

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Identification and statement of the research problem

In this section, the research problem will be identified and viewed in its wider context.

##### 1.1.1 Background and rationale to the research problem

African Language Translation Facilitation Courses (ALTFCs) at the Directorate Language Services (D Lang) of the Department of Defence (DOD) must be seen against the background of South Africa's political climate, as well as in terms of traditional translator training at various institutions, not just in South Africa but all over the world.

##### 1.1.1.1 The political dimension

The ALTFC is the direct result of mainly two policy documents, namely the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the various drafts of the *Language Policy for the Department of Defence*, the last of which was finally promulgated by the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in 2001. The South African Constitution states that Northern Sotho<sup>1</sup>, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, Tsonga, Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Xhosa and Zulu shall be the official languages of the Republic (section 6 (1)). Moreover, it states that the state “must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages” (section 6 (2)) and that “all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably” (section 6 (4)).

Owing to the stipulations of the Constitution, the DOD Chief of Policy and Planning in collaboration with D Lang formulated a language policy for the whole DOD. Although the ALTFC was inspired by earlier drafts, the *Language Policy for the Department of Defence* (DOD LP<sup>2</sup>; see Appendix A) of 2001 will be used for the purpose of this study since it is currently used as the basis for language decisions within the DOD. When the DOD LP was formulated the developments with regard to the Language Policy and Plan for South Africa were closely followed. The Language Policy and Plan for South Africa, which was drafted by the former Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology (DACST), now Department of Arts and Culture (DAC)<sup>3</sup>, resulted in the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF) in 2003.

However, owing to the core functions of the DOD and the SANDF in particular and for command and control purposes, deviations from the NLPF occur in the DOD LP. For example, while the NLPF (2003: section 2.4.6.5) stipulates that national government departments must publish documents in at

least six of the official languages, with the six languages comprising at least one language from the Nguni group (Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu and Swati), at least one from the Sotho group (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana), Venda, Tsonga, English and Afrikaans, the DOD has English as a *thread language*. English as a thread language means that English is used for general communication, command, control and coordination throughout the DOD (DOD LP 2001: sections 6 and 8 (a)). However, this does not exempt members (in uniform) and employees (civilian) of the DOD from recognising, respecting, fostering, using and enhancing all official languages (DOD LP 2001: section 7). DOD press releases and electronic media interviews by senior officials and officers of the DOD “should, in addition to English, also be in the other official languages, with consideration being given to the **rotation principle**” (DOD LP 2001: section 30 (b)). The DOD LP is still based on the old Language Policy and Plan for South Africa of 2000 which requires four language categories, i.e. one language each from the Nguni group, the Sotho group, Venda/Tsonga and Afrikaans/English. The DOD LP is currently being reviewed.

Moreover, the DOD LP (2001: section 9) states that the “original language in which a document is drawn up and signed shall be deemed to have the status of language of record” and that if necessary, “documents of record in languages other than the thread language should have summaries in the thread language filed along with the originals”. Seminal documents, i.e. documents such as DOD policies and orders that significantly impact upon all the members and employees of the DOD, “shall also be promulgated in the thread language and *in any other language upon request*” (DOD LP 2001: section 10; my own italics).

The originator or sender of any type of communication must make sure that the content of the communication is understood by the receiver (DOD LP 2001: section 8 (e)). The receiver of the communication, in turn, must immediately report his lack of understanding with regard to such a communication and request the services of language practitioners or language facilitators at D Lang or the Human Resources Support Satellites (DOD LP 2001: sections 8 (g), 12 and 13). The DOD differentiates between language practitioners, who work as professionals in one or several language-related fields, and language facilitators. *Language facilitator* means any member or employee of the DOD who, as an over-and-above duty and without necessarily having any advanced linguistic, interpreting or translation training, is considered to be competent by D Lang to facilitate on an *ad hoc* basis (see glossary of Appendix A).

The DOD language policy also refers to the language rights of DOD members (DOD LP 2001: section 27). Accordingly, members may use their official language of choice when, inter alia, making written statements, submitting affidavits, communicating, either orally or in writing, with their seniors about personal, health and social problems or administrative enquiries. While during basic training, any official language may be used for training and assessment purposes, intermediate training will be mainly held in English but the other official languages will be used to facilitate learning. With the examiner’s consent,

students may take their tests or do their assignments in the official language of their choice (DOD LP 2001: sections 17 and 18). All command and staff courses are conducted in the thread language only because proficiency in the thread language is expected at this level.

