MURATHO

DECEMBER 2006

Celebrating SATI's 50th Anniversary

1956–2006

The South African Translators' Institute and its Executive

Chairperson/Voorsitter
Anne-Marie Beukes
Tel: (011) 489-2697
Fax: (011) 489-306
amb@rau.ac.za

Secretary/Sekretaris
Treasurer/Tesourier
Marion Boers
Tel: (011) 803-2681
Fax: (011) 803-2681
publications@translators.org.za

Vice-Chairperson/Vise-Voorsitter
Wilna Liebenberg
Tel: (021) 976-9563
Fax: (021) 975-2304
wlieben@new.co.za

Registrar/Registrateur
Irene Dippenaar
Tel: (012) 343-0624
Fax: (012) 343-0730
sati@intekom.co.za

The Executive of the South African Translators' Institute was restructured in June 2005. A small core executive (above) will act as the management committee for the Institute. A series of standing and ad hoc committees are being established, which will deal with the activities that fell under the other portfolios previously forming part of the Executive. Each committee will be overseen by a member of the Executive. As the committees are established, details of their members will be published on this page.

Training Committee
Prof Jackie Naudé (chair)
Dr Anne-Marie Beukes
Dr Ileana Dimitriu
Prof Ilse Feinauer
Dr Jan-Louis Kruger
Ms Wilna Liebenberg
Ms Lolie Makhubu
Dr Kim Wallmach

Interpreter Accreditation Committee
Mr Johan Blaauw (chair)
Ms Bas Angelis
Ms Asanda Katshwa
Dr Annelie Lotriet
Dr Marné Pienaar
Mr Olivier Wittezaele

Mentorship Committee
Ms Wilna Liebenberg (chair)
Ms Isabel Claassen
Ms Gillian de Jager
Mr Tony Moen

Publicity Committee
Lollie de Bruin
Jan Vorster

The South African Translators' Institute

Virtual Office
c/o Marion Boers
Tel/fax: (011) 803-2681
publications@translators.org.za

Registrar
Tel: (012) 343-0624
Fax: (012) 343-0730
sati@intekom.co.za

PO Box 27711
0132 Sunnyside

Chapter Chairpersons/Afdelingsvoorsitters

Boland
Gretha Aalbers
Tel: (021) 461-0486
Fax: (021) 465-5992
aalbers@iafrica.com

Interpreters
Olivier Wittezaele
Tel: (018) 299-1486
Fax: (018) 299-1562
Engolw@puk.ac.za

KwaZulu-Natal
Secretary: Neli Ntshangase
Tel: (031) 260-2995
Fax: (031) 260-3036
Ntshangasec@ukzn.ac.za

Members who wish to re-establish the Gauteng Chapter should contact Wilna Liebenberg, the chapter coordinator.

The SATI constitution makes provision for members to form chapters if they wish "to be recognised as a distinct group on the grounds of their geographic proximity to one another or of a common interest that is acceptable to the Institute". Chapters are formal structures of the Institute and operate in terms of a set of regulations approved by the members of the Institute. The intention of chapters is to offer members opportunities for networking and professional advancement, which can often be more readily achieved at a local rather than a national level.

SATI Web-site:
http://www.translators.org.za
(South African Translators' Institute)

FIT Web-site:
http://www.fit-ift.org
(International Federation of Translators)

Journal of the South African Translators' Institute

Jenale ya Mokgatlo wa Bafetoledi ba Afrika Borwa

IPhephandaba loMbutho waBaguquli-lwimi boMzantsi Afrika

Muratho is the Venda term for "a bridge", the symbol of the communicative activity facilitated by language workers

Muratho ke lentswe la Sevenda le bolelang "borokgo", e leng sesupo sa mosebetsi wa bohokanyi o hlophiswang ke basebeletsi ba puo

Igama elithi "Muratho" ligama lesiVenda elithetha ibhulorho, yona kuzekeliswa ngayo umsebenzi woqhagamshelaniso owenziwa ngabasebenzi ngeelwimi

Information on the name of the journal is given in English plus two other official languages on a rotational basis (in this issue Sesotho and Xhosa).

Muratho accepts articles in all the South African official languages, provided they are accompanied by an English summary.

Published by the South African Translators' Institute
PO Box 1710
Rivonia
0132
South Africa
sati@intekom.co.za
http://www.translators.org.za

Editor: Marion Boers
Tel: (011) 803-2681
E-mail:
publications@translators.org.za

Subscriptions: Contact the editor

ISSN: 1680-1938

Layout: Marion Boers
Printing: T-Vaal (Johannesburg)

MURATHO

Volume 6 Number 2 December 2006

CONTENTS

ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE: 25 AUGUST 2006

ITD SEMINAR: 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

GENERAL

Photos in this issue: Lollie de Bruin, Wilna Liebenberg, Anne-Marie Beukes, Marion Boers

Editor's Notes

This has indeed been a momentous year. As Neville Alexander commented in his paper at our anniversary conference on 25 August, "It is indeed a felicitous occasion when a voluntary association of language professionals is able to look back on 50 years of solid, foundational work." So we made the most of this year and celebrated SATI's golden anniversary around the country with as many of our members as possible. This proved to be exhausting and demanding on the time and resources of the Executive and the Institute, but the Executive feels all the work has borne fruit. We were able to meet many more members than we normally do and they were able to experience the Institute much more intimately than they normally do.

In addition to the events that were arranged, this anniversary provided us with the opportunity to look back and so we put together a history of the Institute's first 50 years. It proved to be a fascinating exercise and we hope that it will give all members and colleagues a feel for where the Institute has come from and how it got to be what it is today. So often there is a lack of institutional memory that hinders progress, as the same issues are rehashed over and over. Perhaps a volume like this one will bring insight to newer members and enable them to appreciate what has already been achieved and considered.

It is never possible for everyone to participate and we felt it was a pity that so many had to miss out on the excellent presentations made at the conference and seminars this year. As a result, despite the fact that we had decided that the history publication would take the place of the second issue of *Muratho* this year, we changed our minds and resolved instead to bring it out with the papers presented at the anniversary conference on 25 August and the International Translation Day celebrations on 30 September. It was unfortunately not possible to include all the papers presented at the other celebratory events, much as we would have liked to.

This issue is thus out of character in that it is being published in December rather than October (next year we will revert to our normal pattern) and that it is almost a set of proceedings rather than our normal journal. We trust that you will find the content interesting and stimulating and that you will feel somewhat part of our anniversary celebrations.

Our thanks go to all who helped make this year such a success: the Executive, the speakers at all our events, the organisers of all those events, and all those who participated. We hope that the year's celebrations and significance will long remain with you all (you can make sure it does by buying some of the mementos advertised on the inside back cover!).

Enjoy reading the presentations in this issue of *Muratho* and I hope they will inspire you to become involved in helping the Institute reach ever greater heights!

Until next time

Marion

Highways and byways: SATI's 50-year journey

It is indeed a privilege and an honour to be able to address colleagues and friends on an occasion and on a topic like this, which has been in the forefront of my life for so long, and which seems set to go on being in this position.

