

Proceedings of the “Synergise!” Biennial  
National Conference of the Australian Institute  
of Interpreters and Translators



Proceedings of the “Synergise!” Biennial  
National Conference of the Australian Institute  
of Interpreters and Translators:  
AUSIT 2010

Edited by

Annamaria Arnall and Uldis Ozolins

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**  

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

Proceedings of the “Synergise!”  
Biennial National Conference of the Australian Institute  
of Interpreters and Translators: AUSIT 2010,  
Edited by Annamaria Arnall and Uldis Ozolins

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# INTRODUCTION

## LINKING TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING PRACTICE TO RESEARCH, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONALISATION

DR. ULDIS OZOLINS<sup>1</sup>

Over the past 30 years Australian innovations and publications in Translating and Interpreting have gained in stature and have in many ways become pathbreaking for different branches of the T&I profession around the world.

Australia's expertise shows not so much in the well-established areas of technical translation and conference interpreting (which for many in the past, particularly in Europe, was virtually all there was to the T&I field), but in development of all forms of T&I outside the conference hall and technical translation: in community translation, in T&I pedagogy, in the development of language services, in national accreditation and standards, and in innovation in T&I practice. All of these are areas now being developed, to varying degrees, in many other countries as the realities of multilingual populations and new communication and justice demands become widespread.

The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) is the national professional body, run almost entirely by volunteer practitioners who juggle their own professional practice with the desire to improve practice and conditions in the T&I field and to bring the advantages of professionalisation to a field still often characterised by amateurism and ad hocery.

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The AUSIT biennial conference importantly brings together practitioners, academics, language service providers and policy makers. The hallmark of the conference is an ability to balance academic interest with professional reality; balance research with detailed practice; and balance theory with the exigencies of translators' and interpreters' lives. This range of T&I activities is exemplified in these Proceedings from 2010 of the aptly named *Synergise!* conference held in Perth, Western Australia, with several papers on literary translation, new ideas in technology, genocide trial interpreting, gender issues in translation, indigenous interpreting, and "transcreation" explained. Continuing issue of refugee interpreting are looked at from the New Zealand experience, and hometown WAITI, the Western Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters, gives a detailed account of new competency-based approaches to T&I training.

This diversity attests to the very varied working lives of individual translators and interpreters, and their ability to turn such varied paths into professional careers. Despite the often justified complaints about the tenuous and poorly-paid situation of T&I practitioners generally, it is imperative to recognise and support those who are creative in their work, positive in their outlook and highly motivated to bring about improvements in the skills and social standing of the profession. The papers in this collection will speak to many other similar T&I situations and issues globally.

## **Crossing cultures**

For those attending *Synergise!*, the outstanding moment came when Frank Palmos gave his moving account of translating Bao Ninh's now classic novel *The Sorrow of War*. Written clandestinely by a north Vietnamese war veteran and circulated equally clandestinely in typescript form, gaining a reputation far beyond its own country, the text was, due to political exigencies, translated and published in the West before it was openly published in Vietnam – 13 years before! - a significant instance in this case of international attention leading eventually, if slowly, to publishing locally. At the conference Palmos read several extracts from his translation, included here, highlighting the intensely emotional and personal accounts Bao Ninh was able to convey, this from a war where the (North) Vietnamese had only allowed publication of heroic victory rhetoric and associated propaganda. Bao Ninh's work, sometimes compared to Remarque's classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*, is a remarkable work from both writer and translator.

Literary translation was also the focus of Afeif Ismail and Vivienne Glance's "Transcreation and the productive artist". Sudanese poet Ismail had been only 9 months in Australia when he teamed up with writer Glance in 2004 to bring his work to a broader community. A persistent problem for those publishing in less widely diffused languages is the lack of good translators into a more widely used language such as English; post-colonial translation theories stress the importance of such translation to counter the massive imbalance of translation from English.

The authors define transcreation as "an artistic reworking of a literal translation – it is a term created through conversations with writers from many cultures to distinguish it from a literal translation", and presents a specific methodology to allow newly arrived migrant writers "to maintain their artistic practice within a short space of time after arriving in Australia." And they describe this collaborative process in detail, from the initial work by Ismail, then a rough translation, then intense discussion and rewriting

using a wide range of communication tools from interpretation, translation, body language, insight, mime, dictionaries, a thesaurus, even drawings, to approach the depths of the original work [...] The main result of their transcreation work is that the resonances of the original works are still vibrant.