In view of the stipulations of the South African Constitution and the DOD Language Policy, D Lang expected a massive increase in translations since in order to practise functional multilingualism, language facilitation measures, such as interpreting, translation, mediating, etc., had to be supplied by D Lang to “support effective communication and promote respect amongst the members/employees of the various language groups” (DOD LP 2001: section 8 (h)). Since the anticipated demand could not possibly be met by the language practitioners of the African Language Section at the D Lang, various options were researched to solve the problem. First translator training in South Africa was investigated to identify to what extent existing translator training could help D Lang in addressing multilingual communication in the DOD.

### **1.1.1.2 Translator and interpreter training in South Africa**

Before investigating translator training in South Africa, it should perhaps be mentioned that translation has been traditionally treated like the poor cousin in this country and has had a rather poor image when compared, for example, with language teaching. Especially translation in and out of the African languages has been often carried out on an *ad hoc* basis (see Inggs & Meintjes 1998: 87), with even the tea-girl or cleaner being asked to help out with translation or interpreting tasks. Although understandable in certain instances, this shows a complete lack of understanding of what translation entails and highlights the crisis surrounding translation in South Africa.

Moreover, there is the belief, often held by seasoned translators, that translators are born and not made. Translators must have an “innate ability or aptitude” (Le Roux 1994: 65), which cannot be taught in translation classes. If a person does not have this special flair no amount of training will turn him into a competent translator. However, this point seems rather moot since the quantity of the translations required, especially into and out of the official African languages, far outnumbers the availability of particularly gifted, trained and experienced translators.

Furthermore, there are many translators who might not be brilliant but who have done competent and important work over the years. Not just practice but also ongoing training has helped them to improve the quality of their translations. As a result, formalised translator training is not only desirable but absolutely necessary in a country such as South Africa.

Regarding the training of translators and interpreters in South Africa, the year 1991 can be viewed as a watershed because the University of South Africa (Unisa) hosted the first international conference on

translation. For practical reasons, the discussion on translator and interpreter courses will be therefore divided into courses presented before 1992 and after 1992.

After the Linguistics Department at Rhodes University had introduced the first one-year post-graduate diploma in translation in 1975 (Beukes 1994: 7), translator training in South Africa was mainly carried out at university and technikon level in the form of diplomas and post-graduate degrees. The *status quo* in 1992, as reported by Kruger (1992a: 5), was as follows: Stellenbosch University, the University of South Africa (Unisa) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) offered a post-graduate diploma in translation, with the Wits course having the additional component of interpreting, thus making it the only university offering interpreter training at that time. In addition, a BA Honours/MA in Applied Linguistics, BA Honours/MA in Linguistics and a Structured MA in General Linguistics - all with an option of specialisation in translation - were offered by the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), Unisa and Stellenbosch University, respectively. Wits did not offer an honours course but an MA in translation. When Rhodes University stopped its translation courses no formal undergraduate translation qualification could be obtained in South Africa.

In the mid-nineties, when it became clear that South Africa would have 11 official languages and translation was not only a nice-to-have but would become a legal obligation, especially for government departments, those educational institutions that had translation courses already in place expanded their range of courses offered while newcomers, such as the University of the Free State (UOFS) and Potchefstroom, also introduced courses (Inggs & Meintjes 1998: 87). In particular, the number of interpreting courses has considerably increased.

The *A-Z of Careers* (2000/2001: 486-487) currently lists the following translation and interpreting courses: Post-graduate diplomas in translation are offered by Unisa, Stellenbosch University, RAU, the University of the Free State (UOFS) and Wits. The University of Potchefstroom presents a BA degree in translation. Honours degrees in translation or in linguistics or applied linguistics with specialisation in translation can be obtained from Unisa, RAU, Potchefstroom University and Wits. Said universities plus the University of the Free State also offer an MA in translation. Other educational institutions, such as the universities of Natal and the Western Cape, as well as the technikons SA, Pretoria and Free State offer undergraduate translation courses as part of other degrees or diplomas.