Starting off with a topic like this inevitably tempts one to indulge in metaphoric digressions. I have toyed with the idea of speaking in terms of a river meandering through a lush landscape with *sytakke* coming in and branching off again into an intricate system that supports and nourishes a whole ecosystem. I have also toyed with the idea of taking the tack that, when I became involved in SATI in 1979, SATI was a lively young woman, still trying to decide exactly what her identity and direction would be, and that now, after decades marked by decidedly interesting events and milestones, SATI has become a mature, elegant focused woman who knows what she wants and gets it – pleasantly, firmly, professionally, at the height of her professional and personal powers.

Well, going back to the formulation of the title, one could then opt for the metaphorical construct of highways and byways, all of them leading somewhere, but some digressing rather more, perhaps ultimately going off the rails (see, there is a further metaphorical construct just waiting to be used!).

This is not going to be a chronological milestoning of the events that have marked the development of SATI. I am rather going to explore, in a narrative and highly personal manner, those things that one could regard as leitmotifs in the development of SATI, and dwell for a moment on those things that have quietly slipped off and become markers, but not drivers of the history of SATI.

Leitmotifs and recurrent concerns

The urge to achieve greater professionalisation and protection for language practitioners has always been a prime concern, and could perhaps be seen as the single most important leitmotif in the history and development of SATI. On the occasion of the founding meeting of the Institute in 1956 it was stated that it was essential to have a professional body that could guard the interests of translators. At the time this included only the translators, as the sworn translators had different needs and wanted to go their own way (it is gratifying that over the course of time the sworn translators have come into the fold). The initial objectives, as outlined in the statutes, were ambitious and wide-ranging, from obtaining official recognition of the Institute and its work to providing training, running examinations and keeping an eye on fair and just remuneration for translators. In a real sense it is also gratifying to note the extent to which the objectives of the founders have to the largest extent been met.

In the context of professionalisation it is also important to note that the relevant cabinet Minister had already been approached about statutory recognition in 1972, while 1974 saw the decision to pursue the matter of the establishment of a charter (a matter which has recurred constantly and which has now been subsumed under the notion of legislation). A code of ethics (which would later be greatly expanded and be made more appropriate for all branches of the profession) was also introduced at this stage, and this led inevitably to SATI being involved (over more years than one would like to remember) in discussions centring on the establishment of a regulatory body. By 2003 there were serious discussions afoot about the establishment of a regulatory board (these discussions involved all the interested parties in the country, from PanSALB to the NLS), but to date this has not happened and for the foreseeable future SATI will remain the watchdog, the support and the face of translation, interpreting and language practice in general in South Africa.

Training was seen from the beginning (vide the early objectives) as concomitant to professionalisation. There was a great deal of discussion of training over the years, starting very seriously in 1963, with the year 1972 being very important in the introduction of formal training via Rhodes University, where a diploma was introduced in 1974. This was for some time the only formal training, until 1976 when Unisa pro-

Address by Annette Combrink at the SATI 50th Anniversary International Conference 'Language Practice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' at the University of Johannesburg, 25 August 2006

Annette is a former SATI chairperson and currently the campus rector of the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University

"Accreditation, already anticipated in the early days (1965) could be regarded as one of the signal successes of SATI in both public profile and acceptance in the market"

duced a postgraduate diploma in translation. Various other training initiatives (both formal degree and diploma courses and short courses) were introduced over time, notably at Unisa, Wits, Potchefstroom, Port Elizabeth, Natal and Free State. Among these the strongest collaborative effort was the University Diploma in Legal Interpreting, which has since morphed into the degree at Unisa. In 1992 informal mentorship was put in place, and this has since in notable instances developed more formally. While SATI has not been a training institution, its inputs in the facilitation of training (especially in terms of standards development and short courses) have been invaluable. A concomitant of training that has been very important has been the introduction of bursaries and other support from the SATI Development Fund – modest, but effective and at times crucial to the completion of courses of study by especially disadvantaged students.

Accreditation, already anticipated in the early days (1965), could be regarded as one of the signal successes of SATI in both public profile and acceptance in the market. From the days when a formal qualification was a requirement for membership, to the introduction of an entrance examination in 1988 (in addition to the qualification requirement) to the establishment in 1988 of a formal system of accreditation that replaced all the other activities, SATI has gained reputation and acceptance through the high standard maintained – achieving accreditation has become highly sought-after, not only opening up membership (with a qualification not being necessary any more) but in reserving voting rights for accredited members as an incentive for language practitioners to accredit in all the various categories of accreditation, from translation to interpreting to editing.

Internationalisation was first mooted at the meeting of 2 September 1959, but in view of the discriminatory policies of the previous dispensation it was only in 1993, at the FIT Congress in Brighton, that SATI became a member of FIT. This involvement expanded from 1999 when A-M Beukes was elected to the FIT Council. In 2003 there were a large number of SATI representatives at the Paris conference to celebrate 50 years of FIT, and since then SATI has been amply represented on FIT committees and on the executive.

Membership/involvement in other bodies with similar visions has been an important concomitant of SATI's role in the promotion and advocacy of the work of language practitioners in South Africa. This started in 1961 with a link to the Terminology Commission, and by 1993 there were ties with many other organisations, such as the Institute for Bible Translation and the Translators and Interpreters Association of SA. This has been largely responsible for the creation of a public face for SATI, as evidenced in the following:

- 1993: Submission on the future language policy of the SABC
- 1994: SATI involved in the inter-departmental Task Group on Language – to make input on the new language dispensation
- 1995: SATI makes a submission to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on the draft Bill for the Pan South African Language Board
- 1995-1996: SATI involved in the task team investigating the Telephone Interpreting Service for South Africa (TISSA)
- 1997: SATI's intervention helps to change the Rules of the Supreme Court to make it possible for the Institute to test prospective sworn translators; this formalised and tidied up the fairly interesting relationship that had existed between SATI and the sworn translators (really in technical terms interpreters!)
- 1998: SATI obtains representation on the National Standards Body for language and communication at SAQA, making it possible to have a real influence on the development of standards of training for the profession

A further development on the road to recognition and visibility could be said to reside in the decision of the SATI executive to introduce **rewards and recognition** for practitioners both within and outside SATI. The first mention of the introduction of a translation prize was already made in 1962, but it was only with the introduction of the Johan Kruger Prize in 1995 that this really took off. A further exciting development has been the introduction of translation prizes in a number of categories, starting off with the 2000 award of the Translation Prize to Leon de Kock (for his English translation of Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf*). The prize has grown immensely in stature (if not in monetary value – alas!).

Integration in terms of race, gender and language came to be considered in 1962 – when, true to the spirit of the times, a chapter for non-whites was proposed. Even more astounding, in our own context, was

the 1976 formal decision to become more bilingual!

As part of its mandate to look after the interests of members, tariffs for translation were already proposed in 1957. This could not continue, however, as 1986 saw, in terms of the Maintenance and Promotion of Competition Act (96 of 1979) the reality that the Institute may no longer prescribe, enforce or even recommend tariffs. In 1990 an attempt was first made to obviate this through doing and publishing a freelance tariff survey, which went some way towards alleviating the problem and providing benchmarks for tariffs.

