

CHAPTER 3

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction and objectives

In the previous chapter, the research problem addressed in this study was embedded in a larger theoretical and conceptual framework. The issues reviewed helped to identify the research already conducted in the field of Translation Studies, more specifically translator training, as well as relevant positions and trends in recent debates regarding this aspect of the discipline. This will help to establish to what extent existing practices in translator training can be adopted for the purposes of this study. Moreover, it was also established that the existing literature on translator training will only partially assist in achieving the aims stated in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 1 (par. 1.2), it was stated that the general aim of this study is to revise and improve the African Language Translation Facilitation Course (ALTFC) presented at the Directorate Language Services (D Lang). More specifically, the aim of this study was divided into two main and two secondary aims. The two main aims of this study are

- R to establish whether the present African Language Translation Facilitation Course (ALTFC) is relevant within the Department of Defence (DOD) environment considering that candidates attending the course lack a uniform educational and linguistic background and the set period for the course is only four weeks; and
- R to generate a new and improved course model by incorporating the findings obtained as far as possible.

However, before dealing with the main aims, the two secondary aims will first have to be addressed since they will lay the foundation for achieving the two main aims. The two secondary aims of this study are

- 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
- to establish the needs of the DOD, as well as the candidates attending the course.

It was also stated in Chapter 1 (par. 1.3) that these aims will be addressed by means of a theoretical component in the form of a literature review (see Chapter 2) and an empirical component in the form of survey research. However, before launching into a discussion on why survey research was chosen as the most suitable research or observation instrument and how the survey research was

operationalised, i.e. how the specific research procedures were developed (Babbie 2001: 132; see also Mouton 1996: 125), the ALTFC, as the object of this study, will have to be described in more detail. This chapter will therefore consist of two parts. Firstly, the existing ALTFC as presented at D Lang will be dealt with. The various modules will be described regarding content, their outcomes/aims and the problems experienced. The second part deals with the research methodology. The operationalisation of survey research will be discussed in general followed by a discussion of the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang* in particular.

3.2 The current African Language Translation Facilitation Course

The current ALTFC is held two to three times a year and lasts four weeks. The courses start on a Monday with the arrival of candidates from units all over South Africa. The actual lectures, however, only start on the Tuesday. Three periods of one and a half hours each are taught per day and an average of about 10 candidates attend per course.

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 1, par. 1.1.2), candidates are not separated according to language combinations but attend classes together. Experience has shown that there are at least five different official African languages in combination with English at each course. One of the problems in this respect is the availability of similar texts with regard to difficulty and subject field in the various official African languages. Although the merits of holding separate courses for each language combination have been discussed, the option has been considered unviable from an organisational and financial point of view. Moreover, it would be rather difficult to get separate courses together for the official African languages of more limited diffusion, such as Swati or Venda. Since the ALTFC is conceived as an orientation course, i.e. aimed at sensitising students to think in a translation-relevant manner rather than ironing out language-pair-specific problems, it was considered justifiable to keep the various language combinations together and deal with them in one class.

Furthermore, the ALTFC is divided into five modules (see Appendix B for the syllabus), namely *Introduction to translation*, *Translation strategies*, *Translation aids*, *Language skills* and *Workshops*. While *Introduction to translation*, *Translation strategies* and *Translation aids* are presented consecutively, *Language skills* and *Workshops* are held throughout the course, with the latter only starting towards the end of the second week and gathering momentum during the last week. This is based on the understanding that in order to hold meaningful workshops at least some formal translation knowledge is required.

Apart from the *Workshops*, a short written test is given at the end of every module to assess whether candidates have grasped the basic concepts presented in the respective module. These tests only contain objective questions, i.e. candidates have to tick off *yes* or *no*, *true* or *false* and *name the three ...* or

at least three ..., etc. Objective questions have been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, they are suitable for testing the recall of factual knowledge. Secondly, they only require short answers, which is important since many candidates still struggle to express themselves in English, especially at a more abstract level.

Moreover, tests are not marked for spelling - although spelling mistakes are corrected - but only content. As long as the trainer can make out what the candidate meant, the candidate will get the necessary mark(s). The pass-mark is 60% since the material is repeated frequently during the classes and candidates have ample opportunity to ask questions. Candidates who fail to obtain 60% have to rewrite the test. An attendance certificate is issued at the end of the ALTFC.

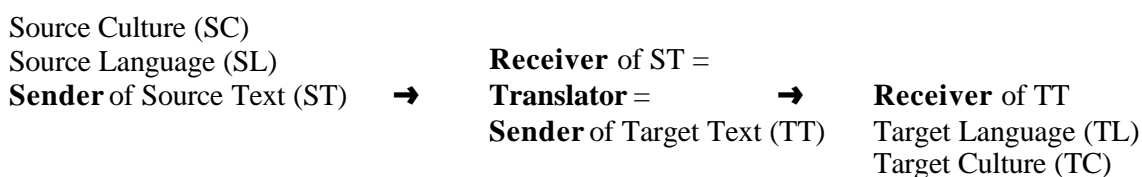
In the following sections, a more detailed description of the various modules is given, starting with *Introduction to translation*.

3.2.1 *Introduction to translation module*

Introduction to translation comprises different sections: the communication model and the translator, the quotes section, text types and translation methods, as well as text analysis. The translational communication model will be discussed first.

3.2.1.1 **The communication model and the translator**

The model looks as follows:



The model gives the three main participants in the translational communication process, namely the sender, translator and receiver (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.1). The sender produces a source text (ST) that is written in a source language (SL), which, in turn, is embedded in a source culture (SC). Since in the translational communication process the sender and the receiver cannot communicate directly because of the language barrier, a translator is needed to facilitate communication not only across two languages but also two cultures. Apart from introducing a number of translation-relevant terms, the model clearly shows that the translator is both receiver and sender, i.e. “the end and the beginning of two separate but linked chains of communication” (Bassnett-McGuire 1991: 38; see also Gile 1992: 187).

Moreover, by stressing the role of the translator as a communicator rather than a reproducer, the importance of making the receiver understand the message becomes evident. Translation is therefore no longer about right or wrong but about communicating effectively. If the receiver does not understand the message, communication has been ineffective and thus failed. The above model also helps to illustrate that for communication to be successful the translator does not only need a thorough knowledge of the SL and the TL but also of the SC and the TC, i.e. translation comprises more than just languages.

Once the connection between translation and communication has been explained (and hopefully understood!) candidates are exposed to some of the thoughts eminent translation theorists have had on translation. This is done in the section on quotes.

3.2.1.2 The quotes section

This section intends to broaden the candidates' horizon about what translation entails from an ideological, linguistic and political point of view, as well as enlarge their translation-relevant vocabulary. In what follows, the focus will be on extreme positions in translation theory, such as linguistic relativity versus the *Exact Translation Hypothesis*, translation as a secondary or proactive activity, equivalence-based translation and translation for empowerment, as well as the relevance of these theories and hypotheses for a course at the level of the ALTFC. The quotes are discussed at a very basic level by first explaining what the quote says, giving examples to support the statement, then asking candidates for their opinion and gently steering them to look at a statement or hypothesis from various angles.

For example, Whorf's (1973: 109) concept of *linguistic relativity* reads as follows:

“We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. ... We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language.”

This quotation can be used to explain that we use language to describe how we see and experience the world around us. The language we speak and the way we speak condition us to think in a certain way and translation may be regarded as impossible between two languages that describe the world in radically different ways.

At the other extreme is the *Exact Translation Hypothesis* which maintains that “anything that can be said in one natural language can be translated exactly into any other language” (Keenan 1978: 157). *Exactly* according to Keenan (1978: 168-174), means that two sentences in two languages must have

the same meaning, with the *exactness* criteria being sameness of speech act, sameness of truth conditions, sameness of derived truth conditions and ambiguity/vagueness. However, how can one translate *exactly* when many of the problems encountered in translation arise precisely because many of the words, collocations, idioms or grammatical categories (par. 3.2.2.1-3) in one language do not have equivalents in another language? Moreover, the original word or sentence may have more than one meaning, which cannot be expressed in one word or sentence in the translation. This is supported by several examples from the African languages and English supplied by candidates as well as the trainer. Candidates are then shown that perhaps it is more sensible to agree with the view that “languages differ not so much as to what *can* be said in them, but rather as to what is *relatively easy* to say in them” (Hockett as quoted in Fishman 1973: 122).

Furthermore, the quote “translation is just like chewing food that is to be fed to others” and is, as such, “bound to be poorer in taste and flavour than the original” (Kumarajiva as quoted in Keenan 1978: 157) usually leads to brief discussions of how the focus in translation studies has changed over the last 20 years and that translation is no longer considered to be a secondary activity (chewing food) but as a creative and proactive activity (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.1-3 and 2.3.3). Another point made is that if a translation reads like *chewed food* it might be advisable for the translator to reconsider his translation strategies.

From a linguistic point of view, Nida and Taber’s (1982 :12) definition of translation, i.e. “translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style”, helps to explain the terms of *meaning*, *style* and *equivalent effect*. *Meaning* refers to the content of the message and the main aim of translation is to get the message across (bearing in mind that Nida and Taber are Bible translators). *Style*, in turn, refers to the linguistic choices authors make within the resources and limitations of a language and the text-type or genre they are working in (Nida & Taber 1982: 207).

At this point, candidates are made aware that the style is influenced by the participants in the communicative situation, i.e. the sender and the receiver and their relationship. Newmark’s (1995:14) stylistic scale of formality is used to illustrate this aspect :

<i>Officialese</i>	‘The consumption of any nutrients whatsoever is categorically prohibited in this establishment.’
<i>Official</i>	‘The consumption of nutrients is prohibited.’
<i>Formal</i>	‘You are requested not to consume food in this establishment.’
<i>Neutral</i>	‘Eating is not allowed here.’
<i>Informal</i>	‘Please don’t eat here.’
<i>Colloquial</i>	‘You can’t feed your face here’.
<i>Slang</i>	‘Lay off the nosh’.
<i>Taboo</i>	‘Lay off the fucking nosh’.

Although Newmark presents eight different styles, the formal, neutral and informal styles suffice and are particularly stressed for ALTFC purposes. Explaining style is very important since most candidates do not seem to be aware of the fact that different stylistic levels exist and that although the meaning of certain words and expressions is the same, the style or register may be completely inappropriate. Candidates are also informed that styles tend to differ across languages and cannot be automatically adopted from one language to another.

Despite style being an important consideration in translation, Nida and Taber (1982: 22-24) give the message priority, thus shifting the emphasis from the form of the text to the intelligibility of the message. However, the message should not only be intelligible but should also have basically the same impact on the target reader as it has on the ST readers, which is the principle of *equivalent effect/dynamic equivalence*. Nida and Taber consider the response by the TT readers as the ultimate test of whether a text has been adequately translated. If the response is not satisfactory, even the text may have to be changed. Nida's famous example of *equivalent effect* is the *Seal of God* in the Bible for Eskimos instead of the *Lamb of God* because Eskimos are familiar with seals and not with lambs.

However, one of the criticisms of *dynamic equivalence* has been that *equivalence of response* cannot be empirically tested (House 1977: 9). House (1977: 29-30) thus takes the definition of translation one step further by stating that "translation is the replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language". It introduces *semantics* as the study of meaning and *semantic meaning* as the relationship between linguistic units and what they refer to in some possible world (House 1977: 27). While candidates seem to readily accept semantic meaning, *pragmatic meaning*, i.e. that the same linguistic unit may mean different things in different communicative situations, usually comes as a surprise. House's (1977: 27-28) example of *the water is boiling* nicely illustrates the difference between semantic meaning and the various pragmatic meanings.

The semantic meaning of an utterance such as *the water is boiling* is that the water has reached a temperature where it loses its liquid state and becomes gaseous. From a pragmatic point of view various scenarios can be sketched. If, for example, the intention is to make tea, *the water is boiling* will mean that whoever is to make the tea can go now and make it. A person swimming in the lake may shout to somebody on the shore that *the water is boiling* and thus indicate that the water is lovely and the person on the shore should come and swim. The same sentence yelled at a father who is just about to bath the baby will mean that the water is far too hot and he must not put the baby into the water. The pragmatic meaning of *the water is boiling* thus depends on the communicative situation.

The above quotations by Nida and Taber (1982) as well as House (1977) can be used as examples of *equivalence-based* approaches to translation. In equivalence-based approaches, the ST is the norm

on which the TT has to be modelled and against which the accuracy of the TT is supposed to be measured, be it in terms of equivalent effect, semantic/pragmatic equivalence or one of the many other definitions of *equivalence*, the discussion of which would go beyond the scope of the *quotes section*. However, candidates are made aware of the fact that by putting the ST on a pedestal and denying that the TT is a text in its own right, the translation process is relegated to a secondary activity. Reference is made to the earlier quote of “translation is like chewing food ...”. Moreover, it is pointed out to candidates that later in the module they will be exposed to *skopos theory* and text analysis by Nord (1991a) which takes a wider view on translation.

The empowerment aspect of translation is illustrated by Meintjes (1992:14) in a quote from her paper on *Translation for empowerment and democracy*. She says that “translation is a process that makes information available to people who would normally not have access to that information. Access to information and to the exchange of information and ideas among a group of people aims to place people in a position to make better and informed decisions, to make their own contribution and thus participate more fully in debates surrounding them.” Withholding information in the form of translations thus excludes language groups from certain aspects of life, keeps them ignorant and makes them dependent on those who have the information. It puts those who decide what is to be translated and what not in a position of power. Translation as a political tool often results in lively debates among candidates because most of them can draw on their own experience of discriminatory practices during the apartheid era.

The quotes’ section is rounded off with Trew (1994: 94; his bold print) and his statement that “**the primary role of the translator is to prevent linguistic exclusion**” and that “all decisions involving the choice, adaptation and explanation of terms should be guided by this principle”. This quote is easy to understand and gives students a very basic guideline with regard to translational decision-making. Does my translation prevent linguistic exclusion or does it contribute to the confusion? Having thus sensitised candidates to some of the issues involved in Translation Studies, they are then exposed to text types and translation methods.

3.2.1.3 Text types and translation methods

In a first step, the functions of language within certain communicative situations are dealt with according to Newmark (1995: 39-42; based on Bühler) because they are relatively easy to remember and because he goes on to link text types with translation methods. Newmark distinguishes between *expressive*, *informative* and *vocative* functions of language and thus text types.

By means of the expressive text type, the authors express their own feelings irrespective of any response from possible readers (e.g. imaginative literature, personal correspondence, authoritative statement).

This text type is therefore author-oriented. The informative text type is message-oriented, with the emphasis on bringing the information across as clearly as possible (e.g. reports, papers, memoranda, articles, minutes, scientific, economic or technological texts). In contrast, the vocative text type is readership-oriented and aims at eliciting a response from the reader (e.g. advertisements, propaganda, instructions, popular fiction).