Anna Herbst also tackles the issue of culture in translation in her "Doesn't everybody know how to say Please? On communicating across cultures without static interference". She draws an analogy between her abode on a Melbourne mountainside where interference with TV signals stops her enjoying her favourite channels, and the position of a translator dealing with the static interference of texts that are redolent of source-text culture much of which may not be understandable or easily explicable to a target readership. This ranges from evocations of the feeling of a particular kind of forest or desert or other environmental milieu, to the non-availability of a direct translation of "please" in some Scandinavian languages.

Claiming that "the target may in many respects be more important than the source" she describes how

it becomes the task of the translator to carefully model a message that will reach the target in a form that not only carries the original meaning but which has also been cleared of the static interference, and with that I mean

the cultural phenomena that have different connotations to the target audience.

Ping Yang explicitly addresses the issue of culture from a lexicological focus, by comparing in his case the difference between the degree of neutrality or judgmentalism and markedness conveyed in many English and Chinese words: items such as "ambition" or "kill" he finds will often be treated more neutrally in English while they will carry strong positive or negative weight in Chinese, so that alternative strategies of conveying more neutral concepts need to be employed.

John Jamieson from New Zealand links lexical to stylistic issues and changes in English language discourse that present translators with particular difficulties. In his "Hidden narratives in non-fiction texts" he notes that translations into English often sound awkward as their stiffness represents an English of a bygone era; in English increasingly a *conversational* style of writing, trying to engage the readers as "you" and "we" has become very widespread, even in bureaucratic or technical texts, and there is a retreat from two other styles he identifies – *lecture* and *sermon*, widely employed in other cultures.

In his other article "Sweating the small stuff - the translator's lot", Jamieson gives numerous examples where seemingly the direct and most obvious translation fails to convey the mood of the writer or capture their style, particularly in closely related languages such as French and English. The antidote? He suggests:

a better approach is to work not just from the words, but from the intention and function of the phrase [...] finding a path from word to idea by a kind of "micro analysis", which works fine as long as words are treated with the disrespect they deserve.

For Jamieson, the translator's task is to get away from the tyranny of words as much as possible, and even for pragmatic texts the guiding principle should be "so how am I going to tell that story?"

And yet words are important! Thanh Ngo in "Meaning loss in translation: the what, why, and how. A case of Vietnamese-English translation" outlines the extraordinary difficulty of rendering the spectrum of Vietnamese honorifics – all translated or mistranslated in English as "you"! The very fine gradations of terms of respect, distance and familiarity, which occur in many languages besides Vietnamese, pose

significant problems where a variety of compensation strategies must be used or significant translation loss results.

And just as honorific markings are necessary in some languages, gender markings are also often highly salient. In the Japanese case, Kyoko Kawasaki's "Gender and ethnic stereotype seen in translated speech: a case study in Japanese speech style and sentence final particles used in translations" shows the difficulties of translating into Japanese where gender clues in English are either non-existent or ambiguous, forcing Japanese translators into continual decision-making on gender marking, often resorting to stereotypes, (occupations, gender role, social activities) to convey material not present in the English source text, leading to translators wittingly or unwittingly reinforcing stereotypes.

### **Training and pedagogy**

Several papers deal with pedagogic issues. Three related papers from the Western Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters (WAITI), that state's T&I professional body look at the attempt to bring about a competency-based approach to T&I education, to replace pedagogies that often had unclear or quite arbitrary rationales. The attempt to specify the competencies and skills required for various kinds of T&I work has been an exhausting and surprisingly difficult one in Australia, but the push to competencies is an educational response to the fact that accreditation offered by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) could be obtained by individuals through a once-off test often with no training at all. Western Australia also used the notion of competence in its 2008 Language Services Policy introduced by the State government, where "for the first time ever, qualifications through training or education are recognised as equally valid as a NAATI accreditation credential".

Meanwhile, Silvana Pavlovska details the importance of training to language service providers, particularly for legal contexts where practitioners seldom have any systematic training and often lack crucial understandings of legal process.

Marc Orlando in "Beyond pen and paper: Note-taking training and digital technology" looks at the potential for T&I education of the new technology of digital pens, which allow monitoring of note-taking in consecutive interpreting and which may be the first significant

breakthrough in giving students a realistic assessment of how their note-taking contributes to – or detracts from – their performance in this notoriously difficult area of interpreting. The pens can be synchronised with oral input and output and on digital paper can give an exact record of links between note-taking and interpreting efforts.