From the beginning, as part of its services to practitioners, the Institute had promoted freelance translators, and from an early list of freelance translators available for private work the Web list has evolved for purposes of making access to the services of all languages practitioners easier for the public – the clients, after all.

For any institution or organisation of this kind, publications are of crucial importance, as they document and embed the institutional memory associated with such an institution. More than minutes of meetings (important, as we know, but mostly colourless) one needs to have documents that record the landmarks and milestones, dreams, wishes and aspirations of the organisation. In this context, SATI has been very responsive, from the 1957 first issue of *Die Vertaler*, the 1962 new *Newsletter* to the range of publications that we now have. These include, of course, the *Bulletin*, *Muratho,* occasional papers and other conference proceedings (such as *Rights in Practice* published in 2005) and the more academic Bibliography published by Alet Kruger (which provides an invaluable service to academics). In a very real sense the Web-site has come to be a core publication.

Organisation and administration

By 1990, membership was over 500, and it was essential to have a computerised database for membership, as well as a centralised register for freelancers. This is a far cry from the 18 founding members and the 40 members of the years immediately subsequent to the founding of SATI. The SATI structure has evolved from a modest part-time (literally handwritten) society to a far more sophisticated body with a virtual office, a streamlined set of procedures and an efficient management system. Likewise, the structure of the SATI executive has evolved to become far sleeker and more professional – the collegial model (and it has been a wrench to move away from it!) replaced in 2005 by a management committee supported by a series of standing and ad hoc committees which function under the able leadership and administration of the chairperson and executive, with the lion's share of the work going to Marion Boers.

After looking at the leitmotifs over the years, what can be regarded as highways, and which as diversions and byways?

- The name and identity of the Institute have changed over time (read all about it in the SATI history) but it would seem as if the present name will stick – not least because the time that we live in has seen the firm establishment of the importance of branding, and in this sense and context SATI has done sterling work in developing, apart from the crest and the well-known motto, the more with-it logo and rallying cry of building bridges. The acceptance of these in the marketplace has probably seen to the permanence of the name and brand. All these things had also contributed to the fact and the extent of SATI developing a public voice, as outlined in the discussion previously. The introduction of rewards and recognition has also been instrumental in building the public face and image of SATI. All these things, even though they might have stumbled or floundered a bit at times, can be seen as highways with significant milestones.
- Professionalisation, as outlined earlier, has been the single golden thread running through the work of the Institute, and this can be linked intimately with networking – at all levels, individual and institutional. Networking has seen its ultimate spin-off and advantage in internationalisation. With professionalisation as a distinct highway, there have been many irritating little byways, with the failure of the professional council to realise one of the more signal events in this context.
- Internationalisation has seen the profession in South Africa come of age in its linkage with FIT and other involvement at the international level, both academic and professional. I think that the founding fathers would have been proud of this, as it represents the acme of professional image and standing. In this context one could state, probably without fear of

"Professionalisation … has been the single golden thread running through the work of the Institute, and this can be linked intimately with networking – at all levels, individual and institutional"

contradiction, that early, frustrated efforts at establishing links could be regarded as byways, but these have converged again, and one can breathe easier with a sense that it all came together in the end.

- As in many other things in South Africa, integration has been something that has not been achieved without pain, trouble and drama. From the early days, when even bilingualism in the Institute was a problem, the matter of racial integration was a thorny issue, and it was of course the single obstacle to SATI obtaining international recognition through membership of FIT. The acceptance of SATI into FIT was probably the strongest possible signal of the intention of SATI to do away with injustice. Gender discrimination, which had been rampant (if perhaps not intentional – the jury is out on that one!) has over time eroded and adjusted itself, to the extent that there has probably been a complete about-face in the gender composition of those running the profession today. This is a gratifying state of affairs to be commented on in the month of August … Pulling in all language groups in the country has seen one running down many avenues that later reflection underlined as being byways.
- The facilitation of training and involvement in the generation of training standards through SAQA, but most especially the introduction of accreditation have probably been one of the pillars of SATI in the past two decades, and these are probably the backbone of the professionalisation exercise in the absence of formal legislation. SAQA has been a trial at times, and we took, to my mind, quite a number of byways in the effort to establish standards for training, but like many other things these too have come together again fairly constructively.
- In all these things, money has of course always been a substratum, and a constant cause of worry and concern. Handling the finances of the Institute over the years has been an interesting and at times nerve-wracking tightrope walk. Money has never been enough, and for a non-statutory body it is almost impossible to break even. However, SATI has survived, and especially in more recent times it has become possible to function more effectively and to make more of an impact (organisationally and developmentally). It is interestingly, of course, true that money has become less of a problem as the stature and the profile of the Institute have grown – typical chicken and egg situation, as in all of life! Money has at times tended to distract the executive, as money battles have always been intense, but as with other things, the byways seem to be converging again as there is a keen understanding of the need to spend money on worthwhile products, and because financial management in the Institute has always been impeccable, there is great acceptance.

"The acceptance of SATI into FIT was probably the strongest possible signal of the intention of SATI to do away with injustice"

In retrospect, my involvement with SATI at the level of the executive has always been a very enriching experience. With all the members of the executive doing the work on a volunteer basis it was difficult at times to achieve deadlines, with everybody having another primary occupation(!!) but the good and cordial working relations, the spirit of camaraderie, the sheer pleasure of having a meeting with 'language people' who could turn the most mundane sentence into a good pun could not but make the involvement rewarding.

SATI: Serving South Africa's multiple voices

Taking stock of its achievements and failures is imperative to the welfare of any organised profession. Celebrating 50 years' activity in translation and interpreting offers a golden opportunity to SATI to look back and engage in self-examination with a view to the way forward. We therefore decided to spend today, 25 August, our anniversary day, in the company of colleagues (local and international) and friends in celebrating the Institute's achievements and reflecting *collectively* (i.e. in true 'Socratic style') on professional matters past, present and future.

In looking back on the occasion of our 50th anniversary, I would like to take stock of how the Institute managed to respond to one of its central mandates as a professional language organisation, that is to serve the South African society's translation-related[1] needs and fulfill its expectations. The focus in particular is on a critical assessment of SATI's performance as an agent of multilingualism in a society characterised by a high degree of diversity. The discussion is framed against the backdrop of the particular socio-historical and professional settings and trajectories that shaped the Institute over the past 50 years. This investigation will trace SATI's activities in terms of the operational and persuasive activities that absorbed the Institute from its founding period in the fifties, through the era of grand apartheid from the sixties to the eighties, to the present era of democracy and official multilingualism. Most importantly, however, following Skocpol's (1984) historical-structural approach, this discussion is aimed at arriving at an understanding of how these past patterns and trajectories might be relevant, or irrelevant, for the present and future choices that the Institute will make.