Candidates are made aware that most of the times texts consist of a mixture of two or three text types. The purpose of an advertisement, for example, is to get the readership to buy a certain product (i.e. persuasive/vocative), but often also contains information about the product (i.e. informative). A speech again, may contain expressive elements that are characteristic of the speaker, inform the listeners on new developments and also aim at eliciting a reaction from the listeners (e.g. vote for a candidate, laugh).

In order to decide how the various text types have to be translated, Newmark (1995: 45-51) distinguishes between translation methods with an *SL emphasis* (word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic) and translation methods with a *TL emphasis* (communicative, idiomatic, free, adaptation). For DOD purposes, only the *semantic* and *communicative* translation methods are discussed. The semantic translation attempts to reproduce the exact contextual meaning of the ST within the constraints of TL grammar by making use of aesthetic licence, whereas the communicative translation tries to “render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership” (Newmark 1995: 47).

As a result, (Newmark 1995: 47) suggests semantic translation for expressive text types since the translator has to take the author’s idiosyncratic language style and thought processes into consideration. Communicative translation is to be used for informative text types since the translator must transmit the message as clearly as possible in a language that is readily comprehensible by readers. The communicative translation method is also suggested for vocative text types where the translator must reach the reader and solve structural, stylistic and cultural discrepancies between the source and target readership.

Although a simplification, the concept of two translation methods for three text types is very student-friendly and more than sufficient for candidates attending the ALTFCs. Moreover, this distinction is important during the next step, which is text analysis.

3.2.1.4 Skopos theory and text analysis

In this section, candidates are made aware that although most traditional (i.e. equivalence-based) approaches to translation are ST-oriented, i.e. the ST is the norm against which the translation is measured, in practice a translation is almost always initiated by somebody (the initiator) for a special

purpose or *skopos* (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.3). The initiator will therefore inform the translator about the purpose of the translation by means of the *translation brief*, a set of instructions for the translator. *Skopos theory* therefore shifts the overall frame of reference for the translator from the ST and its function(s) to the TT and its function(s) in the TC, as set out in the translation brief. The translation process is thus mainly oriented towards the TT and the target readership.

In order to identify the function(s) of the ST and TT, candidates are introduced to text analysis by means of Nord's (1991a) model of translation-oriented text analysis (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1). Nord's model was chosen because the series of *wh*-questions are easy to understand and can be answered according to the students' level of competence. The series of *wh*-questions include *who* (transmits) *to whom*, *what for*, *by which medium*, *where*, *when*, *why* (a text) *with what function* (i.e. the extratextual features) and *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*, *in which tone* and *to which effect* (i.e. the intratextual features)?

In a practical exercise, the text *Does the moon make us mad?* by J. Rennie (see Appendix D), originally published in the US magazine *Backpacker* and republished in condensed form in the *Readers Digest* (July 1997), is analysed. This is the only text used during the ALTFC that has no direct bearing on the DOD and the SANDF in particular. However, it was chosen because it is a text that clearly illustrates many issues from a translation point of view. It is a contemporary English text written by an American for a very specific audience. The text was then republished in the *Readers Digest* which caters for the general public with entertaining and informative reading. The above information contains most of the extratextual features of the text which set the communicative situation and can be answered before reading the actual article (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1).

Regarding the intratextual features, which are text specific and include non-verbal elements (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1), the subject is firmly rooted in Western culture, contains folkloristic creatures like vampires and werewolves and even mentions and quotes from classic English literature. Moreover, the article features a photograph of a Northern-hemisphere pine forest illuminated by a full moon and anybody brought up on Western lore will shiver and hear a wolf howling by implication. The text is very distinctly structured, i.e. setting the scene, pros and cons from an astronomic and biological point of view and a noncommittal end. The lexical chains also reflect the mythological, astronomic and biological content of the text. The vocabulary and sentence structure are relatively easy to follow because the article, being published in the *Readers Digest*, is aimed at a general, educated English readership. It thus should also suit ALTFC candidates.

After hearing the text being read aloud in class, candidates do not seem to have any problems in understanding it. However, candidates become more critical and are no longer certain that they

understood everything as soon as questions such as the following are asked: What are canyons and what would you call them in South Africa? Do you know what werewolves and vampires are? What are people scared of and what role does the moon play in your respective cultures? What are the features that make this article a typically Northern-hemisphere article? *Backpacking* is also a concept that does not seem to be readily accessible to candidates since it does not feature as a recreational mode of travelling in African cultures. The debate ensuing reading the article normally becomes very intense, especially in view of the cultural diversity of the candidates. Moreover, the article works as a tremendous icebreaker since many of its ideas seem as strange to ALTFC candidates as some of the African traditions and beliefs are to people of European descent.

Candidates are also asked to identify the vocabulary items pertaining to the astronomic and biological lexical chains. While some candidates find this exercise rather easy, it is not as obvious to others. There seems to be a gap not only in linguistic knowledge but also in general or world knowledge among the candidates. This issue will be addressed in part I of the questionnaire which enquires about the student profile (see par. 3.3.3.1).

Once the text has been analysed various translation briefs and the subsequent translational decisions are considered orally. If this article was to be published in a Xhosa, Zulu or Venda paper could the average reader be expected to be familiar with certain concepts? Are the candidates as translation facilitators familiar with certain cultural terms and concepts and if not, where would they find explanations? Would candidates be able to translate the article on a one-to-one basis, i.e. the target readership and the purpose of the TT remain the same as in the ST, or would the angle have to be changed, e.g. turn it into an article about a foreign cultural aspect? What would have to be added or omitted? Furthermore, would the cultural aspect be a problem if an abstract had to be produced in the various African TLs? Which parameters of the ST analysis would you have to change and which would remain the same in terms of specific translation briefs, e.g. an abstract in the official African languages for filing purposes or to inform the readers of various African-language magazines on Western cultural beliefs (see also par. 3.2.5 on workshops)?

Although there is no illusion that this type of discussion in the ALTFCs cannot produce the detailed results of more experienced or professional translators it nevertheless encourages candidates to read and think critically, ask questions and think translation-related in order to make their target readership understand sometimes alien concepts. Furthermore, it attempts to dispel the belief of a considerable number of people that whatever is in print must be the truth.

The *Introduction to translation* module aims to give candidates a broader view of what translation entails from a translation-theoretical, linguistic and political point of view. It is aimed at familiarising candidates with a systematic method by means of which to approach a text and think critically about

translation-relevant issues. While this module takes a more global approach to translation, the following module on translation strategies is more specific and deals with issues of how to overcome certain translation problems at various levels.

3.2.2 Translation strategies module

Translation strategies is mainly based on Baker (1992: 7-114) and deals with non-equivalence (i.e. where the TL has no direct equivalent for a linguistic unit or grammatical feature occurring in ST) at word level and above word level, as well as at grammatical and textual level. The latter, however, is only mentioned briefly because of time constraints. It is pointed out that adequate words and perfect grammatical sentences do not guarantee an intelligible text if sentences and paragraphs are not linked up properly into a cohesive text. Moreover, a text may not be coherent because the reader does not have the necessary or a different *knowledge of the world* (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.3) to make sense of it. However, translation strategies to overcome non-equivalence at word level will be discussed first.

3.2.2.1 Non-equivalence at word level

In order to overcome non-equivalence at word level the class looks at translation by a more general word (superordinate, e.g. *wash* instead of *shampoo*), translation by cultural substitution (e.g. the Afrikaans *potjiekos* is replaced with *Wiener Schnitzel* in German as a national dish), translation by using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation (*induna*, i.e. a headman in traditional Zulu society), translation by paraphrase (to rephrase or put into other words), translation by omission and translation by illustration (☺, ♀, ☹). Although the list of translation strategies is by no means exhaustive, it seems to deal with the most common strategies used by translators. This is also corroborated by Wallmach and Kruger (1998: 109-117).

Once the various translation strategies at word level have been explained and illustrated by examples supplied by the trainer as well as the candidates, the word *sangoma* is used in various contexts to show that different scenarios require different translation strategies. For example, there is an article in one of the African-language newspapers about *sangomas* and the editor of the *Sunday Times* would like to publish the article because of the topic's general interest to their readers. How would *sangoma* be translated under these circumstances? If the readers of the *Sunday Times* are expected to be familiar with the term, *sangoma* would probably be maintained in the English translation, i.e. translation by using a loan word. However, if there are doubts as to whether the readership will understand the term, a loan word plus an explanation might be used, e.g. *sangoma*, "a traditional healer or diviner who employs music, dance, and the throwing of bones to discover evil and diagnose disease" (*A Dictionary of South African English on historical Principles* 1996).

Moreover, if the article is not mainly about *sangomas* but *sangomas* are mentioned and the translation is to appear, for example, in a British paper, what would one do then? What are the implications of using a more general word such as *healer* or more specific terms like *fortuneteller*, *herbalist*, *witchdoctor*, *soothsayer*, *sorcerer*, etc.? What is the difference between these terms and what features and

paraphernalia do the British attribute to fortunetellers and soothsayers and what mental picture would Africans form? Moreover, it can be pointed out that the translator can influence the effect on the readers by using *sorcerer* or *witchdoctor*, which tend to have more negative connotations, instead of the less emotive *healer* or *herbalist*.

In another scenario, *sangoma* appears in a long list of practitioners dealing in various ways with human conditions. In such a case, the translator may decide to omit *sangoma*, since an omission would not distort the meaning of the text but make it sound less foreign. In turn, a *sangoma* who would like to set up a practice in town and advertise his or her skills to the various population groups may decide to put an illustration on the board next to the door instead of a text in the eleven official languages.

An exercise such as the above not only shows candidates the practical application of the various translation strategies but also creates a critical awareness of the differences in meaning of words belonging to the same semantic field. The meaning of words tends to be taken at face value but problems arise on closer investigation. Incidentally, there has not been one ALTFC in which the candidates managed to agree on one single explanation of *sangoma*. However, the important point is that most candidates participated vigorously in the discussion and started to think more critically. The solution, in this respect, was secondary. Another area inciting lively participation because of its culture-specific nature is non-equivalence above word level.

3.2.2.2 Non-equivalence above word level

Regarding non-equivalence above word level, first the difference between collocations, fixed expressions and idioms is explained. While collocation refers to the “tendency of certain words to co-occur regularly in a given language” (Baker 1992:47) and is thus language and culture-specific, fixed expressions and idioms are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form. Moreover, idioms often carry meanings which cannot be derived from their individual components (Baker 1992: 63). It is not always easy to identify the meaning of idioms since some of them have a literal as well as figurative meaning (e.g. *getting cold feet*). The (student) translator must also be made aware of idioms that seem to have a similar expression in the TL but with a different or partially different meaning (e.g. *having cold feet* in Xhosa can mean *somebody who does not want to walk anymore*).

Whereas collocations and fixed expressions must be translated as prescribed by the specific language (e.g. in English *to brush teeth* and not *clean* as in many African languages) Baker (1992: 71-78) suggests four translation strategies for idioms which will depend on the context in which the idiom is to be translated. The four strategies are translation by using an idiom of similar meaning and similar form (*to bury the hatchet* can be translated into some African languages as *to lay down the spear*), by using an idiom of similar meaning and dissimilar form (*don't count your chickens before they're hatched*

as *man soll den Tag nicht vor dem Abend loben*, which means in German that one should not praise the day before it is evening), by paraphrase (*as poor as a church mouse as very poor*), as well as translation by omission.

The four translation strategies are explained in detail and candidates are encouraged to give examples from their own languages. Once the facilitator is satisfied that the various translation strategies have been understood, candidates are asked to translate idioms, such as *like a bat out of hell*, *to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs*, *to turn green with envy*, and *to kick the bucket* into their respective African languages. Candidates first have to determine the meaning of the English idiom, translate the idiom into their own languages and then literally translate the African-language idiom back into English for all ALTFC candidates to understand the metaphors used in the respective languages. Moreover, candidates have to state the translation strategy used, with translation by omission being the only strategy omitted for the purpose of this exercise.

Once candidates have grasped the meaning of the idioms, which caused considerable problems in some classes, African-language suggestions are readily supplied. However, one problem encountered in almost all classes is back or literal translation into English. This caused some consternation among facilitators because during the practical translation exercises (see par. 3.2.5 for workshops) literal translation is one of the main problems (“...but this is exactly what it says in the ST!!”). However, back translation did not seem to come as naturally when specifically asked to do so. Still, the translation of idioms always resulted in lively discussions because idioms are culture-specific. Sometimes there was a competitive attitude among the various language groups as to which language supplied the better metaphor and some translations were challenged intralingually as well as interlingually, i.e. by speakers of a different African language.

Although never committing herself (none of the facilitators speaks all eleven official languages) the facilitator can point out several issues during such discussions. For example, there is no such thing as an *inferior language* and if it is not easy to express a certain concept in a certain language it may be because the concept has not been considered important in that specific culture. Moreover, even though a student translator may not be familiar with the concept a little bit of research may produce a solution. Just because candidates do not know an idiom does not mean that it does not exist. How do the metaphors used vary among the various African languages? It can be pointed out that despite the different images used the translated idioms still express the same content. Candidates are also made aware of the fact that a literal translation of the English idiom would in most cases be meaningless in the various African languages and that *false friends*, i.e. expressions that have the same form in two languages but different meanings, can be dangerous.

On the whole, candidates seem to enjoy this exercise. They are very motivated to make contributions

from their own language, especially since they are considered to be experts (for the purposes of the ALTFC) in their own African languages. Moreover, they feel very *territorial* about their own language. While most candidates readily agree that it is at times difficult to translate certain words, phrases or idioms into another language there tends to be general ignorance that the same applies to grammatical categories.

3.2.2.3 Grammatical non-equivalence

Grammar is first put into the context of language as being divided into *lexis* and *grammar*. Grammar is then further subdivided into *morphology* (the structure of words, word-form changes) and *syntax*, which refers to the possible sequence of word classes (noun, verb, adverb and adjective or subject, predicator and object) allowed in a certain language (Baker 1992: 83-84). Differences in the grammatical structures of the SL and TL may result in some changes in the information content of the message during the process of translation (e.g. additions, omissions). Details which are ignored in the SL but which have to be specified in the TL can pose a serious dilemma for the translator if they cannot be reasonably inferred from the context.

Subsequently, some grammatical categories that may cause translation problems across languages are discussed. They include number (e.g. expressed suffixes instead of prefixes), gender (no distinction between *she* and *he* in most African languages), person (e.g. Venda has six distinctions of *you* but Xhosa has no polite form), tense and aspect, as well as voice (e.g. the *passive* is often used in technical and scientific English to give the impression of objectivity, etc.). Candidates are also made aware of the fact that while lexical choices are largely optional grammatical choices are largely obligatory, i.e. the grammar of the TL cannot be changed even though it may result in some loss of information.