## **Legal translating and interpreting**

In a paper that brings considerable innovative thought, and indeed an important paradigm shift to consideration of court interpreting, law professor and legal activist Daniel Stepniak argues a broader rationale for court interpreting than usually has been heard, where the focus has been on making an accused linguistically present in the proceedings:

That language barriers prevent many participants, observers and interested members of the community from being able to follow and reach informed opinions on the administration of justice presents an almost totally overlooked rationale for the participation of interpreters (and translators) in legal proceedings.

Stepniak wants an "open justice" that can inspire "confidence of the public", and argues for a series of policy shifts to bring this about including providing simultaneous interpreting for all court participants, the appointment of in-house court interpreters to build expertise, publication on the law in other languages and "mandatory awareness and skill training" for legal personnel. And for interpreters this will require

a reconsideration of their current role through greater emphasis on simultaneous interpreting of all that is said in court rather than the current emphasis on consecutive interpreting of communication directly involving their clients.

The distance to go to such a situation is starkly illustrated in a paper on South African court interpreting by Sam Erevbenagie Usadolo and Ernst Kotzé, who examine the role of legal interpreters in the many languages of foreign workers who pour into South Africa and run into trouble with the law. While South Africa has significant problems in establishing effective language services in its 11 official languages, 9 of them indigenous African language, the languages of foreign workers present extra challenges. Interpreters are hired without training, briefing is negligible, and the practitioners themselves have little regard for impartiality or understanding conflict of interest, often displaying tribal loyalties to the

accused they interpret for. A baseline of professional standards is needed, but the authors see this is a wider problem in an overstretched justice system which would benefit from even elementary moves such as recording proceedings or giving guidance on ethics – until such moves are made, the standard of court interpreting remains a "wicked problem" for the South African justice system.

Rocco Loiacono in an paper as entertaining as it is worrying shows why – paralleling the South African case – nobody cares much about good translation in a particular legal setting. Loiacono looks at Italian-Australian bilateral agreements covering a range of legal, financial, social security and cultural issues and the strange language that can be seen in them. Calques, false friends, awkward equivalents and obvious source text interference issues (in both directions!) abound. Loiacono surmises that

it does not appear to matter if the text of the Agreements is easily understood by either the Italian speaking or English speaking public at large. What appears to be of paramount importance is that each language “version” does not induce different interpretations, guaranteeing [...] concordance between each language “version”. This has an impact on the terminology selected, and thus the translation strategy adopted.

Demonstrating an easy overturning of all hitherto translation theory, the translations

do not appear to have been prepared with a particular audience in mind, but purely to be understood, as is the case with most legal documents, by “those in the know”.

## **Interpreting practice in critical circumstances**

The often dramatic and life-changing sharp end of interpreting practice is presented in three further papers.

It is some relief to see that, for once, Australian indigenous interpreting has a better basis than at least the overseas comparison with South African court interpreting. Colleen Rosas and Josephine Guy from the Aboriginal Interpreter Service in Australia’s Northern Territory describe the considerable moves that have been made in language services in indigenous languages over the past decade, ironically as part of a much-criticised more active intervention program by the Australian federal government into indigenous communities. While significant gaps remain in service

provision, there is increased facility now for some training, and indigenous languages are part of the accreditation system administered by NAATI.

Ineke Crezee, Maria Hayward and Shirley Jülich from New Zealand look at the troubled field of interpreting in refugee contexts, building on a corpus of work around the world where asylum seeker hearings are bringing the necessity to use more interpreters in an ever-expanding range of languages. Paradoxically, this may also be a significant step towards improving standards and quality of service provision, where such issues may have been little addressed by language service decision-makers previously. The authors undertook a survey of practising interpreters in refugee settings, with a focus on the experiences of interpreters needing to repeatedly recount experiences that in many cases they themselves had been through as refugees. The authors noted "a paucity of studies which investigate the risk of re-traumatisation of interpreters working with professionals and clients in refugee settings", and significantly in their survey "a majority of respondents (83%) replied that they found the nature of refugee stories very traumatic".

Just over half of those surveyed believe more training in mental health and trauma issue would be of benefit to them, with a similar proportion saying more information on refugee issues generally would help. Briefing was generally seen as inadequate. And while some 44% indicated they had been offered debriefing (with 10% taking up the offer), the location where this was offered varied greatly – such offers came overwhelmingly in the mental health or trauma counseling areas, while for immigration interviews debriefing was almost never offered, even though the material covered in interviews was often similar.