> Broadly conceived historical analyses promise possibilities for understanding how past patterns and alternative trajectories might be relevant, or irrelevant, for present choices – *Theda Skocpol (1984: 5)*

Multilingualism in South Africa

For the benefit of our many international guests, I will give a brief description of South Africa's language dispensation. Prior to the advent of the democratic dispensation in 1994, South Africa was a *de jure* bilingual country where English and Afrikaans had been official languages since the early 20th century. Historically, the translation profession in South Africa, and therefore also SATI, evolved within a context where only these two languages were used for governance purposes. African languages had limited status in the apartheid structures, i.e. the so-called self-governing states and homelands, scattered in small pockets in certain areas of the country.[2]

However, in 1994 the language landscape in South Africa changed markedly when the new political dispensation granted official status to 11 languages. So, nine African languages, isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, Siswati, Sesotho se Leboa, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda and Xitsonga, in addition to English and Afrikaans, now enjoy official status in South Africa. Some 25 languages are used in South Africa on a daily basis by more than 44,8 million people (Statistics South Africa 2003). The majority of South Africans, almost 80% of the population, use an African language as their home language. The most commonly spoken home language is isiZulu, which is spoken by 23,8% of the population, followed by isiXhosa (17,6%) and Afrikaans (13,3%). English is used as a lingua franca across the country, but is the home language of 8,2% of the population, according to Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003).

South Africa's Constitution prescribes affirmative action for the African languages that were marginalised in the past: these languages "must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably". In addition to providing for the status of the 11 official languages, the Constitution also addresses the transformation of the historically marginalised languages. Language development is afforded high priority: "practical and positive measures" are to be put in place to advance these languages (RSA 1996). The high priority is reflected in the provision for the establishment of a dedicated language development agency, the Pan South African Language Board

Footnotes

1. The term 'translation' is used generically to denote both the written and oral modes of language mediation.

2. The following situation prevailed in these areas: In addition to English and Afrikaans, Sesotho sa Leboa was the official language of Leboa; in QwaQwa Sesotho was an official language; in Gazankulu Xitsonga; in KaNgwane Siswati; in KwaZulu isiZulu; in Transkei and Ciskei isiXhosa; in Bophuthatswana Setswana; and in Venda Tshivenda.

Paper read by SATI chairperson Anne-Marie Beukes at the SATI 50th Anniversary International Conference 'Language Practice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' at the University of Johannesburg, 25 August 2006

Anne-Marie is also a lecturer in translation at the University of Johannesburg

(PanSALB), a statutory body charged with developing and promoting the use of all the languages of South Africa, including the ancient indigenous languages of South Africa's 'first people', the Khoe and San.

In spite of the enabling framework provided by the Constitution, the implementation of multilingualism in South Africa leaves much to be desired. A huge gap and tension between the constitutional provisions on language and the development and institutionalisation of language policy is evident. Key language legislation envisaged in government's National Language Policy Framework (DAC 2003a) approved by Cabinet in 2003 has not yet materialised: neither the SA Languages Draft Bill (DAC 2003b) published for comment in 2003 nor the South African Language Practitioners' Council Draft Bill (DAC 2000) have been promulgated.

"In spite of the enabling framework provided by the Constitution, the implementation of multilingualism in South Africa leaves much to be desired"

Professional imperatives

Before exploring how SATI chose to serve the multiple voices represented in South African society, I should like to reflect briefly on the core characteristics of professions. The term 'profession' is often used loosely and therefore it is important to delineate the notion for the purposes of this discussion. A 'profession' is viewed as "a dignified occupation espousing an ethic of service, organised into an association, and practicing functional science" (Kimball 1992: 16-7). At the time when SATI was founded (and many other associations all over Europe), professions were more often than not associated with the idea of a 'vocation' or 'calling'. As a result, the "first ethical imperative" of a profession (Cogan 1955: 107) was an altruistic motivation to serve the client.

Notwithstanding the semantic shifts in the notion of a profession since the 1950s, service is now generally viewed as a function of learned or formal knowledge and failure to provide adequate service in terms of a profession's mandate and rules of conduct is regarded as a serious failure. It is exactly at this level that most criticism is levelled against professions since it impacts on its relations with clients and the general public.

Professional associations themselves are believed to have considerable influence on how the public views a profession and its services. The complex nature of the contexts in which SATI has operated and still operates, as well as the underlying attitudes and the enabling and constraining powers that have impacted on the profession, are important aspects to be considered when reflecting on the Institute's role in serving the multiple voices of South Africa these past 50 years and also as regards its future options.

The international context: 'The age of translation'

The mid-twentieth century witnessed heightened activity in the field of translation and interpreting. This happened in response to the increasing demand for translators and interpreters in the post World War II period, an era in which labour became intellectualised. This, in turn, resulted in a pressing need to organise translators and interpreters through associations in order to advance their interests and those of the profession. Newmark (1982: 3) refers to this period as the 'age of translation'.

The establishment of an international federation of translators' associations, the *Fédération international des traducteurs* (FIT), by six translators' associations from France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Turkey in Paris in 1953 is a measure of the new role and significance of translators and interpreters at that juncture. Within the next three years FIT's membership profile increased to reflect the geographical distribution of translators' activities when Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Japan, Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Sweden and the Institute of Linguists in London joined (Haeseryn 2005).

Likewise at the same time two professional translators' associations were established in South Africa, i.e. the Transvaal Association of Municipal Translators in 1950 and the South African Translators' Institute six years later.

SATI: Yesterday

Translation activities in government structures were in evidence in South Africa from the beginning of the 20th century. After Afrikaans' official status was enshrined in 1925, the government of the day was increasingly criticised for the poor quality of Afrikaans used in government documents and publications. Providing adequate translation services in Afrikaans proved to be a daunting task because of a lack of skilled Afrikaans translators and the fact that Afrikaans was not adequately codified and standardised. Seminal government documents such as the Government Service Pensions Act, No. 32 of 1936, were published in English only although the Public Service Regulations were translated into Afrikaans. However, the quality left much to be desired (*The Public Servant* 1959). More

often than not clerks with very modest proficiency in Afrikaans were used as translators, resulting in a situation where Afrikaans became "'n verminkte vertaaltaal … in die hande van swak vertalers",[3] according to Dr GJ Labuscagne (1959: 166), a founder member of SATI who later also chaired the Institute.

After the establishment of the government's Central Translation Bureau in 1930, a series of translation offices in government structures and parastatals (e.g. the Railway Language Bureau, the Wheat Board, the Wool Board, the SABC, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Chamber of Mines) and terminology committees such as the Post Office, Agriculture and Aeronautics Terminology Committees followed over the next 20 years (Van Zyl 1959).

In spite of the gradual increase in translation activities in government structures, public attitudes towards translation were generally negative. A Commission of Enquiry into Translation Bureaux at Head Office appointed by the SA Railways in 1950 was of the opinion that translation was "uit die aard van die saak 'n noodsaaklike euwel in Suid-Afrika"[4] (SA Spoorweë 1950: 1).

In 1950 Afrikaans translators in the employ of local governments in the then Transvaal province established the Transvaalse Vereniging van Munisipale Vertalers (Transvaal Association of Municipal Translators) (now known as Prolingua, 'an association for English and Afrikaans language practitioners') to address domain-specific terminology problems in their area of work. They claimed "dat hulle nie een-een by die verskillende munisipaliteite hulle eie ding kan doen sonder dat veral die gebruik van Afrikaans skade ly nie"[5] (Taljaard 1990: 1).

