Which? Definitely not the Scandinavians with their tradition of solidarity and observance of all international commitments. Probably not the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland or Luxembourg. Australia, New Zealand and Canada are also unlikely. Some others, perhaps. They account for 38% of the $14.5 million shortfall — some $5.5 million. But why are they condemned more if they owe less? Because they do not have an economic alibi: their motives are political — if the Eastern European countries cannot pay, these ones will not. And they have been chronically reticent to boot. Naturally, there is nothing disconcerting about this, and the DG is less puzzled than he implies. His indirect intended sense is crystal-clear: Everybody, and particularly the real addressees, knows that he knows. What the DG is transparently doing is playing the innocent game in order to elicit from them either an inane explanation that will make them loose face, or, better, their pledges. What about the remaining 19% of the shortfall? Naturally, if not the former socialist countries or the developed countries, then the developing countries. But all of them?

Equally regrettable is the fact that amongst the developing countries which fail to meet their pledges there are several Member States with considerable per capita income. This group of countries accounts for 16% of the shortfall...

No, not all, but some of the richest, who account for 16% of the shortfall. Who may they be? Not Nepal and not Bolivia, for sure. But also not India or perhaps even Brazil (we are talking not of GDP but per capita income). What about the remaining 3%? Obviously poorer developing countries account for it:
Only 3% of the total shortfall is due to shortfalls in pledges by less well-off Member States.

This latter statement provides no new information, but simply corroborates our inferences. The interpreter can translate this passage, figure and all, without even hearing the speaker.

I turn now to the subject of safeguards.

The speaker signals a shift in theme. All rhymes will now relate to the new theme Safeguards; but what safeguards? Most probably related to nuclear energy, but what exactly are they?

It is clear that the wave of expansion in the Agency's duties which is resulting from the acceptance of comprehensive safeguards by Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and the DPRK will be followed by another wave as former members of the Soviet Union join the NPT as non-nuclear weapons States.

Another linguistic clue: The wave of expansion is a simile obviously borrowed from the nuclear field — the speaker's professional background creeps into his speech. Why would the acceptance of comprehensive safeguards by only four countries entail such an expansion? What do Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and the mysterious DPRK have in common that is relevant in the nuclear context? We know — or should know — that the first three have long been among the developing countries with a developed nuclear capability, and considered, moreover, to be close to being able to produce their own weapons (South Africa's possession of several devices was being confirmed as this exercise was tried at the SSLM). Obviously, the DPRK must fit the same profile, but who is she? What countries used to be known by their acronyms rather than by their names? We have mentioned a few: the USSR, the GDR, the CSSR... Which of those countries both still exist and has a name starting with a K? Next, what is the NPT? Something to which the former Soviet Republics will adhere as non-nuclear weapons states. It must therefore be some kind of instrument, agreement or covenant having to do with arms, most probably some kind of disarmament treaty (whence the T?)

It is desirable from many viewpoints that these countries conclude new safeguards agreements promptly. After Estonia, Lithuania will be the second country to conclude its NPT safeguards agreement with the agency; the required agreement, which is a standard NPT agreement, is already before the Board.
The Baltic states are already coming forth. We know that there is a standard safeguards agreement, which means that it is not country-specific, and that the Board is supposed to approve it.

*The expected adherence to the NPT by States such as Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan will bring much further work for the Agency — and for these States — in the safeguards field. Adequate national nuclear material accounting and control systems must be set up, based on national legislation.*

If the former members of the Soviet Union will adhere as non-nuclear weapon States, why will the expected adherence of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan bring **much further work in the safeguards field**? They are the three ex-Soviet Republics possessing nuclear power besides Russia. It has now become clearer what the safeguards are about: they must concern the utilization and/or trade of nuclear material. If the safeguards involve setting up adequate accounting and control systems of nuclear material, then it is obvious that these are not yet in place, despite the fifty years of nuclear energy development in the USSR (which explains the persistent reports of smuggling of nuclear material out of the former Union, a phenomenon widely reported in the press). All this will mean more work for the Agency.

*Given resources, the Agency could help to speed up the process which would be of importance for several reasons, e.g. eventual safeguards costs.*

And more money. The indirect plea for adequate (pledge what is needed), full (pay what you have pledged) and prompt (pay in time) payment resounds again. The speaker abides by his words: in actual fact, and despite the apparent detour, he has not stopped speaking about finances.