Narelle Fletcher gained a good deal of media attention outside the conference with her dramatic accounts of interpreting in the Rwanda war crimes trials. Her intense paper "The Role of euphemisation in interpreting the testimonies of the 1994 Tutsi genocide in Rwanda" asks two related questions:

firstly, when genocide survivors tell their story, how do they put into words the experiences they have been through, when these events truly deserve to be called "unspeakable". Secondly, how do interpreters render this information into the target language, and what are the particular challenges they face?

There is no word for rape in Kinyarwanda, and the process of euphemisation by both speakers and interpreters is widespread, though as Fletcher points out it is also common in criminal trials in every country, and was even detected in interpreting at the Nuremberg war crimes trials. Along with that of Frank Palmos, this paper was a dramatic highlight of the conference.

## **Everyday work in T&I and its technological future**

Less stressfully, the conference had a number of papers on technology and its challenges for the T&I profession. Duoxiu Qian takes participants through an "Evaluation of mainstream computer-aided translation tools with special reference to Chinese", while Tineke van Beukering offers an insightful and anxiety-reducing paper on post-editing machine translation (MT): translators who are less than technologically avanta-garde have responded to MT either as a distant threat or with a superior view that MT can only produce rubbish. Neither view is justified, and van Beukering looks at the degree of help that MT can provide to translators particularly in technical translations, and the very necessary human input in post-editing that can leverage off MT efficiency and enhance the translator's creativity.

At the borderline of technology and language service provision, Gabreile Sauberer in her paper outlines the requirements of the European translation service standard EN15038 and its demands of small companies and individual translators.

Finally, a wonderful paper that spoke to many at the conference is Ralph Wittgrebe's "Getting fit for survival", where the author detailed a list of seeming threats to the translator's craft and to small and middle-level translation companies: globalisation and more competition from low-cost countries; less translation into and out of English; increased specialization; lessening of translation requirements (particularly in the EU as it attempts to rein in costs for language services) and the advent of machine translation. Each of these factors nibbles away at company and translators' profits.

He advocates that translators must develop skills; build networks (for both expertise and for high-volume work); and integrate their business into customers' operations. Cooperation among translators who previously regarded each other as competitors must become the norm, especially for

the increasing proportion of work which is high-volume to tight deadlines. And having translation as a recognized and early component of a customer's project management is the ultimate goal, to ensure you are part of an overall business strategy; a move requiring self-conscious customer management skills.

Despite the daunting new environment, translators will survive if they adapt and accept these global changes as real, changes that require shifts in the way translators work. The shifts Wittgrebe sees are

away from meticulously crafted translation towards industrial text with ever more demanding contents. And this brings me to the very first word I read when I first visited this conference's website: Synergise!

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**CROSSING CULTURES**

# SWEATING THE SMALL STUFF: THE TRANSLATOR'S LOT

DR. JOHN JAMIESON<sup>1</sup>

As translators we often hear that we don't translate words, but ideas. However I am not sure what that means. Ultimately, at least for the written translation, words are the only vehicle for the expression of ideas. Words are what we look up in the dictionary, what we argue about, and also what we end up producing. Often we only come to understand the idea at a deep level when we wrestle with the words which express them.

Today I want to look at finding a path from word to idea by a kind of *micro analysis*, which works fine as long as words are treated with the disrespect they deserve. Words are extremely unreliable, and the more elusive the closer we examine them - so our task is to feel our way from these highly unreliable indicators towards the ideas they express, being sensitive to all the twists, turns and variations of the paths followed by the words in both source and target languages.

## Some examples

A review of a new translation of Proust's work *A la recherche du temps perdu* commented that the new title *In search of lost time* was more literally accurate, if less poetic, than the better known translation called *Remembrance of things past*. But is it more accurate? To me, and several other English speakers I have consulted, *lost time* in this phrase carries an implied notion of *wasted time*, as in *making up for lost time*. The real word-for-word calque translation would have been the patently absurd *In search of the lost time*, but if the definite article had been replaced with *a* or *our*, at least the correct meaning of *time which is past, and lost to us, even apparently beyond remembering* would have been caught. It is as if the translator has produced a calque of the original, then simply made the "minimal" change of removing the *the* to make it English.

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An example from the last French presidential election but one. For some time I had been reading in French newspapers about Jean-Marie Le Pen's infamous remark referring to the Holocaust as a "détail de l'histoire". I often wondered how I would translate this expression. The problem is that the word *détail* in French carries a stronger connotation than English *detail* of a "minor" or "mere" detail - hence Le Pen's phrase. Yet when he became a figure of international prominence during the election, this famous comment was regularly translated as *a detail of history*.