Regarding interpreting, an undergraduate Diploma in Legal Interpreting is presented at Potchefstroom University, the UOFS and Wits, with a BA with specialisation in court interpreting being offered at Unisa. Postgraduate diplomas in interpreting can be obtained from the University of the Free State and Wits. While Wits also offers an honours degree as well as an MA in interpreting, UOFS only presents an MA course in interpreting (full-time and tutored).

The latest survey on the training of language practitioners in South Africa by the South African Translators' Institute (SATI 2003: 3-16) largely confirms the above findings. In this survey, the universities of Pretoria and Port Elizabeth are added to the list of institutions training translators and interpreters. While the former offers a number of courses in translation, editing, lexicography and terminology that can be chosen as part of various undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, the latter offers an option of specialisation in translation as part of its BA Honours and MA in Applied Language Studies.

One of the few institutions that offer translator training on a more informal basis is the Unit for Document Design at the University of Stellenbosch. As the name indicates, the Unit for Document Design does not only look at various aspects of text production but targets documents as a whole. As a result, it offers tuition in the fields of, for example, corporate writing, writing for public relations, designing web texts and sites. Under the heading of Language Professions, the unit offers lectures and intensive workshops in translation, editing and plain writing throughout the country. However, these workshops and lectures seem to be aimed either at people who already work in the language field and want to add translation and editing to their repertoire or at practising translators who do not necessarily have any formal training in translation and want to keep in touch with new developments.

Apart from a few exceptions, the above overview on translator training in South Africa, which is modelled in many respects on overseas systems (especially the British), is mainly carried out at postgraduate level. This means that in order to qualify for translator training prospective translation students must already have a degree and be fluent in two or more languages (Inggs & Meintjes 1998: 88). Such a system, however, does not take into account the multilingual situation in South Africa, where people are often fluent in two or more languages and have translated out of necessity, especially in the African languages, on a more informal basis for the better part of their working life. Such people may not necessarily want an academic degree or diploma (many of them do not have a senior certificate) but improve on their translation skills.

Moreover, mainstream translator training in South Africa does not help to alleviate the shortage of translators for the various official African languages in the short term. This situation is aggravated by the loss of many in-house training opportunities in the nineties when large translation offices, such as for example those at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Post Office, Railways, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR), etc., were closed down<sup>4</sup>. Particularly affected are government departments, including the DOD, which do not have the financial means to outsource all their documents for translation or to employ more professional translators. They will have to fall back on their own bi- or multilingual personnel for translation into and out of the official African languages, especially where documents for internal communication are concerned. This in an environment where there is widespread ignorance about what translation entails,

not only by those performing translation tasks but also those initiating translation (see above and Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.1).

### 1.1.2 Statement of problem

Faced with the above-mentioned increase in African language translations, the shortage of trained translators for the African languages and severe budgetary constraints preventing the large-scale outsourcing of documents for translation and the employment of additional language practitioners, D Lang decided to design and implement a translation facilitation course for the official African languages. The first such course, namely the African Language Translation Facilitation Course (ALTFC), was held at D Lang in August 1997.

The ALTFC is intended to prepare members and employees of the DOD (mostly without any specific linguistic training) to deal with elementary, routine translation tasks within the field of their expertise at their units. It is intended as an orientation course and not to train fully-fledged translators. As D Lang predicts that DOD members and employees will be asked to translate, irrespective of their level of language competence or translation experience, the ALTFC is intended to serve as a type of damage control by giving candidates a very basic idea of what translation entails and alerting them to the major translational do's and don'ts.

These four-week ALTFCs are generally held twice or three times a year at D Lang, with about 10 candidates per course attending from all over the country. Candidates are not separated according to their language combinations, but jointly attend classes and workshops. Since English is the language of communication, command, control and coordination throughout the DOD (see par. 1.1.1.1), candidates are required to translate from English into the various official African languages and from the various official African languages into English, depending on which official African language they indicate as the language of their choice (not necessarily their mother tongue).