Recognising that, in addition to terminology development, there was a need for a national and comprehensive association "wat oor die belange en status van die land se vertalers kan waak"[6] (SATI 1956), the South African Translators' Institute (SATI) was founded by a small group of 19 distinguished Afrikaans translators who met in the Council Chambers of the Salstaff Building in Johannesburg on 25 August 1956. These objectives have not changed over the years and the Institute is still a national, non-profit organisation. These translators had recognised a need for uniting translators in solidarity to promote their fledgling profession, but an additional impetus for founding an association of translators at the time was a desire to support the promotion and development of Afrikaans.

The status of Afrikaans vis-à-vis the domination of English in government structures and the public service at that time was an important consideration for the SATI pioneers. These structures, in spite of Act No. 8 of 1925 enshrining Afrikaans' official status alongside English, were still, 30 years later, not competent in using Afrikaans. One of the subtexts in establishing SATI was therefore to advance the cause of Afrikaans in the Public Service and other government structures. Most of the founding members were in fact working in government translation offices. Dr MJ Posthumus, Director of the then Language Services Bureau (the successor of the Central Translation Bureau and now known as the National Language Service), was elected chairperson of SATI, the vice-chair was Dr DJ Coetsee, Head of the Railway Language Bureau, and the secretary Mr JG du P Pretorius, Principal Translator at the Municipality of Johannesburg (SATI 1956).

Besides a drive to change the diglottic situation in which Afrikaans was locked in government structures for some three decades by establishing translation as a respected activity in South Africa, they were inspired by their "Afrikaanse taaltrots" (pride in Afrikaans) and the desire to promote the development and use of their young language.

The establishment of SATI was therefore based on an explicit *operational* rationale (i.e. "to provide protection on two fronts: … to protect its members and … equally to protect the public desiring to make use of translation services" – Picard n.d.), but also a *persuasive* rationale that found its origin in a particular perception of 'deficiency' or 'shortcoming' (i.e. to change public perceptions and attitudes towards the profession – "to give the translator professional status and pride and to ensure an honourable position for the translation profession among the other professions" – Picard n.d.). Redirecting the public's attitudes towards translation was clearly an overt reason for establishing SATI, but a covert persuasive or marketing reason was to promote the use and development of Afrikaans in the face of the domination of English in government structures, trade and industry, the mining sector and the business world.

This objective was made clear by Mr GWT Oosthuyzen, SATI chairperson in the early sixties (and head of the then Railway Language Bureau). He argued that "vertaling is die lewensbloed van moderne Afrikaans"

Footnotes

3. "a disfigured translation language … at the hands of bad translators."

4. "because of its very nature a necessary evil in South Africa"

5. "that they could not practise their trade in isolation at various municipal offices without harming the cause of Afrikaans."

6. "that can look after the interests and status of the country's translators."

and that "die miskenning van die vertalersberoep benadeel Afrikaans"[7] (in *Die Transvaler* n.d.). The close alignment of the Institute with the development and promotion of Afrikaans is evident from his message to SATI members: "Die hoogtes – of laagtes – wat die Afrikaanse taal bereik, hang in 'n geweldige mate af van die kennis en bedrewenheid van die vertaler en die terminoloog"[8] (in *Die Transvaler* n.d.). Afrikaans was employed by Afrikaner nationalism as "a symbolic good" (Millán-Varela 2003: 156). Through the Institute's implicit persuasive orientation it supported the ethnic mobilisation and propagation of the Afrikaner.

The intimate relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaans translators, who came to view the 20th century as 'their Century of Translation', is evident from the words of SATI's first chairperson, Dr MJ Posthumus: "In alle beskeidenheid wil ek die beroepstrots van die vertaler dus as een van die belangrike faktore in die groei van Afrikaans sedert 1925 noem. Maar dit was meer as beroepstrots by die vertaler. Dit was ook sy volkstrots en veral die volkstrots van elke Afrikaner. Hier wil ek dit beklemtoon dat nagenoeg ons hele volk, veral na 1925, 'n volk van vertalers geword het. Ons Eeu van Vertaling het begin. Elk man wat toe gevra het: 'Wat noem ons 'n *clutch* in Afrikaans?' het 'n vertaler geword"[9] (Posthumus 1955: 21).

Translators were crucial in the process of "building a nation from words" (Hofmeyr 1987), but some years later Posthumus expressed his indignation about the lack of recognition for this role: "Ek het 'n klagte oor die miskenning van die rol wat ons beroep in die vorming en ontplooiing van Afrikaans gespeel het. Ek glo nie die oorskakeling van 'n volkstaal tot die staats- en kultuurtaal Afrikaans sou moontlik gewees het sonder die ywer, kennis en toewyding van so baie vertalers nie"[10] (SATI 1974).

The early seventies represented a watershed period in the life of the Institute. Under the leadership of Dr Jan Picard, who was elected chair of SATI in 1972 (he is currently the Institute's Honorary President), SATI's exclusive focus on the Afrikaans language changed when it was decided in 1975 to conduct meetings alternately in English and Afrikaans (Picard n.d.). A year later the Institute's face changed visibly when it started projecting a bilingual English-Afrikaans image in its publications to meet the needs of its non-Afrikaans membership (SATI 1976). As from the first edition of 1976, the Institute's flagship publication, *The Language Practitioner*, boasted a bilingual configuration of articles.

SATI's commitment to professionalism remained a strong driving force. Right from the start the Institute was instrumental in promoting the establishment of translator training programmes at South African universities. At a SATI Annual General Meeting in the sixties, then chairperson Mr GWT Oosthuyzen argued that "daar is 'n dringende behoefte aan behoorlik opgeleide vertalers in ons land en die enigste oplossing hiervoor is die akademiese opleiding van vertalers en die amptelike en akademiese erkenning van die beroep"[11] (in *Die Transvaler* n.d.).

Soon after the Institute came into existence, as far back as 1960, the Institute requested the Department of Education to involve it in any planning regarding the introduction of translator training programmes (SATI 1960a). Negotiations with Unisa to customise mainstream BA courses for translators also started in the same year (SATI 1960b). In 1973 SATI established a permanent Translator Training Committee chaired by Dr J Picard with representatives from South African universities such as Prof. L Eksteen, University of Pretoria; Prof. F Ponelis, Unisa; Dr C van Schalkwyk, Unisa; and Prof. J Combrink, University of Stellenbosch, to serve on this committee (SATI 1973). Through the Institute's efforts Rhodes University introduced a postgraduate course in translation in 1974 (SATI 1974). Negotiations as regards the introduction of translation courses were also conducted with the Rand Afrikaans University (now the University of Johannesburg), the University of the Orange Free State and Potchefstroom University (now North-West University) in 1975. The Unisa diploma course in translation was introduced in 1976 following a process of negotiations by SATI that commenced in 1973 (Picard n.d.).

Evidence of a move away from serving only the needs of translators working in English and Afrikaans linked to a heightened awareness of the needs of translators working in other South African languages is to be found in the Institute's first attempts in 1975 to recruit African language translators working in the former 'homelands' and 'self-governing states' such as Lebowa, Venda, QwaQwa, Gazankulu and KwaZulu (SATI 1975). These attempts were at first jeopardised by the apartheid dispensation in terms of which these translators were not citizens of (white) South Africa, thus obliging SATI

Footnotes

7. "translation is the lifeblood of modern Afrikaans" – "disregard of the translation profession disadvantage(s) Afrikaans"

8. "The highs – or lows – of Afrikaans depend to a great extent on the knowledge and proficiency of the translator and terminologist."