This is what I sometimes call "**demand-side translation**".

We know Le Pen is a Fascist or extreme right-wing politician, and therefore expect him to downplay or dismiss the significance of the Holocaust. Accordingly, when we hear a half-baked translation like this, we more or less understand, and life goes on. The expression feeds into what we expected anyway. And then I heard an American correspondent who had been based in Paris for some years use the translation *a footnote in the history books*, and sighed with contentment, feeling that I now knew exactly what was meant. This is "supply side translation" if you like - not just *domesticising*, but finding a real equivalent in the target language which carries some resonance in the reader's or the listener's mind.

Another interesting example came in Lionel Jospin's acknowledgement of defeat, when he said : "J'ai tiré les conclusions", and then announced he was withdrawing from political life. This statement was dutifully translated as *I have drawn the conclusions*, which could draw a blank from most English speakers. However in French, and particularly in political language, *tirer les conséquences* (or *conclusions*) almost means *to resign*, and is roughly equivalent to *fall on one's sword, do the decent thing or take responsibility*. How can this be?

The issue of conclusions (and consequences) is another one of those linguistic points which makes the Channel seem very wide. For us, to draw conclusions refers to a logical process which starts and stops in the mind of the drawer, whereas in French (and German) etc. the phrase carries the further implication of *to take action accordingly*.

For example, in a text I translated from German written in Switzerland, the word *Konsequenzen* was explicitly defined as action taken to rectify a situation, and had to be translated as *responses*. English *consequences* would have meant the objective impact, passively suffered, of some event,

and *conclusions* would have referred to a mental activity, without further action.

Similarly, after September 11 I read in a German newspaper that the Bank of New York had *die Konsequenzen gezogen* from the attack, and had duplicated its data storage facilities. Thus they had not only *drawn the consequences*, but had done something about it. So the correct English translation would have been *learned their lesson* or something, which in that situation could also have implied some action in English.

So - to return to Mr Jospin. He had not only drawn conclusions from the electoral debacle, but decided to take some decisive action as a result. This means that a "supply side translation" would have to include the implication of action. Possibilities would be *My course is clear*, or *The message has been received loud and clear*.

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Before I draw some of the "consequences" of all this for the translator, let me mention a couple of titles, of a book and magazine respectively.

Some years ago I came across a coffee-table book in Swedish entitled *det svenska rummet*, with photographs of rooms in traditional houses. So no problem - just translate it as *the Swedish room* - what could be simpler? Now, I could well imagine a book called *The British pub* or *The Swedish kitchen*; these words are sufficiently specific to become general, if you see what I mean. However the English word *room* lacks specificity, and - to my ear - *The Swedish room* would refer to one specific room. The normal trick in such cases is to try the plural: *Swedish rooms*. Here again, however, it sounds like a succession of specific rooms, rather than a generalising concept. I then picked up a book lying around at home called *Russian houses*, and found it contained exactly the same kinds of photographs. So was *Swedish houses* the right answer? Certainly, when I had been given the book I had not objected to the title or thought it "sounded like a translation".

My second example - again from Scandinavia - is the title of a magazine I read, called, in Danish, *Politik i Norden*. No worries: *Politics in the North*, surely? Not at all - in Scandinavian languages *norden*, literally *the north*, refers to the Nordic countries. And how about politics? For many of us, the English word has a strong whiff of squabbling in

parliament and calculated manoeuvres, more reminiscent of politicking than political science. As in most Continental languages, Danish *politik* means policy as well as politics, so perhaps *Nordic policy issues* would be a sound translation, and it certainly matches the content and purpose of the publication. The magazine is put out by the Nordic Council, with articles in all three Scandinavian languages on weighty topics such as public service broadcasting, the rise of right-wing political parties, etc.

Now titles are notoriously capricious in translation. I imagine all employers of translators would be very reluctant to recruit anyone who translated *le fantôme de l'opéra* as *the phantom of the opera*, rather than the more correct *the ghost of the opera house*, and what about *M Butterfly*? Having not seen the show, it took me a little while to figure out that this was a re-run of *Madam Butterfly*, except that that the heroine has become a hero. Thus the M in the title was the French abbreviation for Monsieur, and the point was that Madame Butterfly had undergone a not-so-subtle change in the new version. None of this was conveyed by the English letter "m" booming out on the advertisements on commercial radio stations, but nonetheless that was the title they chose to run with. Never mind.