Although the course had been very popular, after five ALTFCs it was felt that the course needed re-evaluation. D Lang would like to know whether the existing ALTFC is useful in its current form (see Appendix B) and in line with current trends in translator training. Especially against the background that translator training in South Africa does not normally take place outside the academic environment, the question arises whether the ALTFCs actually produce language facilitators (see par. 1.1.1.1 or glossary in Appendix A) proficient enough to perform the translation tasks set out above.

Moreover, a re-evaluation of the course was felt necessary firstly, because the original course was designed without proper student profile. There was no information on the level of education of the average candidate attending the ALTFC, the language(s) candidates are exposed to at home or at work, their language preference with regard to English and Afrikaans, their English competence or their translation experience prior to attending the ALTFC. Secondly, there was no detailed information on how candidates felt about the ALTFC in general and the various modules in particular. Thirdly, there

has been a lack of information on whether candidates, having attended the ALTFC, return to their units and actually do translation work, and whether in retrospect they find the course relevant or would have suggestions to improve the course.

The issues raised above can be condensed into one main and two secondary research problems that will be addressed in the course of this study. The main research problem can be formulated as follows:

- Is the current ALTFC relevant within the DOD environment, especially in view of the fact that the candidates attending the course lack a uniform linguistic background and the course duration is only four weeks?

Based on the main research problem, the two secondary research problems can be defined as follows:

- Is the ALTFC in line with current trends in translator training and to what extent can these trends help to improve a translation facilitation course at the level of the ALTFC?
- Is the current ALTFC in tune with the needs of the DOD as well as the candidates attending the course?

With the background and the research problems identified, the aims of this study will now be discussed.

## **1.2 Statement of aims**

Based on the problems identified in the previous section, two main and two secondary aims can be formulated for this study. The two secondary aims will be formulated first since they will contribute to the realisation of the two main aims. The two secondary aims of this study are

- (1) to establish current trends in translator training and the extent to which they can help to improve a translation facilitation course at the level of the ALTFC; and
- (2) to establish the needs of the DOD as well as of the students attending the course.

Based on the findings with regard to the above two secondary aims, the two main aims will be addressed and it should become clear where the existing course needs to be changed in terms of its length, the didactic approach, the material presented and the level at which the material is presented. Thus, the two main aims of this study are

- (2) to establish whether the current ALTFC is relevant within the DOD environment, especially



in view of the fact that candidates attending the ALTFC lack a uniform linguistic background and the course duration is only four weeks; and

- (3) to generate a new and improved course model by incorporating the findings obtained as far as possible.

The research carried out to address the two main and two secondary aims will lay the foundation for the development of a new ALTFC at D Lang. Compiling a well-researched course in translation facilitation seems particularly important in a country such as South Africa where, as mentioned above, the need for professional African language translations exceeds the availability of professional translators. Although the research and the resulting model for an ALTFC will reflect the needs of the DOD it is believed that such a model could also guide other government departments or institutions (even big companies) in their attempt to accommodate staff members in some or all of the 11 official languages for in-house translation purposes. By adjusting certain parameters, it should be possible to use such a model for the training of translation facilitators in various fields and for various needs - always bearing in mind that the idea is to train translation facilitators who can communicate a message effectively and translate texts concerning their working environment intelligibly, albeit not always grammatically and idiomatically correctly. They cannot be expected to produce translations for publication.

Having identified the aims of this study, the specific methodology used for the purpose of this research will be considered.

### **1.3 Research methodology**

The research for a new ALTFC is based on two approaches. On the one hand, the latest trends in translation teaching were researched, especially those based on the functional approach to translation since it seems a common denominator among many translation trainers. Translator training was then discussed in terms of a model of translation-oriented text analysis (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1), as well as from a process-oriented (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.2) and skill-oriented perspective (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.3) in order to address the first secondary aim and to some extent the second main aim of this study. Moreover, the literary search put the research problem into a wider context. On the other hand, a three-part questionnaire was designed and handed out to candidates attending the three ALTFCs at D Lang during the year 2000 to find answers to the second secondary aim and the first main aim. The research thus consists of a theoretical and an empirical component.