Candidates normally do not have any major problems in understanding grammatical categories since all of them underwent some form of language training. However, it has to be pointed out that although translators should have an excellent command of their TL and should not make any grammatical mistakes in the TL, some grammatical errors are more serious than others. For example, forgetting the *-ly* suffix in an English adverb may not necessarily distort the information content, whereas placing an action in the past instead of the ST's future will definitely do so.

Depending on the time available (some classes are slower than others), students will read aloud in class Baker's (1992: 111-114) introduction of text, with text versus non-text and features of text organisation being briefly discussed. If there is a shortage of time, the class progresses immediately to the following module, which is *Translation aids*.

3.2.3 *Translation aids* module

This section basically deals with the question of who and what sources can be consulted when encountering translation problems. After briefly discussing the merits of parallel texts, parallel reading, glossaries, word lists, experts (e.g. the National Language Service (including terminology) at the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) or professional institutions such as the South African Translators' Institute (SATI), etc.) and the Internet and on-line dictionaries, the candidates' role as terminologist is stressed. This is particularly true for translators working into and out of the African languages since the lack of standardised vocabulary and comprehensive dictionaries is still a serious and often lamented problem.

An exercise in this respect is reading for terminology, where a technical article from the *International Defence Review* is read aloud in class. Candidates are then asked to compile a list containing all the technical vocabulary in the text. While this exercise is rather easy for some students, others struggle to distinguish between general and specialised vocabulary.

Moreover, visits are paid to the National Library of South Africa and the Community Library at Sammy Marks Square in Pretoria to expose candidates to different types of libraries and the different types of information obtained there. Candidates are often not aware that community libraries offer a comprehensive information service (many with Internet connections) and not just books for pleasure reading.

However, the main emphasis of the *Translation aids* module is on dictionaries. The course examines the various parts of a dictionary, i.e. the front and back matter, with the former preceding and the latter following the main part. Different dictionaries are then used by candidates to investigate what type of information they can obtain from the front matter (e.g. an introduction to the respective language, a summary of the grammar, information on how to use the dictionary) and the back matter (tables of weights and measures, SI units, the Greek alphabet, etc.).

The structure of the main part is approached from a macrostructural and microstructural perspective. While macrostructural considerations refer to the selection of entries (headwords or lemmas) for a dictionary and their ordering (alphabetically or ideologically), microstructural considerations deal with the separate entries and the specific information given in the entry (Swanepoel 1989: 8-9).

Once the three parts of a dictionary have been explained, the difference between dictionaries and encyclopaedias is pointed out. According to Swanepoel (1989: 53), linguistic dictionaries must "convey information on those linguistic features of a word which the user must possess if he is to use the word correctly", while in encyclopaedias "the lemma functions as an index term or heading for a whole field

of knowledge”. With this distinction in mind, candidates are familiarised with the dictionary typology of Zgusta (Swanepoel 1989: 47-49).

Zgusta’s typology was chosen because it is fairly straightforward in that it deals primarily with dictionary types and can be easily depicted in a tree diagram. Zgusta divides linguistic dictionaries into monolingual and translation dictionaries, with the former describing the meaning of a word in the same language and the latter supplying translation equivalents for an entry in another language.

Monolingual dictionaries are then further divided into diachronic dictionaries, which describe the historical development or the origin of the entry, and synchronic dictionaries, describing the vocabulary of a language at a certain point in time (not necessarily present-day). The ALTFC only concentrates on synchronic dictionaries and their further subdivision into general and limited dictionaries. General dictionaries can be of a comprehensive nature, i.e. describing the general lexicon of a language as exhaustively as possible, or a standard (desk) nature. Although based on comprehensive dictionaries, standard dictionaries are much smaller in scope.

Limited dictionaries, in turn, deal with a specific aspect of general language. They include dictionaries of dialects and regional variants, dictionaries of idioms, proverbs and fixed expressions, dictionaries of jargon, clique languages and slang, dictionaries of synonyms and antonyms, dictionaries of foreign words and neologisms or dictionaries of abbreviations and acronyms. This also offers a good opportunity to explain certain linguistic terms and point out differences, e.g. the difference between synonyms and antonyms or abbreviations and acronyms.

As soon as candidates have a fair idea of the various linguistic dictionaries, the main emphasis being on the differentiation between monolingual and multilingual (translation) dictionaries, they are introduced to the macrostructural requirements of a good translation dictionary. According to Landau (Swanepoel 1989: 219-220), a translation dictionary should supply a translation equivalent for every word in the SL or should at least supply an explanation of the word. Moreover, it should cover the SL vocabulary fully and supply information on grammatical syntactic and semantic features, language variation (e.g. US or UK), names (e.g. the names of biblical figures differ across languages), special vocabulary items (e.g. scientific or medical terms), give guidance on spelling and pronunciation and be compact in size.

Since apart from supplying translation equivalents for every word in the SL the above microstructural requirements could also apply to a monolingual desk dictionary, the facilitator discusses with the class the entry of *house* in the *Collins English Dictionary* (2000) and *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1995). Reading aloud through the entry, candidates are asked to identify the specific microstructural information given in the entry and then compare the microstructural information on *house* in the two dictionaries. This exercise tends to be an eye-opener to candidates since they are normally not aware

that by carefully and intelligently reading through an entry (and to the end of an entry, if necessary!) they will have access to a wealth of information.

Technical dictionaries are not mentioned in the above typology because they do not describe the general vocabulary of a language. The term *technical dictionary* refers to “any dictionary which is primarily aimed at supplying information relating to the technical language of one or more fields of study, e.g. a dictionary of sporting terms or dictionaries in which the technical language of subjects such as physics, chemistry, linguistics, horse-breeding or domestic science are contained” (Swanepoel 1989: 255).

Another reason why technical dictionaries are treated separately is the fact that they can appear in various combinations of the above-mentioned dictionaries. As such, technical dictionaries may be monolingual general dictionaries, monolingual specialised dictionaries, bilingual general or specialised dictionaries, as well as multilingual general or specialised dictionaries.

At the end of this module, candidates are made aware of the fact that dictionaries are only a translation aid and cannot compensate for linguistic competence in the SL and TL. Moreover, dictionaries have to be used with caution because an entry may not contain sufficient information for the word to be used correctly in context. Translators must always use their general knowledge and common sense to determine whether the meaning or translation equivalent given under an entry is correct in terms of the context of the ST and TT. Before using a dictionary candidates should always check the publishing date since older dictionaries will not be up to date with regard to the latest vocabulary developments. It is also pointed out to candidates that from a translator’s point of view a dictionary is always out of date.

Candidates often complain at this point about the lack of appropriate and recent African language dictionaries. Especially technical dictionaries in the African languages hardly exist. However, candidates are made aware of the national initiatives to overcome this problem. For example, in 2000 the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) took the initiative to form Section 21 companies for each of the official languages. These section 21 companies are situated at tertiary institutions and compile monolingual dictionaries to preserve and develop the vocabulary of the respective official language. As in the case of the Bureau for the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (WAT; University of Stellenbosch) and the *Dictionary for South African English* (DASE; Rhodes University) this step will ensure the enhancement of these languages at lexicographical and terminological level.

Moreover, the National Language Policy Framework (Implementation Plan 2003: 13), which was drafted by the DAC and approved by Cabinet on 12 February 2003, makes provision for the development of terminology in all the official languages and all fields in collaboration with all stakeholders, language units (provincial or national) and language bodies (e.g. PanSALB substructures such as national lexicography units). The national terminology drive will be coordinated by the

Terminology Coordination Section (TCS) of the National Language Service (NLS) and a computerised National Termbank will be established by the DAC (Implementation Plan 2003: 18 and a telephone conversation with Dr Mariëtta Alberts from PanSALB). The terminology workgroup that D Lang established at the beginning of 2001 to coordinate terminology within the DOD will also cooperate in the above effort.

Another problem that candidates sometimes encounter in this module is their inability to understand the explanations given of a word or phrase because their command of English is inadequate. The following module on *Language skills* is supposed to remedy some of their linguistic shortcomings.

3.2.4 *Language skills* module

Language skills is the most versatile module and starts with the written English Assessment Test for the DOD. Many of the exercises that follow are based on the results of the test, which is divided into comprehension, concord, punctuation, spelling, tenses and logical sequence. For example, the difference between the English present and past tenses will be discussed in class and followed up by the respective exercises. Most of the candidates also seem to struggle with punctuation. Punctuation has therefore become an integral part of *Language skills* (see also par. 3.1.5).

The module content is not only based on the assessment test but also accommodates problems as they arise. If, for example, the facilitator realises in the course of a composition exercise that students tend to confuse the definite and indefinite articles or omit articles altogether, such a problem will be addressed immediately in the following lesson. The same applies to the listening exercises where students listen to a passage on tape and then write down all they can remember. Those texts are corrected for grammatical and spelling mistakes, which also helps to identify potential problem areas.

For vocabulary exercises, candidates must, for example, read a short story and then analyse the words and expressions printed in bold. They are asked to generate other English words and expressions that mean the same, produce antonyms where possible and translate them into their respective languages. In another exercise, candidates are asked to discuss the differences in meaning between *criticise*, *examine*, *define* and *describe* or *explain*, *give an outline* and *identify*. Apart from action words, noun sequences can also be used to alert students to the slight differences in meaning between similar terms (e.g. *house*, *building*, *bungalow*, *cottage*, etc.). Such exercises make candidates more critical with regard to certain lexical items.

Vocabulary items are also organised around certain communicative situations, such as *at the mess*, *greeting your superior*, etc., which can also include exercises regarding stylistic scales and register. As has been mentioned before (see par. 3.2.1.3), candidates do not seem to be aware that the same

message can be expressed in various ways and that the variations may suit different occasions.

However, the *Language skills* module is not only restricted to language training. The module also deals with the DOD Language Policy. The meaning of the policy's most important sections and the implications for the DOD members and employees are discussed. This exercise introduces candidates to the very formal language of policy documents, exposes them to a number of new lexical items, keeps them abreast with the latest language policy developments and often leads to debates since it is a topic that affects all candidates.

Moreover, candidates are familiarised with the ethical aspects of translation. This section is based on SATI's Code of Ethics for Translators, which stipulates, for example, that translators shall "accept full responsibility for their translations and ... bring unresolved problems to the attention of their clients/employers" or "accept no work that is beyond them (with regard to deadline and knowledge of source language, target language and subject), except with the knowledge of their clients/employers, and to keep to agreed deadlines and forms of delivery" (see also SATI 2001: 8-9, 15). The various stipulations, as well as SATI's role as the professional representative of South African language workers, are discussed in some detail.

Language skills also touches on the translation brief, telling the translator what is expected of the TT and how the TT should be presented (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.3). Furthermore, the class discusses client/translator relations, customer satisfaction, networking, etc. Candidates are then asked to write translation briefs for various translation tasks. Apart from practising their writing skills, candidates are forced to look at a translation task from various angles and not just the translator's point of view.

Several of the exercises or topics presented in *Language skills* can also be found in a slightly different form in the other modules since all the modules are interlinked. They all aim at rendering the actual translation process more structured and help prospective translation facilitators to reflect on their decisions. Translating as such is practised in the workshops, which will be discussed next.

3.2.5 Workshops module

On average workshops cover 14 periods. In one period, candidates are asked to prepare a certain text in terms of the translation brief and in the following period the translation will be discussed. Candidates first comment on the text in general, i.e. answer questions on whether they found the text easy/difficult and why they considered the text easy/difficult. They are encouraged to comment on the passages they had problems with, e.g. in terms comprehending the ST or the absence of ready translation equivalents in the TL.

Once the general aspects of the translational situation have been discussed, candidates are asked to read a paragraph of their translation. If the translation is into English fellow candidates are asked whether the translation of the passage makes sense to them as read by the candidate and not as they remember it from their own translation. The facilitator does not use her English text (most likely the original on which the African-language texts are based) but concentrates on making sense of the translations. If the translation is into the African languages, candidates first read the passage in the African language and then give a back translation into English so that the facilitator and candidates speaking a different African language can understand. In a multilingual classroom, the trainer cannot always understand the finished translation but can still concentrate on the processes that motivated the choices (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.2).

A point that must be raised here is the fact that during the workshops translated texts often have to be used for back translation. Although the ALTFC facilitators are aware that this is a serious shortcoming it cannot always be circumvented because of the unique circumstances of the ALTFC. Apart from annual reports by government departments since 1994, few texts have been published in all the official languages. Moreover, texts available in the official languages are mostly translations from English and vary in quality. Owing to the fact that most of the available African language texts are translations it is also not always easy to come up with a credible translation brief so as to simulate a real-life situation (see Chapter 4, par. 4.3.1 for a further discussion of the problem and Chapter 4, par. 4.4.4 for a possible solution).

Initially, the back translation tends to cause problems because candidates are inclined to read the ST sentences. They seem to be under the impression that if the back translation does not mirror the ST their translation is considered to be wrong. However, by giving several examples, some prodding with regard to certain linguistic units that often cause problems in translation and a reminder that the translation must be communicative, candidates seem to relax and quite enjoy the sometimes rather funny-sounding back translations.

While candidates read their translations, the facilitator takes note of the various versions of a passage. Some of the translations are then put on the whiteboard and candidates are to discuss in class in what respect the versions differ, whether the deviations distort the meaning of a particular linguistic unit and possible consequences for the target reader. Moreover, candidates are asked whether they can identify the translation strategies used, thus making them aware that the more theoretical aspects of the course definitely have their practical implications. The facilitator does not present candidates with ready-made solutions but creates an awareness that different decisions may produce different results. The discussions are to encourage candidates to think in a translation-relevant manner.

On the whole, in this module the emphasis is on the processes involved in translation, i.e. on what

candidates did and why. Since no *polished* translations can be expected due to the nature of the course the main criteria is whether the class understands the message of the translated text. At the end of the discussions (generally one period per text), translations into English are sometimes collected and checked by the facilitator for more personal feedback with regard to accuracy, vocabulary, idiom and register, cohesion and coherence, as well as technical aspects such as grammar, spelling and punctuation (see Chapter 4, par. 4.3.1 for a more detailed discussion on the marking scheme that will be introduced).

In the beginning, translations into the African languages were also corrected by the language practitioners of the African language section at D Lang. However, since few of the language practitioners at D Lang have any professional training in translation because most come from a teaching background, they mainly corrected vocabulary and grammatical mistakes on an equivalence basis and turned the translated text into a battleground (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.1). As a result, candidates were bitterly disappointed because they felt that the language practitioners failed to appreciate their efforts, on the one hand and the language practitioners were affronted because of the candidates' alleged incompetence in their respective African languages, on the other hand. Moreover, the different African languages were marked differently by the various language practitioners. The facilitator was caught in the middle and in the end only corrected translations into English since translations could then be assessed uniformly by the same facilitator.