Slogans are also an endless source of fascination for us translators. The following are two examples of excellent and "less good" translation in the English language media. The banners carried during a demonstration by Latin Americans, asserting their rights and status, bore the slogan *Sí se puede!*, which was nicely translated in our newspapers, and probably other English-language media around the world, as *Yes, we can!*. *Yes, it is possible!* would mean something, but the impersonal statement in English comes across as much weaker, more abstract. I would guess that the translation used reflects the high number of Spanish-English bilinguals to be found in the US. However Italian-English bilinguals are not as thick on the ground in Italy, and when women protesting against Berlusconi wore T-shirts with the message *Non sono una donna a sua disposizione!*, this was obediently translated as *I am not a woman at your disposal!*. There are several problems here: *at your disposal* carries much less idiomatic force than the corresponding Italian words, and *I am not a woman ...* in English has the germ of a contradiction within it, when the wearers of the garment patently were women. So my offering would perhaps have been *I'm not one of your floozies!*.

To return to the more serious side of my argument, there are some conclusions for us as translators from this series of paltry anecdotes.

First, the examples I have mentioned are concerned with relatively minor differences in connotations, but these small differences do matter. Sometimes the problem can also be solved with a very minor adjustment to the translated text, but at other times we have to take some risks and stray well away from the form of the original - as in *Remembrance of things past*. This puts the translator in the role of a conscious manipulator of language. I deliberately change a singular to a plural, a room to a house, to convey the meaning I want. Furthermore, the solutions we arrive at are not objectively correct, easily passed by the examiner. If I propose either *My course is clear* or *The message has been received loud and clear* as translations for the same French phrase, an outside observer would think I have very little idea of what the original actually meant. And yet I put it to you that I have a much clearer idea of the meaning than the reporter who gave us the calque translation.

Another feature is the sharp contrast between the creative ferment of translation, as exemplified by the argument I had with my friends over the Swedish room issue, and the passive acceptance of the finished text, as I accepted the existing title of my *Russian houses* book.

And finally, not everyone gets the ideal solution to these problems all the time. The challenge, in my view, is to get enough convincing, "supply side" communication to carry the text in the reader's mind.

So what are we left with? A practitioner working with tiny semantic and grammatical units and distinctions, deliberately manipulating verbal reality, treating truth as ultimately subjective rather than objective, playing a percentages game in communication terms, to provide a supposedly responsible, reputable, reliable service.

Unlike the enlightened individual who is told not to sweat the small stuff (and it's all small stuff), we translators most assuredly do sweat the small stuff. Hence my disquiet when a production manager at work asks me: "Well, does it mean the same thing or not?", or "Is it right?".

A farewell example comes from the fountainhead of our profession - the FIT. They put out a series of newsletters, called the *FIT Flash*, at regular intervals about upcoming events, conferences etc. This is done in

the interests of the profession, without any commercial objectives, and accordingly there are no proprietary restrictions on the material. So the French - which I take to be the original - has the message *reproduction encouragée*, which in a word-for-word translation looks like *reproduction encouraged*. At various times I saw two translations used, *Please reproduce*, and *You are encouraged to reproduce*. The trouble is that both of these sound like an invitation to replicate rather than duplicate. It still sounds as if we are being asked to increase the world's population of translators. So let's take a look at the French phrase *reproduction encouragée* - what does it mean? In fact, this expression is a play on words, deliberately presented as an opposite of *reproduction interdite*, i.e. *unauthorised copying prohibited*. Accordingly a better approach is to work not just from the words, but from the intention and function of the phrase. If the sense is the opposite of *unauthorised copying prohibited*, a first attempt could be *copying authorised and encouraged*. I believe the actual phrase used now is *Please copy and circulate*, which catches exactly the right note, and a solution anyone could be proud of.

So my "conclusion" is that we most definitely do have to sweat the small stuff to carry out our task competently. I have deliberately selected examples where the intended meaning of the source language expressions is not problematic, aiming to show that the obvious translations often served up by amateurs, and distressingly also by professionals, are incorrect and sometimes ridiculous. I have used the term *word-for-word* rather than *literal* since I do not believe that *reproduction encouragée* can be described as a literal translation of *reproduction encouragée*, any more than *I have drawn the conclusions* is a literal translation of anything Jospin said after the elections in France. Words are clearly inextricably tied to their associations and connotations, and the minutiae of these often subjectively perceived nuances are the native element in which we translators work.