### 1.3.1 Theoretical component

Before investigating the various approaches to translator training, the difference between translation in language teaching and translation teaching for professional purposes (Malmkjær 1998) must be pointed out. While it is the objective of the former to test L2 (foreign language) comprehension and acquire performance skills in the L2, the latter is an aim in itself and acquired on the basis of L1 (mother tongue) and L2 proficiency (Nord 1991a: 140). To translators, language is therefore a tool rather than the object of study (Mackenzie 1998: 15).

However, this distinction is not always made because some translation trainers are actually language teachers and have too little insight into what translation for professional purposes entails. Thus, they concentrate mostly on linguistic aspects (equivalence) to the detriment of a translated text's communicative value. In the linguistic- or equivalence-based approach to translation, the source text (ST) is put on a pedestal against which the target text (TT) is measured and assessed. It presupposes a certain symmetry between languages, which, however, in many cases does not exist (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2, and Chapter 3, par. 3.2.1.2). Moreover, the equivalence-based approach defines translation very narrowly and excludes a variety of interlingual tasks (e.g. adaptations, reformulations, etc.) which professional translators may be asked to perform.

#### 1.3.1.1 Functional approach to translation

According to the functional approach to translation, translation never takes place in a vacuum. A translator is normally approached by a client (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.1) to translate a text for a specific purpose or *skopos*. The purpose of the translation, i.e. what the translation is to achieve in the target culture (TC), will be stipulated in the translation brief, which is supplied by the client and contains guidelines with regard to the intended text function (e.g. informative, vocative; see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.3 and par. 2.3.1, as well as Chapter 3, par. 3.2.1.3), the target text addressee, the time and place of text reception, the medium and the motive for target text (TT) production. This means that the translation process is no longer guided by the source text (ST) and its function in the source culture (SC) but by the function the TT is to fulfil in the target culture (Nord 1992: 39-45).

One of the implications of the functional approach for the translation class is that in addition to the ST students must now also be issued with a realistic and detailed translation brief to guide them in their choice of translation strategies. Instead of merely pleasing the teacher, translation students now translate with a target readership and a specific purpose in mind (Nord 1991a: 141-142; Weatherby 1998: 22; Wilss 1996: 197). This is rather important since it makes translator training more profession-oriented and facilitates a variety of translation exercises which were excluded under the equivalence-based approach (see above).

### 1.3.1.2 Nord's model of translation-oriented text analysis

Nord's (1991a) model of translation-oriented text analysis with its *wh*-questions guides student translators step by step through the translation process. The first set of questions (who transmits to whom, what for, by which medium, where, when, why (a text) with what function?) enquires about the extratextual features, i.e. the situation in which the communication takes place (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1). The second set of questions (on what subject matter (does the sender say) what, what not, in what order, with which non-verbal elements, in which words, in what kind of sentences and in which tone?) enquire about intratextual features and can only be assessed once the text has been read. The interplay of the extratextual and intratextual features results in the effect a certain text has on the reader (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1 for more details).

Nord's model is useful in translator training since it creates among student translators an awareness of the decisions involved in the translation process, decisions professional translators often take intuitively and automatically. Even if the model is not always applied in its entirety, translators can revert to it when translation problems occur.

### 1.3.1.3 Process-oriented approach to translation

The process-oriented approach to translation is based on think-aloud protocols (TAPs), which are used to find out what is going on in the minds of translation students or professional translators (Gile 1994; 1995; Kussmaul 1995; Fraser 1996). In TAPs, translators utter everything that goes on in their minds while translating and thus give an insight as to which translation strategies they use, why they use them, at which level of training certain strategies become automatic and where and why certain mental processes result in successful or unsuccessful translation strategies. As a result of TAPs, translation strategies can be classified with the pedagogical aim of alerting students to potential translation problems. (Kussmaul 1995: 7-9).

Gile (1994) replaces TAPs with written problem reports that students have to submit together with their translation assignments. According to Gile, problem-reporting forces students to reflect on their methods and thus makes them more receptive for instruction, especially with regard to macrostructural issues, i.e. the composition and ordering of textual units (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1 for more details). By concentrating on the processes, the teacher has to be less critical of the product (motivational advantages) but can still reduce product deficiencies due to incorrect translation methodology. This is very important for a course such as the ALTFC where candidates are neither language nor translation experts and errors inevitably occur in the translations submitted (see Chapter 3, par. 3.2.5). Moreover, process-orientation helps in inhomogeneous translation classes where a variety of language combinations occur and trainers do not have a command of all the languages represented.