One of the texts used is General S. Nyanda's three-page speech on the occasion of his taking over the command of the South African National Defence Force at the Handing-over of Command Parade held at Thaba Tshwane on 29 May 1998 (see Appendix D). First the text is read out aloud in class, then the structure of the speech is studied and its textual features are identified. Questions such as the following are addressed orally: What would have to be changed if General Nyanda would hold this speech before the American Armed Forces? What would the American soldier be expected to know about the South African military situation and what not?

The next step is to give candidates the following translation brief:

For filing purposes, an abstract of General Nyanda's speech is required in English as well as in the other official languages. The abstract must not be longer than four sentences.

While candidates normally struggle with the abstract in English they find its translation relatively easy. Once this task has been completed candidates are given a second translation brief for the same ST. It reads as follows:

Since the atmosphere in the SANDF has been rather strained because of uncertainty as to what

would happen once an African general took over command, General Nyanda wants a flier with the main points of his speech issued to soldiers at the units to address certain fears and aspiration. The flier will be printed in an A-5 format.

As in the case of the abstract, candidates find the translation relatively easy once they have the text for the flier in English.

This type of exercise forces candidates to distance themselves from the ST and formulate a new ST in their own words for translation (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.3 on reading comprehension and deverbalisation). It alleviates the problem of candidates sticking almost word-for-word to the ST and thus producing unidiomatic TTs. Moreover, candidates become aware of various text-types and their distinctive features. Although candidates at the level of the ALTFC still look for guidance to the ST with regard to what they are supposed to do with the TT, the above intralingual exercises are a first step towards translation as interlingual text-production as described in Chapter 2 (par. 2.3.3), in contrast to ST-reproduction as the equivalence-based approaches would have it.

A text that is available in all the official languages is *You and the Constitution* (Moran 1996), which was translated by ECCO Conference and Language Services into all the official languages. It gives a very basic introduction to the South African Constitution. Candidates are requested to translate chapter 1 of part one with the heading *What is the Constitution?* The translation brief simply states that the African language texts have to be translated into English for a readership similar to that of the ST. The discussion of the translations of this text often reveals gaps with regard to the candidates' general knowledge.

Candidates are also expected to draw on their general knowledge with regard to health-related texts. Depending on the composition of the group, up to three different texts may be used since so far no health text has been found that occurs in all the official languages. The texts deal with the early identification of hearing problems in preschool children, cholera and dental hygiene. All leaflets have been obtained from the Department of Health and Welfare, which uses them for distribution to the municipal clinics.

With the above information in mind, candidates are then asked to translate the texts according to the following translation brief:

Despite the distribution of these African-language pamphlets among SANDF soldiers at the units, the military hospitals and sickbays all over the country have noticed an increase in the number of school children with hearing problems/cholera cases/ patients with preventable dental problems. The Surgeon General now requests a back translation of these African-language pamphlets into English to ascertain whether the message contained in the pamphlets is sufficient to prevent the above problems.

These are only a few examples of the texts and translation briefs used during the workshops. A frequent problem encountered by candidates with regard to the African-language STs seems the use of regional variants which candidates cannot understand and which create gaps that candidates are not confident enough to fill because of a lack of general and linguistic knowledge. Understanding the text is sometimes also a problem with regard to English STs. On the one hand, candidates do not read the ST carefully enough and on the other hand, not all candidates have an extensive knowledge of English.

An insufficient command of English is also reflected in the translation work. The English used tends to be very informal combined with collocations and fixed expressions that do not necessarily match because they are on an entirely different stylistic scale. Punctuation is often absent altogether. Candidates seem to be stuck at word level, completely forgetting the message and presenting it in a coherent manner (see Chapter 4, par. 4.2.2 and par. 4.3.3).

3.2.6 Summary

From a translation-theoretical point of view, the above discussion of the five ALTFC modules has shown that the ALTFC covers many of the aspects outlined in Chapter 2 on *Current trends in translator training*. It thus addresses the first part of the first secondary aim, i.e. whether the ALTFC is in line with current trends in translator training.

For example, the translational communication model in the *Introduction to translation* module deals in basic terms and condensed form with translation as intercultural/interpersonal communication and cultural transfer (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.1-2). It indicates the participants in the interlingual communication process and shows the position of the translator in the two interlinked communication cycles. Moreover, *Skopos theory and text analysis* deals very briefly with skopos theory and the translation brief (see Chapter 2, par. 2.2.2.3) and then continues with Nord's model of translation-oriented text analysis (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.1). Various texts are used to practise the application of the model not only during the above section but also during the workshops.

During the workshops, Gile's process-oriented approach (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.2) is also applied due to the multilingual classroom situation and because at the level of ALTFC candidates the translation processes are more important from a didactic point of view than the finished product. However, instead of written problem reports, processes and strategies used by candidates to overcome translation problems are discussed orally. Furthermore, the *Translation strategies* and *Translation aids* modules tie in with transfer competence in Nord's narrower sense and research competence, respectively as discussed in the skills-led approach (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.3).

However, the discussion of the ALTFC also showed problem areas, especially with regard to the

Workshops module. Moreover, in the course of the various ALTFCs since 1997 questions emerged, such as whether candidates benefit from a course such as the ALTFC. Is the material presented too much, too complicated or too academic? What type of candidates actually attend the ALTFCs? Even if conceived as an orientation course, will four weeks really make a difference? (It had been decided earlier already that instead of on a Wednesday ALTFCs should start on a Monday in the following year to cut out one weekend away from home, thus reducing the course from four and a half weeks to four weeks.) Is the duration of the course too long because candidates have to come to Pretoria for the ALTFC, miss their families and lose interest and concentration halfway through the course? Do the candidates actually translate once they return to their units?

The above questions resulted in the first main problem of this study, i.e. whether the current ALTFC is 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, and the second secondary problem as to whether the current ALTFC is in tune with the needs of the DOD as well as the candidates attending the course. In order to address the two problems, it was decided to carry out survey research in the form of the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang*. The remaining sections of this chapter will therefore deal with the research method chosen for the purpose of this study and the operationalisation of the above questionnaire (see Appendix C).

3.3 Research methodology

In order to explain why survey research was chosen for the purposes of this study, a brief overview of the most common research methods available in the humanities will be given in the following section.

3.3.1 Various research methods in the humanities

Babbie (2001: 214-330) distinguishes five different research methods, or modes of observation as he calls them, in the humanities. They are *experiments*, *survey research*, *field research*, *unobtrusive research* and *evaluation research*. In *experiments*, the researcher typically takes action and then observes the consequences of that action. For example, a target group is found to have a certain characteristic at the beginning of the experiment. Once a certain experimental stimulus has been administered, the target group is found to have a different characteristic that in the absence of any other stimuli can be attributed to the experimental one. An advantage of experimental research thus is that the stimulus (experimental variable) and its impact over time can be isolated with relative ease. Another advantage is that experiments need relatively little time and money since they tend to be limited in scope. However, the greatest advantage of experiments according to Babbie (2001: 235) is that they “lend themselves to a logical rigor that is often much more difficult to achieve in other modes of observation”.

The second research method described by Babbie (2001: 237-273) is *survey research*. It seems the research method most common in social research is by administering questionnaires to a certain target group. Surveys are particularly appropriate for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory research when individual persons are the unit of analysis, i.e. respondents or informants. They are a very efficient instrument to measure attitudes and orientations (see par. 3.3.2).

The third research method is *qualitative field research* (Babbie 2001: 274-302). Its underlying principle is that if one wants to know about something one has to go to the place where it happens and observe it happen. Whenever somebody observes or participates in some sort of social behaviour and tries to make sense of it field research takes place. However, it is not just a way to collect data but also to generate possible theories and hypotheses. Since field researchers do not tend to start their research with precisely defined hypotheses to be tested the research design can be modified at any time during the process. Babbie (2001: 298) considers field research particularly suitable for studying “the subtle nuances of attitudes and behaviours and for examining social processes over time”.

The next research method is *unobtrusive research*. Unobtrusive research is the umbrella term for three distinct research methods (Babbie: 2001: 303-330). In *content analysis*, various social artifacts are examined which typically include written documents, such as newspaper articles, the constitution or reports, as well as TV programmes, songs, paintings, etc. Content analysis is used to find out, for example, whether during the sixties the political rhetoric in England was more radical and aggressive than in Germany or to investigate violence on TV. The *analysis of existing statistics* is almost self-explanatory since the researcher makes use of the vast amount of data that has already been collected and analysed by others. In *historical/comparative analysis* records are read and analysed to establish “common patterns that recur in different times and places” (Babbie 2001: 304). One of the biggest advantages of unobtrusive research is its non-reactiveness, i.e. social behaviour can be studied without affecting it in the process. In the other research methods, the behaviour of respondents may be influenced because they know that they are being researched or observed or they may give answers that they think are expected of them rather than what they really believe.

The last of the five methods is *evaluation research*. It is more a research purpose than an actual research method since it is concerned with the evaluation of research, i.e. determining whether the intended result of a social intervention was produced (Babbie 2001: 333). As such, it is a process intended to measure certain outcomes and responses and can make use of any of the above research methods.

One of the factors distinguishing the research methods described above is the type of data they generate for analysis (see par. 3.3.2.5). The data obtained by social research is divided into *quantitative* and *qualitative* data (see Mouton 1996: 161-169 and Babbie 2001: 275). Quantitative data can be

analysed statistically, i.e. the data can be expressed in numbers and presented in tables, pies, graphs, etc. Mouton (1996: 163) further divides statistics into *descriptive statistics*, which deals with “organising and summarising the data at hand”, and *inferential statistics*. As the name implies, inferential statistics deals with the possible inferences when generalising from the research data to a wider population. Experiments and surveys are typical examples of research methods mainly producing quantitative data.

In contrast, *qualitative data* cannot be readily expressed in numbers. Qualitative analysis focuses, *inter alia*, “on understanding rather than explaining social actions and events within their particular settings and contexts” and provides “contextually valid accounts of social life rather than formally generalisable explanations” (Mouton 1996: 168). The emphasis is thus on the coherence and meaning of the data rather than the specific meaning of its elements as is the case in quantitative analysis. As a result, qualitative analysis is more holistic, synthetic and interpretative. Qualitative data is typically obtained by field research, content analysis and historical/comparative analysis.

However, even though certain research methods have been identified to produce mainly qualitative or quantitative types of data, it does not mean that, for example, field research cannot produce quantitative data or survey research qualitative data (see par. 3.3.2.2 on open questions). Moreover, qualitative and quantitative research need not be mutually exclusive within the scope of a research project, especially at the methodical and technical level. It all depends on the purpose of the research (Mouton 1996: 38-40). For more reliable results, Babbie (2001: 215) suggests that as a rule various research methods should be used in any research since each method has its shortcomings.

With regard to the study at hand, it can be shown that two research methods have already been used. Observing the candidates during the ALTFC (albeit informally) raised many of the questions that were condensed into the two main aims and the two secondary aims of this study (see par. 3.1). Furthermore, the literature survey in Chapter 2 revealed that the latest developments in translator training may help to solve some of the problems addressed in this study, especially those of the first secondary aim (see par. 3.1 and Chapter 4, par. 4.4). However, especially those questions dealing with the DOD-specific nature of the ALTFC, e.g. the student profile, the reason why candidates attend the ALTFC or the candidates’ opinions on various aspects of the ALTFC, cannot be answered by means of the above two methods and require a different approach.

The best way to obtain the DOD-specific information seemed to ask the ALTFC candidates themselves. When attitudes and orientations of people are to be explored (parts I and II of the questionnaire) or people are to be described (part I of the questionnaire), survey research in the form of structured questionnaires is the most effective research method (see above), especially when a number of issues have to be addressed. Moreover, questionnaires produce quantifiable data that can

be presented statistically and permits generalisations from the respondents to the population as a whole. The next section will therefore deal in more detail with the general aspects of survey research with structured questionnaires.

3.2.2 Survey research and questionnaires

The reasons why surveys are conducted are presumably as numerous as the number of surveys. However, as mentioned in the previous section these reasons can be roughly reduced to three general objectives which are to *describe*, *explain* and *explore* the *unit of analysis* (Babbie 1990: 51-53). Before dealing with the three main objectives of survey research, the unit of analysis will be discussed briefly.

The *unit of analysis* is the object or entity being studied and need not only refer to individuals but can include “organisations, institutions, collectives, social objects, social actions or events and interventions” (Mouton 1996: 91). While this definition seems easy enough one has to be careful not to confuse the unit of analysis with the data source(s). Although the unit of analysis and the data source(s) can be identical, this is often not the case. For example, the unit of analysis of this study is the current ALTFC and the data sources are the more recent literature on translator training and the candidates of the ALTFCs held in 2000. However, since the type of candidates attending the ALTFC is also important with regard to designing a relevant ALTFC in the DOD environment, the first part of the questionnaire is dedicated to the student profile (see par.3.3.3.1). As a result, in part one of the questionnaire the candidates of the ALTFCs in 2000 were thus the unit of analysis and at the same time the data source.

Having defined the unit of analysis, the discussion of the three main objectives of survey research can be resumed. *Description* deals with the *what* and tries to identify certain traits and attributes pertaining to the unit of analysis. It will produce information on age, sex, education, marital status or percentages of people in favour or against something, etc. This type of research will, for example, reveal what people do, have or prefer but not why they do, have or prefer it.

The *why* is the second concern of survey research and falls under *explanation*. Explanatory research attempts to show relationships between variables, with variables referring to “characteristics or features that take on different values, categories, or attributes” (Mouton 1996: 92). As such, explanatory research is more often than not multivariate, which means that it examines two or more variables at the same time (Babbie 1990: 52; also see par. 3.3.2.5). A researcher may want to explain why certain translation courses are preferred to others by using variables such as the translation trainer, time when the course is held, location, use of high tech equipment, etc. and establishing relationships between course preferences and the various variables.

The last objective is *exploration* (Babbie 1990: 53). Exploration is a *research device* at the beginning of a survey research project to see whether all facets of a topic have been covered or whether important elements have been overlooked. In informal interviews a number of randomly chosen people who hold certain views on the topic to be investigated are encouraged to give their opinions. The data thus gathered is not representative and does not answer the basic research questions but helps in planning the research.