# HIDDEN NARRATIVES IN NON-FICTION TEXTS

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Translations of non-fiction texts into English often sound awkward, even when done by English native speakers. They seem to contain "bumps" in the narrative flow. There may be nothing "wrong" with the translation, but somehow it fails to speak to the reader. In other words, the narrative is not quite consistent. This problem is clearly compounded by the use of TMs. These memories are really good at the "what" of the text, but tend to obscure the "how" and "why" of what is being said. It is difficult for the translator to focus on the flow of the text when it is continually being divided into segments.

This paper aims to provide some ideas and techniques for addressing this problem and producing a natural sounding equivalent. It draws attention to some clear differences between English on the one hand, and numerous other languages on the other - so given that most of those here today probably work with TMs and translate either into or out of English, I hope that these ideas will be of some interest.

I am specifically interested in the hidden narratives operating in non-fiction texts, at the level of phrases and words, i.e. within the scope of a single TM segment. I believe that that a written document usually involves a mixture and interplay between three main narrative modes, which might be called "conversation", "sermon" and "lecture".

**Conversation mode** refers to a transfer of new information, where "I" tell "you" about an "it" you were not previously aware of. This creates a relatively narrow "we", comprising the speaker and interlocutor (or small number of interlocutors). The features of a communication in this mode - for example *Waiter, there is a fly in my soup*, include the following: there is a clearly defined speaker and interlocutor, the focus is on a real, specific and concrete, here-and-now experience, at individual rather than collective

level. The information is new to the addressee unless otherwise indicated. And the statement is easily refutable, clearly either true or false. In terms of linguistic features, "I talk to you about it" communications of this type are characterized by concrete nouns, clear marking of any repetition of known information, not much use of subjunctive tenses, and shorter rather than longer sentences. There is a strong taboo on self-reference in the third person, and in English, vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon origin is likely to be preferred to words taken from, say, French or Latin.

**Sermon mode** is characterised by the sharing of known information, so the narrative stance is more like "here's something we all know". The community of "we" created by a sermon refers to "all of us", and is potentially larger than the dyad of the conversation. This is a consensus-building exercise - think of the sentence *We are gathered here together...*, for example. The speaker is clearly defined in one sense, but is only standing at the front of the church or in the pulpit as a representative of his/her particular profession, and the audience can be a very diverse group, with many different reasons for being there. The audience will expect to hear a lot that they already know. The communication will include a lot of generic references; any concrete or specific concepts may be images representing some more general truth. This is collective rather than individual communication, and the form of truth being conveyed will not be easily disprovable. At the micro level, abstract nouns and subjunctives may well abound and repetitions will be frequent. Self-reference in the third person is often acceptable.

The narrative stance for a **lecture** is "this is the case". The information presented aspires to objective truth in a general, even universal sense. The lecturer is talking to "all of us in the audience", but ultimately the "we" community in this case can perhaps be defined as "people in general". A physical law or a historical fact is true without reference to the speaker or listener. This time the audience will expect to hear something new - that is why they are there - but there will also be a lot of content that is familiar to them. The linguistic means used are characterised by a mix of concrete and abstract nouns, but the concrete nouns will often be representative of their class rather than referring to a specific object. Subjunctives will be relatively rare, but other devices typical of the sermon, such as repetition, may well be used.

So we have three modes of verbal communication, generating ever wider communities of "we": conversation mode, relating to a small group;

sermon mode, relating to "all of us (in this room)"; and lecture mode, relating to "people in general", "all of us (on the planet)".

Each of these communities also has its own kind of truth: literal and directly related to the participants for a conversation (with very high penalties for lying); aspirational and not necessarily including all participants for the sermon; and general/universal, but without reference to individual participants for the lecture.

The crucial point to remember is that the presence of a clearly defined first and second person in conversation mode tends to be matched by concrete, specific subject matter, i.e. the third person. And similarly, the more collective identity of the players in the sermon and lecture situations is mirrored in the more generic and abstract nature of the subject matter.

Conversely, the use of a concrete noun, for example, tends to imply a conversation - if I say *spade*, for example, I have to tell you which one I mean, whereas *justice* or even *cabbage* refers to knowledge or experience already shared between the interlocutors, with no need for further identification.

The situation becomes more interesting when speech becomes text and we begin to translate from one language into another. A written text typically has elements of all three modes, so the reader's perception of the narrative mode keeps changing according to the linguistic means used.