*May I mention that an Agency mission has just returned from a visit to Kazakhstan and Belarus, where it discussed the preparatory work required for the future application of safeguards, particularly the need for systems of accounting and control.*

We learn that the Agency sends missions and what could be their task. The safeguards, moreover, are supposed to be applied. And we already know that what is to be accounted for and controlled is nuclear material.

*The Secretariat would like to continue the discussion with the two States and other republics of the former Soviet Union to assist in ensuring early application of safeguards upon their planned adherence to the NPT.*
Mentioned is made of the Secretariat. So far we had the Board and, by implication, the Administration. Either the Board has a Secretariat, or the Administration is called Secretariat (as is the case with the UN and many other international organizations). The latter is by far the most plausible hypothesis. In any event, would not the Secretariat of the Board be an essential part of the Administration?

_During the visit, the Agency mission also discussed many issues related to safety, radiation protection and physical protection._

We are dealing obviously with nuclear safety, protection from radiation and of physical objects, including — but probably not limited to — the human body.

The speech goes on, but I stopped it here. Its analysis required the better part of two hours, with many hypothesis discarded and facts explained. In Buenos Aires I was surprised at the thoughtful approach by my students (well, colleagues) and their keen analysis of the text. One of them remarked that she had never quite realised why it was so important to keep a certain distance (both mental and chronological) from the original. Also, an otherwise routine exercise — yet one more tape! — became a thrilling experience. All of them were amazed to realise how much information could be gathered form almost every phrase. A most surprising fact was that on only rare occasions did the linguistic-surface analysis yield any clues, mostly about the speaker, and far from crucial at that: they simply confirmed that the speaker is indeed the DG, that he is not a native speaker of English, and that he has a background in nuclear energy. We did not really need them, but since they were there, why not take stock of them just the same — for the sheer heck of it! More crucial was the preposition for collocated with Governor, but we would have needed more instances to verify its real sense. As to the _interruption/payment_ collocation, it merely corroborated an otherwise plain inference. Something else that struck the students was how much factual knowledge about the Agency and its workings they had been able to gather from a speech barely five or six minutes long. A few minutes more and even the name might have cropped up!

Apart from natural talent and intelligence, the students' ability to make the relevant inferences will be a function of their relevant knowledge and exposure. In order to make this kind of analysis with a text such as the above, the teacher need not assume on their part any specialised knowledge: an average cultivated person with access to CNN and Euronews — let alone the printed media — should in principle be able to make the most general inferences. Not surprisingly, however, the exercise helped reveal all manner of information lacunae, coupled with methodological errors in analysis, inability to bring into play clues not immediately preceding the segment at hand and, generally
speaking, a lack of awareness of the text as a global speech act, developed through a coherent sequence of specific acts. This serves a doubly useful purpose: on the one hand, students are sensitized to the need to supplement their encyclopedic knowledge on their own; on the other, they are made aware of the need to think: as the speaker, as the audience, and, above all, as interpreters. In this latter respect, two tasks remained constant at each stage: a thorough analysis of the explicit and an exhaustive inference of the implicit. The name of the game was establishing intended sense (that which the speaker means to convey globally) on the basis of sense as directly expressed or indirectly conveyed. Needless to confess, there is nothing relevant to this text that I am not aware of: for all I know, I may have even interpreted it when it was delivered. I have been now toying with the idea of doing with my students a text about which I myself have no clue, taking some of my own medicine in their presence (the sergeant must, after all, be able to do the same drills he is forcing upon his recruits — and do them better). Be that as it may, I submit specific exercises such as the above do help develop basic and crucial text-analysis skills at all levels, from the hypertextual (the conference, the world) to the micro-linguistic (isolated prepositions). What sets it apart from other exercises in text- and discourse analysis is that, even if the students are not required to interpret it simultaneously, the analysis proceeds as the text is delivered, without the benefit of a global perspective, which makes it, I submit, particularly useful for SI training. It is precisely the fact that the text is dosified that allows — nay, demands — constant conjecturing and verification.

The same kind of analysis can, of course, be performed giving the students the whole text, in which case the exercise will be more useful to translators.

Bibliography


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