### 1.3.1.4 Skills-oriented approach to translation

The skills-led approach to teaching translation deals with the knowledge and skills a translator should have in order to be able to produce adequate translations in terms of the translation brief and the function the TT is to fulfil in the TC (Critchley et al. 1996). According to Wilss (1996: 192) translation knowledge and skills combine into translation competence.

The interesting aspect of this approach is the focus on text production in the target language (TL). Before attempting to translate the ST, students are encouraged to read widely on the respective topic in the TL to get a feel for the TL text type (i.e. so-called *parallel texts*). Moreover, they are encouraged to study existing translations in the TL on the subject matter to identify strategies other translators used to overcome certain translation problems. This approach has been *refined* by the descriptive approach to Translation Studies, where translations of the same text are analysed for norms and strategies used by the respective translators, by keeping the time and purpose of the translation in mind. According to the skills-led approach, after TT texts and translations have been analysed the ST is rewritten in the TL rather than translated (Critchley et al. 1996; Jakobsen 1994).

The main benefit of consulting a corpus of parallel texts is that student translators seem to produce more idiomatic TTs in their L1 as well as in their L2 (e.g. Weatherby 1998; Lang 1994; see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.3 for more details). In the skills-led approach, a lot of emphasis is put on team work, which seems to reflect professional practice and takes the translator out of his isolation.

While the theoretical component in the form of literature research helps to accomplish the first secondary aim and partly the second main aim, the empirical component will address the second secondary aim and the first main aim of this study. A brief overview of the empirical component will be given next.

## 1.3.2 Empirical component

This section will first concentrate on questionnaires as a research tool and then focus on the questionnaires used in the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang*.

### 1.3.2.1 Questionnaires as a research tool

According to Sheatsley (1983: 201), a good questionnaire must meet the objectives of the research and obtain the most complete and accurate data possible within the time and resources available. However, he also concedes that even the best-designed questionnaires will not answer all the questions, thus encouraging further research.

However, even carefully designed questionnaires do not guarantee success because respondents may misunderstand questions, reject questions, consciously lie in an attempt to conceal their actual behaviour or attitudes or answer questions randomly rather than admitting ignorance. A good questionnaire must therefore encourage respondents to answer the questions as accurately and completely as they can (Sheatsley 1983: 201).

Before drafting a questionnaire, the researcher has to decide on the unit of analysis, i.e. the entity that is to be studied, which, in the case of this study, is the ALTFC candidates (part I of the questionnaire) and the ALTFC (parts II and III of the questionnaire; see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.2 for more detail). The questionnaire design is also influenced by the sample, i.e. the people who fill in the questionnaire and their level of education. The sample, in turn, influences the type of administration, which can be self-administered, administered by an interviewer and self-administered with an interviewer present (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.2.1). Another important factor is the type and extent of information that is to be elicited by means of the questionnaire, which will determine the number of variables and attributes, i.e. the number of possible answers supplied (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.2.1).

With the conceptualisation in place, the questionnaire can then be operationalised, i.e. the specific research procedures can be developed. This means that the questions must be formulated, the response categories must be designed and the questionnaire must be formatted (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.2.2-4). With the questions drafted and put into a meaningful order and format, the result must be pretested to see whether questions are understood as intended and will deliver usable results. The questionnaire should therefore be tested on a few people (not family and friends) before the actual survey starts (Sheatsley 1983: 203, 225 ff.). Once the results have been obtained, the data must be analysed. Questionnaires produce mainly quantitative data, which means that the data can be expressed numerically and be presented statistically in graphs, tables, etc. If the researcher concentrates only on one variable at the time the analysis will be descriptive. Focussing on two or more variables will result in an explanatory analysis (Mouton 1996: 163; see Chapter 3, par. 3.2.2.5).

Having briefly outlined the qualities of a good questionnaire, the questionnaires used in the survey at D Lang will be discussed briefly.