There are two interesting points to note for translators working into or out of English:

Firstly, some of the linguistic means I have mentioned are more rigidly tied to the associated narrative mode in English than in other European languages. That means that conversation is more clearly distinct from lecture or sermon in English written texts.

Secondly - as a result - lecture or sermon tends to denote "not referring to you and me" in English. As a result, lecture and sermon mode often present as a "turn-off" for English-speaking readers. Accordingly there is an increasing tendency for English written texts to prefer conversational mode to sermon or lecture mode. One of the most fundamental reasons for this difference lies in the pronoun *man* widely used in German and Scandinavian languages, and its analogues elsewhere. This pronoun can

refer to all of the different "we" communities. In contrast, our English one is much less robust, largely fossilized, and used only by a small number of people in a restricted range of situations. And note that man need not be lexicalised. French *comme on sait* (as 'one' knows), for example, corresponds to *wie bekannt* in German, *kak izvestno* in Russian, etc. The point is that this entity, covering all three communication communities is readily available as an explicit or implied semantic subject in Continental European languages, but less readily available in English. This means it may be difficult for the translator working into English to identify the narrative stance in a foreign text, because of the greater flexibility in the use of linguistic means in those languages. Some creative choices will be required in order to place the narration at the desired point on the continuum.

To take a trivial example, a manual telling me that in a certain situation *an image comes up on the screen* can be regarded as lecture mode - this happens for everyone, in all cases, where *an image will come up on the screen* is nearer to conversation mode - the author is speaking directly to me. Yet this distinction would not be made in German.

By focusing on the links between narrative stance at the macro level and specific linguistic means at the micro level (such as the words and phrases within a TM segment), this paper aims to provide some techniques for maintaining a smooth narrative flow in a text being translated with the aid of a translation memory.

Three examples of linguistic means are considered here: abstract nouns, concrete nouns and repetition. Abstract nouns typically refer to something that *we* already know about, not requiring *me* to identify to *you* the *it* that I propose to talk about. They therefore tend to take the text into the sermon or lecture area.

The first example considered here is the headline and title of an article in *Kääntäjä*, the magazine of the Finnish Society of Translators and Interpreters. The phrase read literally as *Sibelius and Rydberg – omnipresent divinity*. For the English speaker *omnipresent divinity* suggests the narrative perspective of a lecturer, making the communication rather remote on two levels: the message seems remote from the reader, and the experience described feels similarly remote from the composer and poet referred to. But a glance at the content of the article showed it was about pantheism in art, i.e. the sense of *God in every leaf and stone*. Using such

an expression as the English translation, i.e. replacing abstract with concrete nouns, makes the communication more direct on both these levels: the reader feels more directly addressed by the content, and senses the possible intensity of the experience for those involved.

Or take the first sentence of the humorous book *From Finland, with Love*, by Roman Schatz: *What you are about to read is a collection of satirical columns about Finland*. The first sentence of the very zappy and readable Finnish translation, word for word, reads as follows: *This, your future reading experience, is a collection of satirical columns about Finnishness*. There are narrative mixed messages here: *this* and *your* are conversational, but *reading experience* and *Finnishness* are "out there" in the lecture or sermon domain. But since these phrases were generated as natural Finnish equivalents for much less remote concepts, it has to be concluded that these seemingly non-conversational narratives are nothing of the sort in Finnish. On this occasion the manipulations by the translator working into English would involve translating a nominal phrase with a verbal one - *what you are about to read*, and reducing the level of abstraction in *Finnishness* to *Finland*. Translators working from English into other European languages would also do well to note the reverse manipulations actually performed by the Finnish translator in this case.

Another technique is to translate a process as result. For example the Finnish Society of Translators and Interpreters recently conducted what must have been an outstanding workshop on the metrical translation of poetry into Finnish. A phrase often used in connection with the course was *metriinen herätys*, literally *metrical awakening*. This is confusing in English, because we are unable to place the "person" in this expression - we need to identify the "I" and "you" involved. So is necessary to ask what was happening and who was doing it. My feeling was that *we will awaken you to the joys of meter* was the message with the persons involved explicitly stated. Thus *the joys of meter* would be a possible translation. The plural - and therefore countable - noun *joys* makes the narrative more concrete. My narrative choice has therefore been to place the communication in conversation mode by implying the identity of the players involved and making the content more concrete than the disembodied *awakening*.

A similar example from German involved a marketing brochure headed – literally – *Orientation and Partnership*. The material was promoting the services of an event organiser, so by deconstructing the concept as *we will*