9. "In all modesty I would like to identify the translator's professional pride as one of the significant factors in the growth of Afrikaans since 1925. But in the case of the translator it was not only about professional pride. It was also his national pride and above all the national pride of each Afrikaner. In this regard I would like to emphasise that almost our entire nation became a nation of translators, particularly after 1925. Our Century of Translation had begun. Then every man who asked 'What is a clutch *in Afrikaans?' became a translator".*

10. "I have a complaint regarding the disregard for the role our profession played in the development and evolution of Afrikaans. I do not believe that Afrikaans' shift from a vernacular to a national language and language of culture would have been possible without the diligence, knowledge and dedication of so many translators"

11. "There is an urgent need for suitably trained translators in our country and the only solution is the academic training of translators and the official and academic recognition of the profession."

to categorise them as 'foreign members' without the right to vote. The Institute subsequently chose to appoint these translators as regional representatives on the SATI Executive (SATI 1975). The Institute's changing approach towards greater inclusivity was evident from the 1980 AGM, where ways and means of securing closer links with translators in the 'homelands' were discussed (*Oggendblad* 1980; *Pretoria News* 1980).

A measure of the successful collaboration with 'homelands' translators was the establishment of an important language development project in 1985. Translators working in Sesotho sa Leboa approached the Institute at its 1985 AGM with a request to assist in finding a solution to problems encountered with the translation into Sesotho sa Leboa of English and Afrikaans legal terms. The Institute requested the National Terminology Services (NTS) of the then Department of National Education for assistance. A needs analysis by the NTS pointed to "a primary need for terminology in criminal law and related domains" (CLTAL 2006). In 1987 the Institute donated R1 000 as seed capital for the establishment of a Working Group for Legal Terminology in African Languages.[12] Since 1996 a Centre for Legal Terminology in African Languages (CLTAL) has been compiling terminology lists in the sub-domains of criminal law, criminal procedural law and law of evidence.

Language development is a protracted process and requires expert input from a variety of role-players such as translators, interpreters, terminologists, lexicographers and academics. CLTAL envisages that the work started in 1987 will soon be completed with the publication of a trilingual dictionary (English/Afrikaans/Sesotho sa Leboa). CLTAL recently decided to incorporate its data into the database of the Sesotho sa Leboa National Lexicography Unit, a PanSALB substructure working on a comprehensive monolingual Sesotho sa Leboa dictionary (CLTAL 2006). It is particularly gratifying that SATI's modest investment two decades ago has grown substantially!

The macro-structural context of the sixties, seventies and eighties, the era of grand apartheid, had a far-reaching impact on the affairs of the Institute. This period, which was characterised by increasing isolation from the international community of translators and interpreters because of the segregation politics of the government of the day, demonstrated the complex relationship between language practice and political governance. The Institute's efforts to join the international arena of translators took place against the backdrop of dramatic political changes that the apartheid government was forced to implement in the aftermath of the 1976 uprising, a decisive watershed period in South African history. Several applications by the Institute to join the prestigious International Federation of Translators (FIT) were unanimously rejected by FIT's 40 member associations (cf. Beukes 2006).

From the early nineties a succession of rapid political changes shaped the macro-structural context within which the Institute functioned. Apartheid's racial segregation laws were scrapped, the ban on the ANC was lifted, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and the constitutional negotiation process started in 1991. The promise of a new dawn for South Africa became a reality. By the time the FIT Statutory Congress was convened in Brighton in August 1993 the foundation for South Africa's new constitution was laid and hence all reservations on the side of FIT and UNESCO removed. There were thus no more political barriers to joining the international community of translators and interpreters and SATI's application for membership of FIT was approved.

SATI today

South Africa's new democratic dispensation and a challenging language clause have provided a most enabling framework in which SATI could flourish professionally. The Institute has managed to contribute to professionalising the translation and interpreting profession over many years.

After half a century SATI is firmly established and widely recognised, serving the profession with a code of conduct, self-regulation through a voluntary system of accreditation in a broad range of South African and other languages, development projects (e.g. a bursary scheme to assist translation and interpreting students working in African languages; a translation prize for outstanding published translations in the official languages) and involvement in forums and projects at national and international level (e.g. the ACALAN translation programme and terminology development project). Internationally the Institute also enjoys recognition: SATI has served on the governing body of FIT since 1995, the only translation association from the African continent to serve in this position.

The Institute is still the only comprehensive non-profit professional organisation for

"The macro-structural context of the sixties, seventies and eighties, the era of grand apartheid, had a far-reaching impact on the affairs of the Institute."

Footnotes

12. The Working Group later developed into the Committee for Legal Terminology in African Languages.

language practitioners in South Africa, with more than 700 members across the spectrum of language practice, i.e. translators, interpreters, language editors/revisers, terminologists and lexicographers. Also, whereas initially SATI's members were translators working almost exclusively in Afrikaans and English, its focus since the early nineties has shifted significantly. As a result the Institute's members are now representative of translation, interpreting, editing and terminology activities in about 50 languages, including all nine official African languages and South African Sign Language, as well as other languages such as French, Portuguese, German, Dutch, Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin.

So the early nineties was a watershed period in the language dispensation in South Africa and accordingly also in the life of SATI and its members. In preparing to meet the demands of a new official language policy that would provide for multilingualism, SATI duly adopted a Mission Statement in 1990, embracing the notion of a multicultural and dynamic society: "In the spirit of its motto, PER INTERPRETES PONS CONDITUR, the South African Translators' Institute is committed to playing its part in a changing world by helping to build bridges between people and groups and fostering in the community an awareness of the need for effective communication. In pursuit of this goal the Institute endeavours to (a) promote excellence in translation and related fields, as well as clarity of thought and expression; (b) ensure high standards of professionalism among its members through accreditation and the adoption of a code of ethics; and (c) provide support for its members both in their occupational lives and as members of a multi-cultural and dynamic society" (SATI 2006).

"SATI was quick to recognise the immense ramifications of the language provisions in the new Constitution for translation and interpreting."

SATI was quick to recognise the immense ramifications of the language provisions in the new Constitution for translation and interpreting. At its 1993 AGM, the Institute announced its commitment to promoting a multilingual culture in South Africa. The Institute envisaged several initiatives to play its part in supporting the new multilingual dispensation and the development of a tradition of translation and interpreting in the historically marginalised African languages (SATI 1993).

SATI Development Fund

Recognising that the official status of African languages would make new demands on the training of translators and interpreters, SATI was of the opinion that the time had arrived for collective action to support such training (SATI 1993). SATI was determined to assist in preparing a new generation of language practitioners who would be suitably trained to meet the needs of a truly multilingual society. The Institute established a Development Committee to manage a Development Fund with a view to collecting funds and making assistance available to deserving translation and interpreting students. Over a period of 13 years the Committee managed the allocation of 53 bursaries to deserving translation and interpreting students totalling R140 300. SATI's own contribution to the Development Fund, through donations received from its members since 2000 and amounts transferred annually to the Fund, totals R58 000. In view of the urgent need to develop the African languages, the Development Committee is firmly resolved to support students working into and from African languages.