### **1.3.2.1 The questionnaires used in the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang***

The three-part questionnaire used in the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang* (Appendix C) was completed by the students attending the three ALTFCs held at D Lang in 2000 (03 May-02 June 2000, 02 August-01 September 2000 and 11 October-10 November 2000). The study comprised about 30 candidates, depending on the part of the

questionnaire. Although the sample may be considered low, it was felt that the respondents could supply useful information as to the needs of ALTFC candidates and possible course improvements. Moreover, owing to time constraints, the number of ALTFCs included in the investigation had to be limited.

The three parts of the questionnaire were designed to establish the student profile (part I), i.e. the linguistic and educational background as well as the translation experience of translation facilitation candidates (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.3.1). A large section of part I was dedicated to determine whether ALTFC candidates are *compound* or *coordinate* bilinguals. Compound bilinguals learn the mother tongue first and acquire one or several foreign languages later. Coordinate bilinguals grow up learning several languages at the same time (Wilss 1999: 10). From a translation point of view, this is of importance since many authors on translator training believe that students should only translate into their mother tongue (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.3) and because it may affect the methodology chosen in the training of translation facilitators.

Part II of the questionnaire (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.3.2) intends to establish the opinion of candidates on the existing ALTFC and their suggestions and ideas for improving the course. Detailed questions are asked on the five course modules (see Appendix B) with regard to the difficulty of the material presented and the most useful aspects of the respective module. The presentation of the modules is also rated. Part III of the questionnaire (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.3.3) is to reveal whether once students are back at their units they really do translate and still find the course material relevant to their working environment.

Parts I and II of the questionnaire were filled in by students at the beginning and at the end of the course, respectively. Part III was faxed to the students 7 to 10 months after completion of the course and returned to D Lang anything from one day to 6 weeks after issuing.

The majority of questions formulated in the three parts of the questionnaire are partially open-ended, i.e. they include an *Other (please specify)* category, to guide candidates regarding the types of responses expected from them but leaving room for candidates to add categories not included in the list. The questions also included close-ended ones with unordered responses, as well as a few with ordered responses (*Circle as many answers as applicable and number them in the order of importance with 1 being the most important*). At the end of parts II and III, open-ended questions were asked for candidates to express in their own words how they felt about individual modules and the course as a whole, respectively (see Chapter 3, par. 3.3.2.2 on question design).

Particular pretesting of the questionnaire did not take place since the translation facilitation teacher was present when students filled in parts I and II of the questionnaire. She could therefore explain in class what certain questions meant and could deal with problems as they arose.

## 1.4 Structure of the study

For a more detailed discussion of the above, the present study is divided into five chapters.

**Chapter 2** puts the research problem into a wider perspective by presenting an overview of the literature in current translation teaching. Firstly, the aspects of translator training common to most authors will be outlined. These include a discussion of the difference between translation in language training and translation for professional purposes, as well as the functional approach to translation. Secondly, three main trends in translator training are identified, with special attention being paid to Nord and her model of translation-oriented text analysis, the process-oriented approach and the skills-based approach. The various approaches are compared and assessed for their respective merits.

**Chapter 3** first deals with the realities in the DOD by discussing the current ALTFC. Secondly, the research methodology is discussed by first concentrating on survey research and the characteristics of a good questionnaire design in general, and then dealing with the questionnaire regarding the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang*, in particular.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings of the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang*. On the basis of these findings, the four main problem areas are identified. They comprise feedback on practical work, the time factor, the candidates' English capability and teacher enthusiasm. The findings of the survey and the findings of the literature review are then combined into four possible ALTFC models and the merits of the various models are discussed against the background of the realities prevailing in the DOD.

**Chapter 5** briefly assesses the value and implications of these findings and of the study as a whole.

**Endnotes:**

1. Although the South African Constitution lists Sepedi as one of the 11 official languages, there are suggestions by the Pan South African Language Board, amongst others, that it should be replaced by *Sesotho sa Leboa* (Sotho of the North) since Sepedi is only one of the dialects of Northern Sotho.
2. In order to simplify the reference, *DOD PL* is used instead of the official abbreviation *DODI Pol + Plan 54/2001* used in the Department of Defence.
3. In 2002, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) split into the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
4. This situation may change again in terms of the National Language Policy Framework (Implementation Plan 2002: 13) which makes provision for the establishment of language units in each national government department and in each province to supply translation, interpreting and editing services.