However, if a large and representative number of people are to be interviewed, if there are many interviewers and the data is to be subjected to statistical analysis, informal interviews will not suffice and a standardized questionnaire will have to be designed. According to Sheatsley (1983: 197), in a standardized questionnaire the wording of all questions must be prescribed so as to avoid that respondents receive differing stimuli by means of different phrasing, which could seriously affect the response. The same applies to the order of the questions. Depending on where a certain question occurs in the questionnaire, i.e. what questions precede or follow it, the response may differ. Moreover, key terms in a question must be clearly defined and explained to ensure that they are interpreted consistently. For example, is *regularly* meant to mean every day, twice a week, four times a year, etc.?

While standardized questionnaires help to measure and control response effects and generate standardized responses that can be processed with relative ease they also have several disadvantages. Despite the definitions and explanations, respondents may still interpret questions differently. Moreover, they cannot qualify or elaborate on their answers and may thus feel that they are forced into replies they did not really want to give (Sheatsley 1983: 197). However, the main disadvantage of standardized questionnaires is that they cannot be modified or changed once they are in use. Some of the shortcomings may only be identified once the data is being analysed and researchers may realise that they left an important aspect out or that the data collected do not really answers their questions.

It is therefore of utmost importance to spend time and effort on designing a questionnaire that respondents can readily understand and are willing to answer, as well as on that produces the data required. The following section will thus concentrate on the characteristics and production of a good questionnaire.

3.3.2.1 Preliminary considerations regarding questionnaire design

The design of the questionnaire will largely depend on the research purpose and the respondents who are to answer the questions, i.e. the type of sample used. According to Babbie (1995: 226) a sample “is a special subset of a population observed for purposes of making inferences about the nature of the total population itself”. The designer of the questionnaire will therefore have to take the level of education and sophistication of the sample group into consideration, with the difficulty of the questions

being adjusted to the level of the least educated respondent. A useful questionnaire must thus be “simple enough for universal comprehension but not so childish or elementary that it will serve to alienate the interested and well informed” (Sheatsley 1983: 200). For the purposes of this study it is not necessary to deal with the various sampling techniques since the sample in this study is very specialised, i.e. ALTFC candidates (for sampling techniques which are indispensable when the general population is investigated see Babbie 2001: 175-213).

Moreover, the research purpose and the type of sample will influence the administration of the questionnaire. Questionnaire administration is divided into *self-administration* and *administration by an interviewer* (Sheatsley 1983: 198-199 and Babbie 2001: 253-267). Self-administered questionnaires are typically used in mail surveys. A letter of instruction is normally included and tells respondents how they are to go about answering the questionnaire. Self-administered questionnaires have various advantages. For one, they are rather cheap because there are no interviewers involved and the costs are mainly for printing and postage. They are rather effective with regard to sensitive questions, which respondents would not necessarily want to answer in front of an interviewer, as well as collecting data from highly motivated and specialized groups.

However, self-administered questionnaires tend to have a low response rate, which can affect the representativity of the sample. Another disadvantage is that unlike the interviewers the respondents are not experts with regard to answering questionnaires and may encounter problems despite the instructions. If returned, the questionnaire may be incomplete or questions may have been misunderstood.

The above problems are avoided when *interviewers administer questionnaires*, which can either be done face-to-face or by telephone. The response rate is normally very high and questionnaires are less incomplete because specifically trained interviewers help with the more complicated questions and clarify misunderstandings. Moreover, the interviewer is in a position to observe the interviewees, report on their willingness to answer, the social environment, etc. However, this type of questionnaire administration tends to be rather cost-intensive depending on the size of the sample and the number of interviewers required.

The above two types of administration can be combined into a *self-administered questionnaire with an interviewer present* (Sheatsley 1983: 198-199). This type of administration typically takes place in a classroom situation. It also has a high completion rate and the interviewers can answer queries while the respondents fill in the questionnaire. However, it is not suitable for large-scale research since the sample is normally not assembled at one venue. Moreover, the sample of such an investigation is often not representative of a wider population.

However, the sample and the type of administration are not the only decisions survey researchers have to make. They also have to decide what information they want to elicit by means of the questionnaire and how detailed the information is supposed to be. On the one hand, this includes the number of dimensions that are to be investigated with regard to a concept and on the other hand, a decision must be taken on how detailed attributes have to be in order to supply sufficient information on a variable.

When, for example, researching the concept of *language capability* the researcher will first have to identify certain aspects that make up *language capability*, i.e. *indicators* of what is meant when talking about a certain concept (Babbie 2001: 123). Indicators of *language capability* may be ordering a beer in a restaurant, writing a newspaper article, following the main news on TV or having received language training up to a certain grade. The various indicators can then be grouped into *dimensions*, which refer to the special types of language capability, i.e. its specifiable aspects (see Babbie 2001: 123). By grouping the above indicators, *language capability* could then have an active and passive dimension, a formal and informal dimension, and a language training dimension. According to Babbie (2001: 124) “specifying dimensions and identifying the various indicators for each” fall under *conceptualisation*. The conceptualisation process does, of course, not only apply to survey research but to any type of research since it gives the researcher a clearer understanding of what is being researched.

Once the concepts have been specified in terms of dimensions and indicators the dimensions relevant for the research project will be operationalised. Although conceptualisation and *operationalisation* are not always clearly separable, the latter means “the development of specific research procedures (operations) that will result in empirical observations representing those concepts in the real world” (Babbie 2001:132). It involves the identification of characteristics making up the concept for purposes of measurement (Mouton 1996: 126). During operationalisation, the various concepts and dimensions are expressed in *variables* and the *attributes* composing them. Variables indicate what differs from person to person and their definition will depend on the internal logic of the research purpose (Oppenheim 1992: 23). Attributes, in turn, are the “characteristics or qualities that describe an object” (Babbie 2001: 29), with variable being the superordinate comprising a set of attributes.

For example, the variable *gender* could be composed of the attributes *young*, *middle-aged*, *old*. Attributes must be mutually exclusive, i.e. only one answer is possible, as well as exhaustive and precise enough in view of the research purpose (Babbie 2001: 134). Regarding the above example, researchers may decide that the young and the old are not important for their study and concentrate on the age group from 30 to 60. The precision of the age needed will then lead to groupings in 5-year or 10-year intervals. Another example would be *language affiliation*. For example, is it sufficient to differentiate between English/Afrikaans and the official African languages; is more precise information required in terms of English/Afrikaans, the Nguni group, the Sotho group and Venda/Tsonga or should all the eleven official languages be given as separate attributes?

Once there is clarity as to the information that is to be obtained by the questionnaire, the target group or sample, as well as the mode in which the questionnaire will be administered the focus can shift to the operationalisation of the variables in the form of questions and statements. Since the usefulness of the data obtained by means of the questionnaire will largely depend on the questions asked and “the ways in which our respondent perceive and respond to them” (Sheatsley 1983: 205) the next section will deal with the formulation of questions and statements that will produce the required information.

3.3.2.2 Question design

Before turning to the type of questions available to the researcher, it should be mentioned that a typical questionnaire need not only contain questions but also statements (Babbie 2001: 240). Statements are used to determine the extent to which respondents display a certain attitude or hold certain beliefs, with measuring categories ranging from *completely agree* to *completely disagree* (see par. 3.3.2.3 for the type of measuring categories). Using questions as well as statements allows for a greater variety in designing question items which may result in a more interesting questionnaire.

Returning to questions, it can be said that they are generally divided into open-ended and close-ended questions. In open-ended questions, respondents are asked to answer the question in their own words. The advantage of this type of question is that the response is not influenced by prescribed categories and reveals what is foremost on the respondent’s mind (Sheatsley 1983: 206-208; see also Oppenheim 1992: 115 for a table of the advantages and disadvantages of open-ended and close-ended questions).

However, not all respondents are equally articulate and as a result some answers may not reflect what the respondent actually wanted to say. Open-ended questions may produce a lot of repetition and irrelevant material. Some respondents may even miss the point of the question completely, while others may answer different dimensions of a question, which can make it rather difficult to combine responses. Moreover, it may be rather difficult and time-consuming to analyse the responses since it is not always easy to break them down into manageable categories.

Open-ended questions are therefore mainly used when a spontaneous and uninfluenced response is required, when there are so many categories that not all of them can be conceived or when after a series of close-ended questions the monotony is to be broken by giving respondents a chance to express themselves. Moreover, in exploratory research (see par. 3.3.2) researchers will ask open-ended questions to find out whether they have covered a field exhaustively and did not miss any important aspects (Sheatsley 1983: 208).

In contrast, close-ended questions require respondents to choose one from two or several categories. They are more easily processed than open-ended questions since they guarantee uniform responses.

Salant and Dillman (1994: 86) further divide close-ended questions into *close-ended with ordered responses*, *close-ended with unordered responses* and *partially close-ended*. An example of a *close-ended question with an ordered response* is the following question item:

How would you assess your command of English?

SPEAKING:	1 GOOD	2 SATISFACTORY	3 BAD
READING:	1 GOOD	2 SATISFACTORY	3 BAD
WRITING:	1 GOOD	2 SATISFACTORY	3 BAD

In this type of question, respondents are asked to rate each item separately. It measures how good respondents are at something or how serious they think a problem is.

Close-ended questions with unordered responses supply a number of categories and alternatives from which respondents have to choose the *most* important, significant, applicable, etc. It gives an indication as to which problem is viewed as the most serious for action or from which item respondents benefited the most. *Partially close-ended* questions are like close-ended questions with ordered responses but offer in addition to the alternatives also an *Other (please specify)* category with some space given. This affords respondents the opportunity to add alternatives researchers omitted.

Babbie (2001: 246-248) also adds *contingency questions*. They differ from the above type of questions not so much in the structure of their answer categories but in that they are not relevant to all respondents. Answering or skipping the question will be “contingent on responses to the first question in the series” (Babbie 2001: 246). The following is an example of a contingency question:

Q9 Is translating already part of your routine work at your unit?

- | | | |
|-------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 NO | → | IF TRANSLATING IS NOT PART OF YOUR |
| 2 YES | | ROUTINE WORK, SKIP TO Q11. |

Q10 (If translating is already part of your routine work) what type of documents do you mostly translate? (Circle as many answers as applicable.)

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 INSTRUCTIONS | 5 MINUTES |
| 2 SPEECHES | 6 OTHER (Please specify.) _____ |
| 3 ROUTINE LETTERS | _____ |
| 4 DAILY ORDERS | _____ |

Question 10 in the above example is a typical contingency question because it is only answered by respondents who answered *yes* in question 9. Such questions can sometimes extend over several pages (see Appendix C for part three of the questionnaire) and it is therefore important that they are clearly distinguished from the other questions by means of formatting.

In addition to the types of questions available to the researcher, there are some guidelines on how to produce useful questions (see Sheatsley 1983: 212-218 and Babbie 2001: 240-245). Questions should be kept unambiguous, short and to the point. Respondents will lose interest if they have to read through lengthy questions. Questions should be easy to read and quick to answer. Moreover, just because the question designers know what they intend with a certain question does not necessarily mean that respondents will understand the question. Researchers tend to get so engrossed in a topic that they fail to supply vital information to the respondents who may not be experts in the field. In the same vein, vague and ambiguous words should be avoided. In a question like *Have you translated recently?*, does *recently* imply since yesterday, the last two months or this year?

Furthermore, double-barrelled questions should be avoided. Many respondents will not be able to answer a question like “To what extent have you benefited from the *Introduction to translation* and *Translation aids* modules?” since they may have benefited from the one but not the other. Questions should therefore only contain one variable. Questions should also not be phrased in the negative since one can never be sure whether respondents look at the question from the same angle. In “should the four-week duration of the ALTFC not be extended?”, respondents may read over the *not* and indicate *yes* that it should be extended. The results may thus not reflect opinions and attitudes accurately.

In addition, only questions should be asked that respondents are competent and willing to answer. This is particularly true of self-administered questionnaires where there are no interviewers present to prod respondents into giving an answer or rephrase the question for easier understanding. Moreover, even if respondents are not competent to give an answer they may still circle an item since they do not want to appear ignorant. This will also distort the results. The same may happen if questions are not relevant to the respondents. Despite the fact that they may never have given thought to a certain topic they may still indicate an answer, thus being misleading.

As a general rule, Sheatsley (1983: 206) says that questions must be formulated in such a way that they elicit the information required by the aims of the research, are suitable for the type of administration and are easily understood by the respondents. Moreover, there should always be clarity as to why a certain question is asked, what it is doing in the specific spot and how the responses are going to be used (Oppenheim 1992: 122). Having described in some detail the question types and aspects of good question design, some attention should now be given to the response categories or measurement dimensions available to the researcher, especially since they are closely interlinked with the questions themselves.

3.3.2.3 Response categories

In contrast to open-ended questions, where the replies are individually phrased, close-ended questions offer response categories designed in line with the question and the research purpose. Since the natural dichotomies of *yes/no*, *agree/disagree* or *satisfied/dissatisfied* are not always refined enough to elicit the information required, response categories tend to offer several alternatives. Response categories should always be detailed enough since it is easy to group detailed categories into wider groups but almost impossible to deduce more detailed information from broader categories. However, Oppenheim (1992: 209) states that response categories should not comprise more than five alternatives since respondents find it difficult to make detailed distinctions and data analysis becomes difficult if the number of alternatives is too large.

Before starting to design response categories, it will be worthwhile to look at the categories that have been successfully used in numerous surveys over the years. Accordingly, Fowler (1995: 156-165) differentiates seven categories of responses, i.e. those *measuring frequency, quantity and feelings, answering evaluative questions, measuring satisfaction, rating agreement and measuring priorities*. When measuring *frequency* respondents are normally asked how many times they did a certain thing over a specified period of time which can range from *more than once a day* to *once a year or less*. Since people vary markedly with regard to the frequency they do things, it is often more accurate to have them report the number of times they have done something and group the replies later for analysis purposes. When measuring frequency it is very important that the time period is appropriate since respondents may not have performed a certain action last week but twice a day the week before. Moreover, if the time period is too long respondents may not be able to remember correctly and therefore guess. Alternatives such as *often/sometimes/rarely/never* can pose a problem because respondents are not sure what *often* or *sometimes* really means. However, these type of alternatives will suffice if people are to be grouped into broad categories.

Questions measuring quantity typically start with *how much* or *to what extent* and scales could include *a lot/some/little/none at all* or *big/medium/small*. Quantity can also be measured on a numerical scale from 0 to 10, with 0, 1 and 2 representing none to very little, 8, 9 and 10 a lot and 3 to seven somewhere in the middle (Fowler 1995: 159).

Numerical scales can also work well for measuring *feelings* which can range from the very positive to the very negative or from *delighted* to *terrible*. Since numerical scales for measuring feelings need a midpoint indicating where positive feelings turn into negative feelings respondents can be asked to rate their feelings from, for example, -5 to +5, with 0 expressing neutral. Scales can also be visual, showing several little faces from very happy to very sad. An advantage of numerical and visual scales is that not every point on the scale has to be covered by an adjective. The types of alternatives to be used will

largely depend on the mode of administration since a visual scale will prove rather useless in a telephone interview.

