

End of Chapter Exercises – Chapter 5

1. John Le Carré's novel *The Russia House* opens with the following three paragraphs (1989:17–18):

In a broad Moscow street not two hundred yards from the Leningrad station, on the upper floor of an ornate and hideous hotel built by Stalin in the style known to Muscovites as Empire During the Plague, the British Council's first ever audio fair for the teaching of the Eng-lish language and the spread of British culture was grinding to its excruciating end. The time was half past five, the summer weather erratic. After fierce rain show-ers all day long, a false sunlight was blazing in the pud-dles and raising vapours from the pavements. Of the passers-by, the younger ones wore jeans and sneakers, but their elders were still huddled in their warms.

The room the Council had rented was not expensive but neither was it appropriate to the occasion. I have seen it – Not long ago, in Moscow on quite another mis-sion, I tiptoed up the great empty staircase and, with a diplomatic passport in my pocket, stood in the eternal dusk that shrouds old ballrooms when they are asleep – With its plump brown pillars and gilded mirrors, it was better suited to the last hours of a sinking liner than the launch of a great initiative. On the ceiling, snarling Rus-sians in proletarian caps shook their fists at Lenin. Their vigour contrasted unhelpfully with the chipped green racks of sound cassettes along the walls, featuring *Win-nie-the-Pooh* and *Advanced Computer English in Three Hours*. The sack-cloth sound-booths, locally procured and lacking many of their promised features, had the sadness of deck chairs on a rainy beach. The exhibitors' stands, crammed under the shadow of an overhanging gallery, seemed as blasphemous as betting shops in a tabernacle.

Nevertheless a fair of sorts had taken place. People had come, as Moscow people do, provided they have the documents and status to satisfy the hard-eyed boys in leather jackets at the door. Out of politeness. Out of curiosity. To talk to Westerners. Because it is there. And now on the fifth and final evening the great farewell cocktail party of exhibitors and invited guests was getting into its stride. A handful of the small *nomenclatura* of the Soviet cultural bureaucracy was gathering under the chandelier, the ladies in their beehive hairstyles and flowered frocks designed for slenderer frames, the gen-tlemen slimmed by the shiny French-tailored suits that signified access to the special clothing stores. Only their British hosts, in despondent shades of grey, observed the monotone of socialist austerity. The hubbub rose, a brigade of pinafores governesses distributed the curling salami sandwiches and warm white wine. A senior Brit-ish diplomat who was not quite the Ambassador shook the better hands and said he was delighted.

Imagine that you have been asked to translate Le Carré's novel into your target language. You have not yet read the whole novel – and you would normally read a text all the way through before you seriously get down to translating it. However, you decide that it might be helpful to 'warm up' to Le Carré by translating a few extracts to get the hang of his un-usual style.

Translate the above extract into your target language and comment on any difficulties involved in maintaining the flow of information in terms of thematic and information structures. You should pay particular attention to marked information structures in the third paragraph. How does Le Carré's manipulation of English syntax foreground certain items of in-formation? Can this be successfully conveyed in your target language?

2. The following extract is from Swee Chai Ang, *From Beirut to Jerusalem: A Woman Surgeon with the Palestinians* (1989:299–300). This book gives a first-hand account of death and suffering in Palestinian refugee camps in war-torn Beirut in the 1980s. Ms Ang, a surgeon, volunteered to provide medical assistance to Palestinians and was with them during the Israeli invasion of West Beirut in 1982. She also lived through the appalling 1982 massacres in the Sabra and Shatila camps. Since then, she has re-turned repeatedly to Lebanon and the Occupied Territories to help Palestinians.

Israeli bomber planes were breaking the sound barrier in south Lebanon. Villages in the south, as well as the Palestinian refugee camps, were attacked. In May 1988, two thousand Israeli troops crossed into southern Lebanon. People in Lebanon told me: 'The Israelis failed to stifle the uprising in the occupied territories, so they take it out on us by threatening to invade Lebanon again.'

It was a multi-pronged attack on the Palestinians in Lebanon. Saida and the south were bombed by Israeli aeroplanes, and shelled from the sea by Israeli gun-boats. The Beirut camps were attacked from the mountains, not by the Israelis, but by anti-PLO forces. Shatila and Bourj el-Brajneh were shelled incessantly from the month of May 1988. Both camps were flattened; homes and hospitals demolished.

Shatila finally collapsed on 27 June 1988, followed by Bourj el-Brajneh a few days later. I got the news of the fall of Shatila in London, having just returned from a fund-raising trip in the Gulf countries. People all over the Gulf wanted to support the uprising and build hospitals and clinics to mend the wounds of the Palestinians. What can I say? Each time I think of Shatila, I still cry. It was nearly six years since I first met the people of Sabra and Shatila. My understanding of the Palestinians began with them. It was they who taught a naive woman surgeon the meaning of justice. It was they who inspired me to struggle incessantly for a better world. Each time I felt like giving up, they would strengthen me with their example. (Swee Chai Ang 1989:299–300)

Los aviones bombarderos israelíes atravesaban la barrera del sonido en Líbano. Tanto las aldeas del sur como los campos de refugiados palestinos estaban siendo atacados. En mayo de 1988 dos mil tropas israelíes entraron en el sur de Líbano. Los libaneses me decían: "Los israelíes no han podido aplacar las revueltas en los territorios ocupados, y por eso nos atacan a nosotros, amenazando con invadir el Líbano otra vez".

El ataque israelí tuvo dos frentes principales: Saida y el sur fueron atacados desde el aire por aviones israelíes y bombardeados desde el mar desde lanchas cañoneras. Los campos de Beirut los atacaron desde las montañas, no los israelíes, sino las fuerzas anti-liberación palestina. Shatila y Bourj-el-Brajneh fueron bombardeados sistemáticamente desde Mayo del 1988. Ambos campos de refugiados quedaron completamente arrasados, sus casas y hospitales destruidos.

Shatila cayó el 27 de Junio de 1988, seguida por Bourj-el-Brajneh unos días más tarde. Cuando escuché la noticia yo estaba en Londres, recién llegada de un viaje por los países del Golfo para recaudar fondos. Conocí a tantísima gente en los países del Golfo dispuesta a apoyar la revuelta y a construir hospitales y ambulatorios para ayudar a curar la herida palestina. ¿Qué puedo decir? Cada vez

que pienso en Shatila, aún lloro. Hacía ya casi seis años desde que había conocido a la gente de Sabra y Shatila. Yo conocía al pueblo palestino a través de ellos. Ellos fueron quienes me enseñaron qué significa la justicia cuando no era más que una cirujana más bien ilusa. Ellos fueron los que me inspiraron a luchar incesantemente por un mundo mejor. Siempre que pensé en rendirme, ellos me ayudaban a seguir luchando, a través de su ejemplo.