SATI Prize for Outstanding Translation

In 2000, encouraged by the success of the bursary project, SATI decided to expand its developmental work with a view to promoting the use of indigenous languages in published translations. Translation has the potential to play a vital role in securing prestige for indigenous languages in a country with 11 official languages. SATI was of the opinion that a prestigious translation award for work into and from the indigenous languages would also go a long way towards convincing the South African public that translation is an honourable and necessary field of work.

The Institute therefore announced the introduction of the SATI Prize for Outstanding Translation at its AGM in June 2000. The Prize, a first for South Africa to target all 11 official languages, consists of a substantial cash prize supported by the SATI Development Fund and a certificate of merit. A most encouraging response was immediately forthcoming from the BHP Billiton Development Trust, which contributed R50 000 to the SATI Development Fund to be used towards supporting the Translation Prize. Prizes were awarded on International Translation Day in 2000, 2003 and 2006. A generous sponsorship of R50 000 towards the 2006 Prize was secured from the Via Afrika publishing group.

A multitude of voices

Creating discursive space for the multitude of voices that SATI's members represent and in which they work is a high priority for

the Institute. Multilingual publications and dedicated projects are viewed as pivotal vehicles to give concrete manifestation to these voices and perspectives.

In this regard SATI broke new ground with its *Rights in Practice* (2005) publication published in English and Afrikaans and most articles also in five African languages. In addition, two major projects are currently under way in collaboration with important role-players. SATI recently launched a terminology project on the compilation of a multilingual translation terminology list in collaboration with the Training Committee of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), John Benjamins Publishers and the Department of Linguistics and Literary Theory at the University of Johannesburg. These lists (in Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho sa Leboa) will be based on a base list of 200 concepts in the domain of translation and interpreting teaching collated by the FIT Training Committee and published as *Translation Terminology* by John Benjamins in 1999.

SATI is also committed to supporting the continental drive to develop African languages through the translation programme and terminology development project of the African Union's (AU) Academy for African Languages (ACALAN). This project forms part of the AU's Year of African Languages 2006 to commemorate the adoption of its Language Plan for Africa in 1986. Through collaborating in this ground-breaking project SATI wishes to assist in realising the potential of translation in intellectualising African languages (cf. Alexander 2005: 6).

Conclusion: SATI's future

Looking back on the road travelled by SATI over a period of 50 years it becomes clear that our professional association did indeed have a considerable influence on language mediation matters and language promotion. In following the goals of SATI's founding members, the Institute will in future undoubtedly continue to direct its gaze to professional matters by serving our profession and giving "the translator professional status and pride" and protecting "its members and … the public desiring to make use of translation services".

However, having traced the Institute's successful involvement in language development activities in the past, I believe we should use that experience and expertise to broaden our association's participation in promoting translation and interpreting in the African languages. Prerequisites in this regard will be a broader membership base and active participation by all our members. In addition, better collaboration with other language and translation associations, both locally and in neighbouring countries, would likewise be imperative for success. I would like to argue that the Institute does not only have a 'technical' professional obligation towards its members, but that we should continue finding means of social facilitation. As an important professional association aimed at facilitating communication in a society where language inequality is endemic, SATI should adopt and promote policies and practices that promote the use of translation as a language development tool and as a tool for creating 'discursive space' for our indigenous (minority) languages.

Until now organised translation in South Africa has largely been associated with elitist activities. Community translation and interpreting have been neglected by both government and the Institute. As far back as 1993 SATI acknowledged that it had a role to play in promoting community interpreting, giving a voice to those who have less power. At the time the Institute envisaged that it would "establish short training courses for people fluent in more than one language who acted as translators and interpreters in their communities. Candidates who completed a course would be awarded a certificate which he hoped would enable them to be paid more in recognition for their role in the workplace", then SATI chair Johan Kruger said (*Business Day* 1993: 3). Regrettably these courses did not materialise. Determining the needs of those who have less power in our society and devising and presenting customised short courses are some of the important challenges that the Institute will have to meet head-on.

SATI's future lies in combining the power of its multiplicity of voices in advancing the cause of our profession and that of the Institute, but most importantly, we have to serve our clients, the people who embody South Africa's rich linguistic and cultural heritage.

"Looking back on the road traveled by SATI over a period of 50 years it becomes clear that our professional association did indeed have a considerable influence on language mediation matters and language promotion"

References

Alexander, N. 2005. The potential role of translation as social practice for the intellectualisation of African languages. In *Muratho. Journal of the SA Translators' Institute*, 5(2), October: 3-10.

Beukes, A-M. 2006. SATI's long walk to international acceptance. In *Bridging Language Barriers. SATI: The First Fifty Years 1956-2006*. Johannesburg: The South African Translators' Institute.

Business Day. 1993. SA 'could get lost in translation'. In *Business Day*, 22 June 1993, p. 3.

Thanks are due to Marion Boers and Karen van Rooyen for their assistance in translating the Afrikaans quotes.

CLTAL. 2006. Centre for Legal Terminology in African Languages Web-site http://www.legalterms.co.za (accessed 21 July 2006).
Cogan, ML. 1955. The problem of defining a profession. In *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 297, Ethical Standards and Professional Conduct, January 1955: 105-111.
DAC. 2000. *South African Language Practitioners' Council Draft Bill*. Pretoria: Department of Arts and Culture.
DAC. 2003(a). *National Language Policy Framework. 12 February 2003*. Pretoria: Department of Arts and Culture.
DAC. 2003(b). *South African Languages Bill. Revised Final Draft. 4 April 2003.* Pretoria: Department of Arts and Culture.
Die Transvaler. n.d. 'Miskenning van vertalers-beroep benadeel Afrikaans'. In *Die Transvaler*.
Haeseryn, R. 2005. *FIT over Fifty Years 1953-2003*. International Federation of Translators.
Hofmeyr, I. 1987. Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924. In: S Marks & S Trapido (eds). *Politics of race, class and nationalism in 20th century South Africa*. London: Longman: 95-123.
Kimball, BA. 1992. *The "True Professional Ideal" in America. A History*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
Labuscagne, GJ. 1959. Afrikaans in die Staatsdiens. In Du Buisson, MS (ed.): *Die Wonder van Afrikaans*. Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers: 159-168.
Marais, JSB. 1959. Afrikaans in die Staatsdiens. In *The Public Servant*, May: 26-36.
Millán-Varela, C. 2003. 'Minor' needs or the ambiguous power of translation. In G Hogan-Brun, & S Wolff (eds): *Minority Languages in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 155-172.
Newmark, P. 1982. *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
Oggendblad. 1980. Instituut wil nouer skakel met tuislande. In *Oggendblad*, 11 August 1980, p. 8.
Picard, JH. n.d. *Suid-Afrikaanse Vertalersinstituut: Drie Dekades op die Vertaalakker*. Unpublished manuscript.
Posthumus, MJ. 1955. Die eeu van vertaling. In *Munisipale Aangeleenthede*, Julie: 21-25.
Pretoria News. 1980. Translator institute to help homelands. In *Pretoria News*, 15 August 1980, p. 6.
Public Servant, The. 1959. Die Wonder van Afrikaans. In *The Public Servant*, 39(5), May: 4.
RSA. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act No. 108 of 1996*.
SATI. 1956. Minutes of the founding meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 25 August 1956, Johannesburg. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1960(a). Minutes of executive meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 3 August 1960. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1960(b). Minutes of executive meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 10 November 1960. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1973. Minutes of executive meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 21 September 1973. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1974. Minutes of executive meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 15 May 1974. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1975. Minutes of executive meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 20 October 1975. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1976. Minutes of executive meeting of the South African Translators' Institute, 6 January 1976. UNISA Archives.
SATI. 1993. SAVI stig Ontwikkelingskomitee. In *Bulletin*, 5/93: 1.
SATI. 2006. Mission Statement. www.translators.org.za/indexes/english/gen.htm. (Accessed 19 November 2006.)
Skocpol, T. 1984. Sociology's historical imagination. In Skocpol, T (ed.): *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1-21.
Statistics South Africa. 2003. *Census 2001. Census in Brief*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
Van Zyl, MS. 1959. Die vaktaal en die Staatsdiens. In *The Public Servant*, May: 37-38.