Measuring feeling, answering evaluative questions and measuring satisfaction are in many ways interrelated but not the same. While in feeling questions people are asked to comment on how they feel about things, in evaluative questions they are asked to evaluate something. Adjectives used on the evaluative scale normally range from *excellent* to *poor*. Regarding satisfaction, which is “the relationship between what people want and what they get” (Fowler 1995: 162), the scale ranges from *very satisfied/generally satisfied/somewhat satisfied/ very dissatisfied*. Fowler (1995: 162) argues that as soon as one moves away from *completely satisfied* one deals with degrees of dissatisfaction.

The same could perhaps also be said when rating agreement in terms of *completely agree/generally agree/generally disagree/ completely disagree* or *completely true/somewhat true/somewhat untrue/completely untrue*. Whether the *agree* or *true* formulation is chosen will depend on whether the response to the questions is evaluative or cognitive.

The last category mentioned by Fowler (1995: 163) is measuring priorities. Respondents are given a number of alternatives and are asked to rank order them in order of priority. A problem in this respect is that respondents who do not consider any of the alternatives important will still rank order them and the researcher will have no idea that the alternatives were not relevant to the respondent. The answers could therefore be misleading. This problem could perhaps be alleviated by phrasing the question as follows:

In your opinion, which area of the translation aids section should receive more attention? (Circle as many answers as applicable and number the answers chosen at the end of the item in order of priority, with 1 being the most important.)

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | NONE | 5 | INSTITUTIONS |
| 2 | PARTS OF THE DICTIONARY | 6 | COMPILING WORD LISTS |
| 4 | COMPUTERS | 7 | Other (please specify) _____ |
| | | | _____ |
| | | | _____ |

By asking respondents only to choose those answers applicable, respondents can omit the alternatives irrelevant to them and only rank order the relevant ones. The ranking order must always be clearly stated, as above *with 1 being the most important*. Moreover, by adding an *Other (please specify)* category respondents can include alternatives important to them that have been overlooked by the questionnaire designers.

In a second option, students could be asked to rate the various alternatives on a scale from 0 to 10.

This has the advantage that 0 can be given to items that are irrelevant but could result in problems during the data analysis when several alternatives may end up having the same rating. However, Fowler (1995: 164) has found that rating will normally produce an ordering and that “the multiple rating task provides more information with less respondent effort”.

One problem that affects all but the last response categories is the decision whether to include a middle or neutral alternative in the scale. Sheatsley (1983: 210-211) reports that the *neutral*, *don't know* or *no opinion* options are in practice commonly left out since it is perceived as an easy and lazy route that respondents will take if available since they do not want to think seriously about the topic. Moreover, researchers prefer respondents to produce answers.

However, Fowler (1995: 164-165) feels that there are certain situations where it is important to know whether respondents have sufficient knowledge of a topic to supply reliable answers. He suggests two ways to obtain this information. Firstly, a screening question can be asked before the actual question, with respondents first being informed about the nature of the topic and then asked whether they are familiar enough with the topic to have an opinion. Secondly a *not familiar enough* alternative can be given. Oppenheim (1992: 128-129) laments that the *don't know* and *not applicable* categories are too often omitted since they are justified when the topic is possibly beyond the respondent's experience.

The *not applicable/don't know* options have the advantage that they give respondents the feeling that it is perfectly normal not to be informed about certain things and thus make it easier to admit ignorance. Moreover, respondents can decide for themselves whether they have enough knowledge of a certain topic or not. Incidentally, Fowler (1995: 163) points out that a distinction should be made between respondents who lack information to have an opinion on something and those who feel ambivalent about the topic but are well informed. A disadvantage regarding the screening question is that respondents may decide early on that they are not familiar enough with a topic while the subsequent questions are of such a nature that they could have answered them easily enough.

Another controversial issue seems the inclusion of an *Other (please specify)* category. Sheatsley (1983: 212) believes that if the question is properly formulated there should be no legitimate need for an *Other (please specify)* alternative. Since attributes must be exhaustive and mutually exclusive (see par. 3.3.2.1) such an alternative should be irrelevant. However, Babbie (2001: 240) argues that researchers put in an *Other (please specify)* alternative precisely to make the response categories exhaustive. Oppenheim (1992: 129) confirms this by suggesting the inclusion of an *Other (please specify)* alternative should always be considered even if the response categories are the result of extensive pilot work.

With the content decided, including the variables that are to be measured, and the questions and

response categories drafted, decisions will have to be taken on how to order the questions and response categories, as well as what overall appearance the questionnaire should have. These issues will be addressed in the following section on questionnaire format.

3.3.2.4 Questionnaire format

According to Babbie (2001: 245), the format of the questionnaire is as important as the formulation of the questions. If the format is not right respondents may miss questions, confuse questions with regard to the required data, frustrate respondents and even lead to the questionnaire being thrown away.

Firstly, all questionnaires should have a general introduction to inform respondents who the survey is for and what it is about (Sheatsley 1983: 219). Typically, the introduction will be included in the questionnaire but could, for example, also be relayed by the interviewer or have been sent in an advance letter in order to find out whether people will be willing to complete the questionnaire. The introduction should be as brief as possible because if lengthy prospective respondents will lose interest and think of objections not to reply. If the questionnaire is divided into subsections, each section should be introduced to help respondents make sense of the questionnaire and put them into the right frame of mind (Babbie 2001: 250).

Moreover, the introduction should include clear instructions as to how the answers to the questions are to be indicated, i.e. whether the answer is to be checked off or marked with an X in the respective box or circled. In the case of open-ended questions, respondents should be informed whether short or exhaustive answers are expected. This should also be indicated by the space made available for each answer. However, Salant and Dillman (1994: 115) maintain that it does not suffice to give instructions on how to answer the questions just at the beginning of the questionnaire. It should be supplied where it is needed.

Another important aspect is that the questionnaire should not be cluttered. Researchers are often concerned that the questionnaire might turn out too long and try and squeeze as many questions as possible onto a page. However, respondents may be more discouraged by needing more time than expected to complete one page than by filling in several in the same period of time. Rather than cramming questions, researchers should make sure that question items are really justified and will contribute to the analysis (Sheatsley 1983: 223). Babbie (2001: 246) states that it “cannot be overemphasized” that questions should be spread not just because of the respondents but also to make data processing easier.

Furthermore, the questions should be optically distinguishable from the response categories. Salant and Dillman (1994: 115) suggest that questions be put in bold and the answers in light or that small letters be used for the questions and capital letters for the response categories. Each answer category should

be in a separate line. Numbers should be used for the various answers to facilitate analysis at a later stage. Contingency questions must be clearly isolated from the other questions by setting them off to the side and where possible using optical means, such as putting the contingency question and answer category into a box (Babbie 2001: 247) and linking it to the preceding question by means of an arrow. When contingency questions spread over several pages respondents must be verbally instructed what to do (see par. 3.3.2.2 for contingency questions). In the case of ranking alternatives, the number of alternatives that have to be ranked and the ranking order must be clearly stated (see par. 3.3.2.3).

The ordering of the questions in the questionnaire is also crucial since the ordering may affect the response. Generally, the first question should be easy and non-threatening. It should induce the prospective respondent to carry on with the questionnaire. If difficult or sensitive questions are asked at the beginning respondents may turn suspicious and defensive. Such questions should only be asked once the respondent is well into answering the questionnaire (Sheatsley 1983: 220-221). In self-administered questionnaires, demographic data, such as age, income, education and occupation, should normally come at the end since some people are reluctant to supply personal information straight away. However, in an interview the opposite may be the case, where questions about the respondent's family and occupation can be used as an icebreaker to establish a rapport (Babbie 2001: 249).

Furthermore, subjects should be grouped together, with the sequence of questions being logical. General questions about a topic should precede more specific ones because the answers tend to be more useful when the respondent has had the time to ponder general aspects first. Since respondents tend to lose interest rather quickly the type of questions and response categories should be alternated.

The above are general guidelines since the importance of the question order will vary from survey to survey. The only method to find out whether the questions and the format work is by *pretesting* the questionnaire either in part or full (Babbie 2001: 250-251). Although the pretest respondents need not be representative the questions must be relevant to them. Pretesting is essential since questionnaire designers tend to get too involved with the topic. Even after reading through the questionnaire several times for errors they may not pick up inconsistencies and ambiguities causing consternation among respondents.

In mitigation of all the things that can go wrong in designing a questionnaire, Sheatsley (1983: 223) stated that "at the end of every survey, the researcher is prepared to write a better questionnaire than the one sent into the field, but of course by then it is too late". However, the one main rule that all questionnaire designers should follow with regard to format is consistency, i.e. whatever the format, it should be used consistently (Salant and Dillman 1994: 117).

The discussion of the preliminary considerations of questionnaire design, question design, response

categories and the format of questionnaires has shown how the relevant information is obtained in survey research. The only aspect left for discussion is what to do with the information once it has been obtained, i.e. data analysis. Data analysis will therefore be the main focus of the following section.

3.3.2.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is one of the most exciting steps in the research process since it is during analysing the data “that we discover and substantiate patterns and relationships, test our expectations, and draw inferences that make our research fruitful” (Babbie 2001: 397). However, before data can be analysed it first has to be consolidated and quantified. Code categories will have to be identified, especially in the case of open-ended questions which result in nonnumerical responses. Like the attributes of a variable and the response categories in close-ended questions, code categories must be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Every coded piece of information should fit into one category only (Babbie 2001: 389).

Numerical coding, developing code categories and constructing a codebook are particularly important if the data is to be presented in machine-readable form. However, the relatively small sample and the limited number of questions in the survey on hand permit data processing without computer assistance. It is therefore not necessary to go into greater detail with regard to relevant computer programmes and rendering data machine-readable. Data analysis can therefore be dealt with next.

As has been mentioned in paragraph 3.3.1, the various research methods produce mainly quantitative or mainly qualitative data. Accordingly, one distinguishes between *quantitative* and *qualitative data analysis*. Quantitative data analysis refers “to the stage in the research process where the researcher, through the application of various statistical and mathematical techniques, focusses separately on specific variables in the data set” (Mouton 1996: 161). The researcher can either focus on one, two or multiple variables at a time, resulting in univariate, bivariate or multivariate analysis, respectively (Mouton 1996: 163 and Babbie 2001: 397-414). While the former is mainly descriptive the latter two are mainly explanatory.

Univariate analysis is often the first step in a more complex analytical process since by looking at one variable at the time the researcher summarises and organises the data obtained in a more comprehensible and accessible form. One of the formats to present univariate data is by listing how often the attributes of a variable were indicated by the respondents in a sample. This is called *frequency distribution* (Babbie 2001: 398). While the figures given in the frequency column in a table refer to the frequency distribution the figures given in the percentage column indicate the *percentage distribution* of scores on a variable (Mouton 1996: 164). Regarding percentages, Babbie (2001:397, 405-406) distinguishes between *percent* and *valid percent*. *Percent* is made up of all respondents including those who answered *don't know* or did not answer the questions. The *valid percent* excludes the *don't*

knows and those omitting the answer. Whether the percent or valid percent values are given will largely depend on whether it is important to know how many people omitted the question or did not have an opinion on the issue. In some instances, it may be useful to report both versions for readers to draw their own conclusions.

Apart from frequency and percentage distributions, data can also be presented in *averages* (central tendency). The three types of averages are the *arithmetic mean*, the *median* and the *mode*, which all “indicate various points of concentration in a set of values” (Mouton 1996: 164). Whereas the arithmetic mean is obtained by adding all the responses and dividing them by the number of respondents, the median represents the middle attribute in a distribution, with one half of the responses above and the other half below it. The mode, in turn, is the value or attribute occurring most frequently. The choice among mean, median or mode will depend on the type of data and the purpose of the analysis. When presenting mean values, for example, the researcher will have to bear in mind that they can be influenced by extreme values on the low and high end of the spectrum (Babbie 2001: 401).

One of the problems with presenting averages is that the original data cannot be reconstructed. This problem can be overcome to some extent by supplying summaries of dispersion, with dispersion referring “to the way values are distributed around some central value” (Babbie 2001: 401). For example, in addition to the average age of a sample the ages of the oldest and youngest member of the sample can be indicated. The most common measure of dispersion is the *standard deviation* which is “an index of the amount of variability in a set of data” (Babbie 2001: 402). If the standard deviation is high the values are very dispersed, i.e. far apart. In the case of low standard deviation, the values are rather close.

When presenting the data, the researcher will often be torn between the amount of detail needed and the manageability of the data. Since detail and manageability are often opposed objectives compromises must be continually sought. One compromise would be to present the data in different forms, e.g. the mean as well as the standard deviation. Moreover, the results given under the various categories may not always help to form a clear picture. In such cases, it might be useful to *collapse* categories, i.e. combine two or more categories into one (Babbie 2001: 404). For example, by combining the categories of *completely agree* and *generally agree* or *generally disagree* and *completely disagree* the data may become more accessible and thus make more sense to the reader.

Instead of dealing with the responses of the sample as a whole, as has been done so far, it may be of interest to look at various groups within the sample to identify similarities and differences among them. Although such *subgroup comparisons* (Babbie 2001: 403) - in the study on hand, for example, comparisons between the May, August and October/November ALTFCs - can be purely descriptive they are also comparative, as suggested by the name. Subgroup comparisons can already include two

variables, thus leading to bivariate analysis.

The difference between bivariate subgroup comparisons and bivariate analysis is that bivariate analyses have an “explanatory causal purpose” (Babbie 2001: 411) by concentrating on two variables and their relationship. Moreover, bivariate analysis would not make sense without subgroup comparisons. For example, a researcher might want to establish whether there is a link between *English capability* and *population group*, bearing in mind that only a small percentage of South Africans are mother-tongue English speakers. The results would probably not be very revealing if *South Africans* would be taken as population group without breaking *South Africans* further down into subgroups, such as Africans, Indians, Coloureds, Afrikaans-speaking whites, depending on the research purpose. In such a scenario, the population group forms the independent variable on which the *English capability* depends. According to Mouton (1996: 94), “an independent variable is the presumed cause of the dependent variable, which is the presumed effect”, i.e. regarding the above example it is presumed that the population group (independent variable) will influence a person’s English capability (dependent variable).

However, the English capability may not only depend on the population group but also on a person’s level of education or geographic location, e.g. rural or urban. Describing and explaining a dependent variable by two or more independent variables is called *multivariate analysis* (Babbie 2001: 412). As a result, the subgroup description is more detailed in multivariate than in bivariate analysis because the subgroups could be further divided for example, according to their level of education or geographic location.

Although social researchers seem to use multivariate analysis mostly since they want to explain the relationships among various variables simultaneously, the type of analysis used for the study at hand will be mainly univariate, i.e. descriptive. For the purposes of this study it is more important to describe the characteristics of students attending the ALTFCs to obtain a student profile than to establish, for example, a relationship between their level of education and command of English or that students with matric have a greater appreciation of translation theory than those without. Although the various responses to certain questions will be used to support each other where applicable, it will not be attempted to establish relationships among the variables.

Having dealt with the general aspects of social research and survey research in particular, it is now time to proceed to the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang*. In what follows, the operationalisation of the questionnaire to conduct the survey and the separate questions will be discussed.

3.3.3 Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang

The design of the questionnaire used to conduct the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang* (see Appendix C) largely follows the guidelines discussed in paragraphs 3.3.2 to 3.3.2.4. As a result, only deviations from the above guidelines and information specific to the survey on hand will be dealt with.

The questionnaire itself consists of the title page, the introduction, as well as parts I, II and III with the actual questions. The title page informs respondents for whom the survey is being conducted, i.e. the Directorate Language Services which forms part of the Human Resources Support Centre and the Department of Defence, and what the survey is about, namely the revision of the ALTFC at D Lang. For visual appeal, the title page also features the coat of arms of the South African National Defence Force.

The short introduction tells respondents that the survey is conducted for D Lang to learn more about their linguistic backgrounds and needs as well as their expectations, opinions and feelings regarding the course in order to revise the ALTFC and make the individual modules more relevant and student-friendly. Furthermore, respondents learn that the questionnaire is divided into three parts, with parts I and II being filled in while they are still at D Lang and part III being faxed to them seven to ten months after the return to their respective units. The introduction also stipulates that the information supplied in the questionnaire is strictly confidential. Although parts I and II are actually anonymous because respondents are not required to give their name this is not the case with part III. By faxing back part III, respondents could be easily identified. While this was of no consequence regarding the answers certain respondents gave, it was much easier to keep track of who had already returned the questionnaire and who not. When anonymity is guaranteed not even the researcher can link response to respondent. Confidentiality, in turn, guarantees that although the researcher could make public as to who said what, this will not be done (Babbie 2001: 472-473).

Even though in writing as the second page of the questionnaire, the introduction is also given orally by the trainer, who incidentally is the researcher. Since parts I and II of the questionnaire are completed in a classroom situation at the beginning and at the end of the ALTFC respectively, these parts are self-administered with the trainer present, who also deals with any questions concerning the questionnaire as they arise. Part III, however, is self-administered since it is faxed to the respondents seven to ten months after they finished the ALTFC. Since respondents would have been widely exposed to the workings of a questionnaire by the time they received part III, no serious problems were expected.

At this point, the respondents should perhaps be identified. The sample comprises the candidates

attending the three ALTFCs during the year 2000. Since the sample was spread over three courses it was considered to be representative of the candidates attending the ALTFC. Since the ALTFC-specific parts of the questionnaire (i.e. parts II and III) are completed at the end of the course no problems were anticipated regarding the respondents' capability to answer the questions. Moreover, respondents were expected to be willing to cooperate in the survey, especially while still at D Lang. However, there was some concern as to whether it would be possible to trace respondents seven to ten months after the return to their units and whether they would be willing to return the third part of the questionnaire. Being buried under their normal workload, completing a questionnaire may not be high on their priority list. Despite these concerns, a decision was taken to take the chance and see what was going to happen (see Chapter 4, par. 4.2.4).

Regarding the questionnaire format, the questions are numbered consecutively from Q1 to Q61 right through the three parts of the questionnaire. The questions themselves are typed in bold but additional instructions like *circle as many answers as applicable and number the answers chosen at the end of the item in order of priority, with 1 being the most important*, are in regular font style (light). All question types discussed in paragraph 3.3.2.2, i.e. open-ended questions, close-ended questions with ordered responses, close-ended questions with unordered responses and partially close-ended questions, were used. Contingency questions are clearly set apart by means of indentation but follow the same format as the other questions, with the actual question in bold and additional instructions in regular font style.

The response categories are printed in capitals with the font size decreased from 12 to 11. The answers are also numbered starting with 1. In the case of multiple answers, students are sometimes asked to rate their answer with one being the most important (see par. 3.3.2.3). Although it was expected that rating the answers may cause confusion among certain respondents it was felt that the detailed explanations given by the trainer before filling in the questionnaire and the assurance that respondents encountering problems should not hesitate to ask would resolve any problems that might occur. A middle or neutral answer was deliberately omitted since the objective was to commit respondents to a definite answer. Since respondents are familiar with the topic after having attended the ALTFC they should not find it difficult to express an opinion. The *Other (please specify)* option was sometimes included since with certain questions the number of response alternatives would have been too numerous to list. The response alternatives given in such cases were intended to guide respondents to the type of answer required.

Moreover, despite the fact that the possible response options should be listed underneath and not next to each other, this was not always followed. Especially with regard to the 11 official languages, it was felt that listing one official language per line would stretch the questionnaire item out of proportion and lead to an unnecessary waste of space. However, whenever response options were listed in two

columns next to each other clarity and a uncluttered layout were primary considerations.

Although the questionnaire was distributed among various language practitioners at D Lang for their opinion and comment the questionnaire was not actually pretested. Since the language practitioners at D Lang all have language-related degrees or several years of language-related experience they are not representative of the sample, which was not expected to contain any language experts. Moreover, none of the language practitioners had attended an ALTFC yet and could therefore not answer the ALTFC-specific questions. However, apart from the fact that it would have been extremely difficult to trace former ALTFC candidates who are spread all over the country and seem to change units quite regularly or leave the service of the DOD, it would have been too expensive to fax the 16-page questionnaire to about 10 former ALTFC candidates as a pretesting exercise. It was felt that with the trainer present in the classroom any uncertainties respondents might encounter in connection with the questionnaire could be dealt with immediately. Useful results were thus expected even without pretesting the questionnaire.

Having dealt with pretesting, the sample, administration and various formatting aspects of the questionnaire used in the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course*, the content and purpose of the individual questions in the three parts of the questionnaire will now be discussed in more detail. The three parts of the questionnaire will be addressed separately since their content largely differs.

3.3.3.1 Part I of the questionnaire

Part I of the questionnaire deals with the student profile, with the candidates being the unit of analysis. In a short introduction, candidates are informed that by answering the questions in this part D Lang will get a better understanding of the candidates attending the ALTFC with regard to schooling, language combinations and preferences, prior translation experience, etc. This will help D Lang to better anticipate the candidates' needs and expectations.

After the short introduction, there is an instruction on how respondents are to indicate the answer of their choice. For the purposes of this questionnaire, respondents are asked to circle the number of their answer to the various questions.

With the exception of questions Q9 and Q14, the questions in part I of the questionnaire are either language- or education-related. The language-related questions were posed first because applicants usually enjoy talking about their language prowess, be it with regard to the number of languages they speak or how well they speak them. These questions are therefore less sensitive than those regarding formal education and informal training where the gap among candidates could be considerable. Having completed the language-related questions, candidates are expected to be more relaxed and favourably

disposed towards the more sensitive education-related questions.

Regarding the language-related questions, Q1 to Q4 enquire about the language exposure of respondents. Q1 and Q2 with *What language did you first learn as a child?* and *What language do you mostly speak in your own family at home?* respectively, intend to establish whether candidates attending the ALTFC are compound or coordinate bilinguals, i.e. whether they learned second or third languages later in life or grew up multilingual (see Chapter 2, par. 2.3.3). Since many candidates claim to be fully bi- or multilingual it will be interesting to find out whether they do have a strong language or mother tongue (compound bilinguals). In the case of compound bilinguals one would expect candidates to have problems translating into the L2. Only coordinate bilinguals can be expected to be equally confident in the L1 and L2.

The purpose of Q3 and Q4 is to establish the respondents' language exposure at the workplace. Respondents will indicate which language they speak mostly to their colleagues and superiors. This will show whether respondents have to switch languages at their workplace. The register used at home tends to be more informal than the one used when speaking to a superior. Moreover, the language used at the workplace will be more subject- and field-specific and therefore more technical. If respondents have to switch to an L2 at their workplace this could mean that they are more up-to-date with the work-related vocabulary in their L2 than in their L1 or mother tongue. Translating work-related texts into their L1 could therefore cause vocabulary and stylistic problems normally not expected of mother-tongue speakers.

Q5 attempts to consolidate the answers to Q1 to Q4 by establishing in which language students feel most comfortable with regard to comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. Although this is a double-barrelled question, which should ideally be avoided (see par. 3.3.2.2), the idea is to determine whether students have a strong language with regard to the four main capabilities and not with regard to comprehension, speaking, reading and writing specifically. Although in Q1 to Q5 students have to indicate a specific language it is not the language itself that is important but the language continuity in their families and at the workplace, or the absence thereof as it may turn out. These questions will indicate, for example, whether students are still mostly exposed to the language they learned as a child, use in their family and at their workplace or whether the language they learned first as a child or use at their workplace differs from the language in which they are most comfortable.

Q6 enquires whether respondents prefer English or Afrikaans. Since English is the thread language in the DOD training takes place in English (see Chapter 1, par. 1.1.1.1). As a result, ALTFC candidates are asked to translate from their respective African language into English and from English into their respective African language. However, it is conceivable that candidates especially from certain parts of South Africa have been exposed to Afrikaans rather than English. This would put them at a

disadvantage with regard to tuition as well as the actual translation exercises.

Q7 and Q8 ask respondents to assess their command of English and Afrikaans in terms of speaking, reading and writing. With regard to each language capability respondents can choose *well*, *satisfactory* and *bad* as alternatives. Apart from confirming the language preference in Q6, with the command of the language preferred expected to be better unless the choice is politically motivated, it is important to know how respondents see their language capability. For example, if candidates feel that their English capability is lacking in certain areas additional English training will have to be supplied to remedy these shortcomings. In contrast, if the candidates' English capability is of a very high standard one might consider to reduce the English training in the *Language skills* module. Moreover, if students feel more comfortable in Afrikaans than in English this would have serious implications for the ALTFC from a practical (e.g. translation exercises) as well as thread-language point of view.

The responses to Q9 regarding the prior translation experience of ALTFC candidates will also have a serious impact on the ALTFC design. If there is a sufficient number of candidates with translation experience prior to attending the ALTFC trainers will be able to draw on their experience or point out problems that candidates may have encountered without being consciously aware of the nature of the problem. Moreover, they may have come up with their own strategies to overcome certain problems in translation and may be able to contribute to a lively discussion in class.

Q10 is a contingency question and only answered by those respondents who indicated prior translation experience in Q9. Q10 helps to identify the type of documents respondents mostly translate as part of their routine work, ranging from instructions, speeches, routine letters, daily orders and minutes, with respondents being able to add alternatives not covered by the above in the *Other (please specify)* option. This helps to identify practice-relevant documents for the translation exercises during the *Workshops* module.

Q11 and 12 deal with school and tertiary education. The level of education of ALTFC candidates is of course very important because it indicates what can be more or less expected of them. Candidates with matric, for example, have been exposed to language training, including English, to the highest school level and thus for several years. As a result one would expect their command of English to be quite good, even though not perfect. One would also expect them to be familiar with basic linguistic terminology, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs, that can be used to talk about language in a more abstract way. This cannot automatically be expected from candidates with fewer years of formal schooling or no formal schooling at all. Moreover, candidates with matric should have a fairly good general knowledge, which is indispensable in translation since it prevents translators from misinterpreting texts and making serious mistakes. *Knowledge of the world* can also help to speed up the translation process.

Apart from having been exposed to more technical and formal language, candidates with matric or some tertiary education should find it easier to study and familiarize themselves with more abstract concepts. The responses to the two questions on formal education will therefore influence to what extent students can be expected to motivate and discuss issues, as well as to what extent they can be left to work independently and produce their own solutions.

Q13 is about in-house training and asks candidates whether they have attended any other courses at D Lang. In this respect, the English courses that ALTFC candidates may have attended are of particular interest since it will convey an idea at which level candidates are regarding their command of English. Incidentally, apart from showing a candidate's interest in a new language African language courses attended by candidates at D Lang do not really contribute to a more accurate student profile since African language courses are only offered at the L2 and not L1 level. Ideally candidates should have completed the English beginners, intermediate and advanced courses before registering for the ALTFC. The ALTFC should be the second last course members or employees of the DOD attend at D Lang, with the African Language Interpreting Facilitation Course being last.

The last question of part I (Q14) enquires about why respondents attend the ALTFC. There was some speculation that the ALTFC was so popular because there was not enough work for candidates at their units and it was easy to register for because there were no special requirements for attending the course. Without unduly influencing the responses, the idea was that respondents would give all the right answers, such as an interest in translation, wanting to learn more about translation, having to translate without any prior training, etc., in the *Other (please specify)* category. This question is also expected to supply information on whether candidates are serious about translation or whether translation is one among their many interests.

The responses to the above questions are expected to sketch a clearer picture of the type of candidate attending the ALTFC with regard to language preference, education, prior translation experience and the motivation for choosing the course. In what follows, i.e. parts II and III of the questionnaire, respondents are to express their opinion on the various ALTFC modules.

3.3.3.2 Part II of the questionnaire

Part II of the questionnaire is the actual course evaluation. It also starts with a brief introduction informing respondents that by answering the questions in this part they will be given the opportunity to voice their opinion on individual course modules with regard to relevance, comprehensibility and presentation. This will help to identify problem areas regarding the *Introduction to translation*, *Language strategies*, *Translation aids*, *Language skills*, and *Workshops* modules and result in a modification of the ALTFC and course material, where necessary. Respondents are reminded that they

have to indicate their choice by circling the number of their answer.

The first module to be evaluated is *Introduction to translation* (see par. 3.2.1). Since it is the most theoretical of the five modules there has been some uncertainty as to whether the objectives of the module can be achieved despite the complex nature of the material presented. Q15 to Q18 deal with the quotes section (see par. 3.2.1.2), which, although believed to be of interest to ALTFC candidates because of providing them with a wider view of translation, is not absolutely necessary to translating as such. Q15 and Q16 therefore enquire about the usefulness of the section by asking respondents whether the discussion of the quotes has helped them to understand more complex linguistic concepts (e.g. pragmatic versus semantic meaning) and whether it has given them a better understanding of what translation is about. The answers to the Q15 and Q16 should be reflected in Q17, where respondents can indicate whether they would like the quotes section to remain part of the *Introduction to translation* module or not. Q18 is a contingency question and only answered by those respondents who feel that said section should not remain part of the module. It will give clues as to why respondents feel negative about the quotes section by offering various alternatives, such as *too theoretical, incomprehensible, boring, Other (please specify)*.

Q19 to Q21 deal with text analysis and ask respondents whether text analysis can help in preparing a translation task, whether text analysis, especially according to Nord, can give them the necessary confidence to change a text in terms of the translation brief and whether the section on text analysis has given them a better understanding of how different types of texts are written. This section is not optional since a basic form of text analysis is indispensable for approaching a text with a view to translation. However, predominantly negative answers to the three questions would have to result in a modified and altered presentation of the material.

Apart from their purpose expounded above, Q14 to Q21 should show that more complex concepts can be explained at a more basic level in order to make sense to non-linguists at the level of the ALTFC. Moreover, not only should those concepts be understood but also found useful and relevant with regard to specific translation tasks.

The format of the question on whether the presentation of the *Introduction to translation* module can be improved (Q22) is copied when enquiring about the presentation of the *Translation strategies* (Q27), *Language skills* (Q31) and *Translation skills* modules (Q36). Respondents can indicate either *no*, the presentation of the respective module cannot be improved, or *yes*, the presentation can be improved. Those who indicate that the presentation can be improved will go on to contingency questions Q23, Q28, Q32 and Q37 respectively, to indicate what type of improvement they would like to see implemented. The alternatives listed include *more examples, more repetition, less repetition, more teacher enthusiasm, more student involvement* and *Other (please specify)*. The responses to these

questions should signal ALTFC trainers either that their presentations are still on track or that a certain routine has settled in and presentations have become uninspiring. They should also indicate whether respondents feel overtaxed or rather bored during the presentation of a module.

Q24 to Q26 deal with some of the objectives of the *Translation strategies* module (see par. 3.2.2). They are intended to supply information on whether the section on translation strategies has sensitised respondents to the fact that lexical and grammatical categories may differ across languages, as well as on whether respondents have become more conscious of possible ways to overcome non-equivalence at word level and above word level. The response categories to all three questions are *very much so*, *to some extent*, *not really* and *not at all*. An awareness of non-equivalence at various levels between languages cannot be expected from non-linguists but is essential knowledge for aspiring translation facilitators to prevent them from translating word for word and thus unidiomatic. Moreover, translation strategies to overcome non-equivalence between languages move translators from an intuitive to an informed decision-making process since they can reason why they are doing what they are doing. In the case of predominantly negative answers to the questions in this section, different ways and means would have to be designed to get these concepts across in a more effective way.

Q29 concerns the *Language skills* module (see par. 3.2.4) and enquires of respondents whether *too much time*, *adequate time* or *too little time* is spent on language tuition during the ALTFC. Those respondents indicating that too little time is spent on language tuition are also asked to answer contingency question Q30 as to which areas they would like to receive more attention. The alternatives given are *grammar*, *vocabulary*, *idioms and fixed expressions* and *style*, with an *Other (please specify)* category for alternatives not mentioned. Respondents are asked to circle as many answers as applicable and number the answers chosen at the end of the item in order of priority, with 1 being the most important. This is to help identify the most important problem areas with regard to the respondents' language deficits, especially regarding English. Although ALTFC candidates are supposed to have a fair command of English there have been indications that this may not be the case.

Q33 to Q37 deal with the *Translation aids* module (see par. 3.2.3). Q33 asks respondents whether as a result of the *Translation aids* module they will be more critical with regard to the dictionaries they use (especially monolingual English dictionaries). This critical awareness is supposed to include the type of information they can expect to find in different dictionaries as well as the publishing date, with outdated dictionaries being avoided if at all possible.

Q34 enquires whether the guided tours of the libraries have increased the respondents' awareness about the type of information they can get there. Although students generally seem to enjoy the outings, especially the guided tour of the community library may be superfluous since most of the students may have been to one and know how they work and what information to expect.

Since *Translation aids* is the shortest of the five modules and many areas can only be briefly touched upon Q35 asks respondents which area of the *Translation aids* module should, in their opinion, receive more attention. Respondents are encouraged to circle as many answers as applicable and rate them, with 1 being the most important. The first response option *none* will indicate that the respondent is happy with the amount of time spent on the various translation aids and does not feel that this module needs more attention. Those respondents who think that translation aids should be dealt with in more detail can circle options such as *parts of the dictionary*, *types of dictionaries*, *computers*, *institutions*, *compiling word lists*, and supply their own suggestions in the *Other (please specify)* category. The alternatives supplied are not exhaustive since there would be far too many to list but it is hoped that they will lead students to think of the required type of answers, which they will list under *Other (please specify)*. Q36 and Q37 concern the presentation of the *Translation aids* module, whose general format was discussed earlier in this section.

All that has been learned in the above four, more theoretical modules, is to be applied during the *Workshops* module. This is why the first question dealing with the workshops (Q38) asks respondents whether they would agree that during the workshops the practical application of more theoretical concepts (e.g. text analysis, translation strategies, etc.) has been sufficiently demonstrated. The responses to this question will be rather important since respondents should be aware at the end of the ALTFC that the theoretical concepts they have been exposed to are not a thing apart but should guide them in their translation-related decisions. The place to show candidates that there is a link between theory and practice is therefore during the workshops where students encounter various problems in their texts.

Since it is notoriously difficult to get the same or similar texts in the official languages Q39 is important in that it asks whether respondents think that the texts translated during the workshops are relevant to their translation environment. Those respondents indicating *no*, i.e. that the texts translated during the workshops are not relevant to their working environment, are requested to also answer contingency question Q40. They are asked to indicate which type of texts would be more adequate in their opinion by circling as many answers as applicable and numbering the answers chosen at the end of the item in order of priority, with 1 being the most important text type. The alternatives include *legal*, *technical* and *medical* texts, *speeches*, *routine letters*, *minutes*, as well as *Other (please specify)* to accommodate any text types not mentioned in the list.

The question on whether the presentation of the workshops could be improved (Q41) follows the same pattern as those enquiring about possible improvements to the other modules. However, the answers to the contingency question as to in which areas the presentation could be improved (Q42) differ because during the workshops no new knowledge is imparted (at least not in a structured way) but candidates report about their practical work, with the trainer asking relevant questions and guiding

answers. The structured responses included *texts should be dealt with in more detail*, *texts should be dealt with in less detail* and *presentation should be more structured*. Ideally, respondents will make extensive use of the *Other (please specify)* category and give valuable pointers to make the workshops more student-friendly and relevant.

Having dealt with the questions concerning the various modules, the remaining questions of part II of the questionnaire are about the ALTFC in general. Q43 enquires about the ideal length of the course. At currently four weeks, there were complaints that the ALTFC is too long, candidates miss their families and as a result lose interest in the course. In contrast, trainers feel that the course should rather be longer since they already struggle to accommodate the necessary material. The responses to this question are expected to give a more coherent picture as to how long ALTFC candidates think they can endure.

Q44 and Q45 are language-related and ask whether the ALTFC has heightened the respondents' awareness of how language works and helped them to improve their overall language capabilities. Having worked intensely for over four weeks with texts and language(s) as such, candidates should be more *language conscious* and have benefited at least from a vocabulary and idiomatic point of view. Positive responses to these questions will indicate that irrespective of whether ALTFC candidates will perform translation tasks once back at their unit they have learned something for life because most communication, be it intra- or interlingual, will make use of language. They may not only communicate more efficiently but will to some extent also be able to reflect on communicative acts.

Q46 and Q47 are translation-related. Respondents have to indicate whether the ALTFC has prepared them to tackle the translation tasks at their unit in a more professional as well as confident manner. Supposedly knowing more about translation than at the beginning of the ALTFC, candidates should be aware of what can or cannot be expected of them when presented with a translation task. Moreover, they have been equipped with guidelines on how to approach a text and strategies to overcome translation problems. All this should make them more confident as well as more professional. However, at times a little knowledge can be more confusing than no knowledge at all. With the response categories ranging from *very much so*, *to some extent*, *not really* to *not at all*, the responses to these two questions will shed light on whether the ALTFC has succeeded in producing more professional and confident translation facilitators for the DOD or failed, as it may turn out.

Q48 and Q49 differ from all the questions discussed so far in that they are open-ended (see par. 3.3.2.2). Candidates are given the opportunity to comment in their own words on the various modules of the ALTFC, as well as on the ALTFC as a whole. They can concentrate on aspects not covered by the questionnaire and give expression to their appreciation or frustration as the case may be. Depending on the nature of the responses, they may be either quantified and presented statistically or used

individually to support findings produced by the structured questions.

The responses to the questions in part II of the questionnaire should provide valuable pointers as to the shortcomings of the ALTFC. Although possible problem areas have already been identified by the trainers, ALTFC candidates may perceive these problem areas differently. Moreover, it cannot be substantiated whether the various complaints by candidates over the years were just individual complaints or of a more general nature. The responses will form the empirical basis for the resulting modifications. Many of the findings in this part of the questionnaire should be corroborated by the responses to the questions in part III, which will be discussed next.

3.3.3.3 Part III of the questionnaire

Part III of the questionnaire is the post-course evaluation and was faxed to respondents seven to ten months after completing the ALTFC. In the short introduction, respondents are informed that the answers to the questions asked here will help to establish whether respondents have performed translation tasks at their unit after returning from the ALTFC and whether, with hindsight, the material presented during the course is relevant to their working environment. In answering questions, respondents are again instructed to circle the number of their answer.

The first question of part III of the questionnaire (Q50) is the most important question of this section. It will supply information on whether respondents actually go back to their units and perform routine translation tasks, which is the idea behind presenting the ALTFC. Moreover, Q50 will reveal whether all those translation facilitators trained at D Lang are really needed, which may influence the number of ALTFCs presented. Respondents who indicate *yes*, i.e. that they have translated since their return, will also complete contingency questions Q51 to Q57, which are all based on the respondents' translation experience. Those with no translation experience since their return skip to Q58.

Q51 enquires about how often respondents have translated, with the alternatives being *very often*, *often*, *every now and again* and *hardly ever*. The categories are kept fairly broad because it is not necessary to know exactly how many times respondents translated but rather get a general idea. The question also helps to establish the need for translation facilitators at the units.

Q52 continues to ask what type of documents they have mostly translated with as many answers as applicable being circled and rated (1 indicating the most important answer). The responses to this question will help to choose relevant texts for the workshops. Although this question and Q9 of part I are very similar it is expected that more respondents will answer Q52 since they have had time to gain translation experience since leaving the ALTFC.

Q53 to Q57 are again about the usefulness of the ALTFC. Q53 is more general by asking respondents whether they feel that the material presented in the ALTFC is relevant to their working environment. Q54 is more specific by establishing which aspects of the course respondents have found most useful, i.e. *theory, workshops, text analysis, translation strategies, text-type exercises, English tuition, African language tuition, Other (please specify)*. By circling as many answers as applicable and numbering the answers chosen at the end of the item in order of priority, with 1 being the most important, an attempt will be made to establish a correlation with the rated responses to Q55, which asks why respondents find the particular aspect(s) most useful. The responses to Q55 include *created linguistic awareness, created awareness of non-linguistic problems, helps me to find relevant information, improved my English proficiency, gave me practical advice on how to tackle translation tasks, confidence booster and Other (please specify)*. Q54 and Q55 are to help narrowing down the most helpful parts of the ALTFC and the resulting benefits.

Q56 is similar to Q47 in that it enquires whether the ALTFC has given respondents guidelines to translate more confidently. However, Q56 will be hopefully answered with the benefit of experience. Moreover, it is important to find out whether the ALTFC has boosted the candidates' confidence since there seems to be a link between a translator's confidence and professionalism (Fraser 1996: 129-132).

Q57 is the last contingency question and is to establish how the ALTFC could be improved with respondents bearing their recent translation experience in mind. Respondents are again asked to rate their answers, with 1 being the most important. *Less theory, more practice, more text analysis, more terminology exercises, more emphasis on text types, more English tuition, proper African language tuition and Other (please specify)* are given as alternatives. This question is complementary to the specific questions on the various modules as well as the open-ended questions (Q48 and Q49) of part II. It will also help to see whether there is at least some consistency in the respondents' answers.

Questions Q58 to Q61 are again answered by all respondents irrespective of their translation experience. One of the reasons why ALTFC candidates have not been utilised for translation tasks could be based on the fact that people at their units do not know that candidates are available for routine translation tasks. As a result, Q58 enquires whether people at the units are aware of their availability, with respondents indicating *yes, I don't know* and *no*. Advertising their newly acquired skills would probably increase the number of candidates translating.

While the ALTFC is obviously supposed to benefit DOD members and employees with regard to translation facilitation one would hope that even those who do not go back and translate have benefited from a linguistic point of view. Q59 therefore enquires whether in retrospect respondents still feel that the ALTFC has improved their overall language capabilities by offering *very much so, to some extent,*

not really and *not at all* as response alternatives.

Since the duration of the ALTFC seems rather controversial among ALTFC candidates as well as trainers the question about what respondents would consider the right duration of the course was again included (Q60). Compared with those in Q43, the response categories in Q60 are extended and include in addition to *4 weeks* and *6 weeks*, *twice for 3 weeks* and *twice for 4 weeks*. It will be interesting to see whether the answers given in Q60 will confirm those given in Q43.

Q61 is the last question of the questionnaire and open-ended. It encourages respondents to comment in their own words on the ALTFC and their experience as translation facilitators. By answering in their own words, respondents are expected to supply new angles and suggestions or support the structured answers of the three parts of the questionnaire. Moreover, the comments on their experience as translation facilitators may help to identify new problem areas that could also be addressed in future ALTFCs.

3.4 Conclusion

In the course of this chapter, the unit of analysis, i.e. ALTFC and its modules, was described in some detail. Moreover, in order to address the main aim and the second secondary aim of this study survey research was identified as the most useful research method. Since a number of issues have to be addressed with regard to the ALTFC and the data obtained from the sample must be representative of ALTFC candidates as a whole a standardised questionnaire was considered to be the best research tool. A large part of this chapter therefore deals with the operationalisation of questionnaires, such as selecting the sample, questionnaire administration, detail of information (indicators and dimensions), question design, response categories and the questionnaire format. After pointing out the characteristics of a good questionnaire, the various types of data analysis (qualitative, quantitative, uni-, bi- and multivariate) were examined.

Once questionnaires had been discussed in general, attention focussed on the questionnaire for the *Survey for the revision of the African language translation facilitation course at D Lang*. Firstly, the context in which the survey takes place was outlined and secondly, the three parts of the questionnaire with the respective questions and their purpose discussed. The emphasis of the questions was on the student profile (language- and education-related) and the ALTFC candidates' opinion on various aspects of the five ALTFC modules.

The above questionnaire was filled in by the candidates attending the three ALTFCs in 2000. The data thus obtained and their interpretation will be provided in the next chapter.