Seen at the SATI 50 Conference

Translation in Africa: The ACALAN translation project

I should like to begin by congratulating the South African Translators' Institute (SATI) on its golden anniversary. It is indeed a felicitous occasion when a voluntary association of language professionals is able to look back on 50 years of solid, foundational work. And, while it has to be said that, as far as I am aware, that work was largely confined to what used to be the two official languages before 1994, like a few other specialist organisations SATI has managed to negotiate the transition to the new South Africa without major turmoil and we have every reason to expect that all the official languages of the country as well as others will soon occupy their rightful space in the work and reflections of the Institute. Indeed, SATI has indicated on more than one occasion that it is willing to play whatever role is deemed appropriate and most helpful during this, the Year of African Languages (YOAL). This gesture is highly appreciated by the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), on behalf of which I am making this statement. I consider it to be a singular honour to have been asked by the organisers to address this very special conference of SATI and want to thank you for bestowing it on me.

My subject is in one sense quite simple. The aspect of the translator's craft that I want to focus on is, with the exception of the domain of the Christian religion, not very well represented in African literary work. But, before we proceed to look more carefully at translation, I have to make it clear that I am using the term 'translation' in the narrow sense of the rendering of a written text into a target language from a source language. The broader definition in terms of 'interlingual communication'[1] that includes speech (interpreting) as well as gesture (signing) is very relevant in the African context but would require a much more elaborate essay than I am able to write at present. For reasons that I have expounded elsewhere,[2] the economic, political and socio-cultural advance of the African continent requires, among other things, a large-scale, systematically planned programme of translating the great works of world literature, science, technology and philosophy into as many African languages as possible. Such a programme would indeed at one and the same time foreground and constitute the profound meanings behind the rhetoric of 'the African Renaissance'.

The significance of translation as social practice

In order to situate the translation project of ACALAN in the context of the cultural revolution, which is an integral aspect of the African Renaissance, it is necessary that I summarise briefly the philosophical vision that informs this project.

To begin with, we have to recognise that translation, in the sense of interlingual communication, is the archetypal mode of intercultural communication, about which so much is said and written today. As such, if we take a historical perspective, it has been, and is, one of the main processes, next to trade and military conquest, by which peoples have influenced and, therefore, 'developed' one another. This means, of course, that what we refer to as civilisation is the result of many centuries of such intercultural contact and two-way transfer of knowledge, skills, customs, beliefs, concepts, technologies, artefacts, etc. It means that civilisation is not a one-way flow of all that is good and beautiful from some superior group of peoples to the unfortunate ones that have been 'left behind'. All progress, all civilisation, builds on what has gone before. In European and North African history, we can trace the many different strands of such mutual influence among the peoples who inhabited the territories around the Mediterranean Sea in ancient times. Other such regional civilisations in Asia, Africa and South America have also begun to be studied in comparable detail since the end of World War II, i.e. after the decolonisation movement gained momentum. In all of these, the essential story is the same: peoples influenced one another through the same patterns of interaction. Their artefacts and their languages were appropriated in uneven but none the less two-way interactive processes that tended over time to alter markedly their ways of seeing the world and their ways of being in the world.

Footnotes

1. See Beukes 2006:1

2. Alexander 2005b

Paper read by Neville Alexander at the SATI 50th Anniversary International Conference 'Language Practice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' at the University of Johannesburg, 25 August 2006

Neville is the director of PRAESA at UCT and a language rights activist

By means of translation, we appropriate others' concepts, their ways of seeing the world in and through our language(s). We, literally, make it ours and, in so doing, we establish, where it does not exist, or restore, where it has been ruptured, the continuity between past and present, between tradition and modernity.This process is one that all peoples experience, and the further away we are in time from the original act of appropriation, the less comprehensible it appears to us that at some time in the past, that which has been appropriated was 'foreign', indeed non-existent. This is the reason why words, such as 'venison' or 'velocity' in the English language, for example, that to a formally educated person are clearly of non-English origin, are instinctively and robustly defended as 'indigenous' or native English words by the lay speaker.

This is a rather obscure way of making a simple but exceptionally important point, i.e. that this act of appropriation places the individual and, by extension, the group of people on a par with the 'most advanced' exemplars in the particular domain. When I can speak comfortably and systematically in my own language(s) about the most modem technology, science, logic or metaphysics, it ceases to be foreign; it becomes 'mine' or 'ours', and I or we have as much right to it as those through contact with whom we first came to know of the particular concepts. We need not look very far to find the infinite number of examples of this phenomenon. Writing on a different subject but operating with the same insight, Prof. Kwesi Prah (1995: 20) notes that:

> It may be argued that science and technological knowledge, if and where it is originating from outside, needs first to be appropriated by the target group into their indigenous knowledge base. Such knowledge needs to become part of the creative experience of the target society if its adoptional success and adaptational effectiveness is to be guaranteed. In other words, such knowledge needs to melt into the language world of the target communities; become part of their perceivable reality. If modern science and technology is to reach (as it must) African society at the grassroots level, it must not subvert the cultural order of the indigenous knowledge base. Rather it must wed, melt and integrate into the indigenous systems and become wholly part of the local culture. Given the fact that for most Africans, especially at the grassroots level, reality is defined in indigenous languages, it is difficult to conceive of the agency for such an adoptional process which bypasses the use of native languages. Indeed, the centrality of African languages to social and cultural life for the overwhelming majority of Africans makes them the key link for the organic incorporation of science, technology and innovative ideas into the development effort in Africa today.

I stress this point in the run-up to my brief discussion of the ACALAN translation project simply because it is in Africa that the rupture between tradition and modernity is most acutely manifest and most cruelly felt. The reasons for this have to be sought in the actual history of colonial conquest, imperialism and, latterly, that of 'globalisation'. It is also to be found in a careful analysis of the neo-colonial state, which, on this occasion,[3] I shall simply take as understood. The overall social and the specifically sociolinguistic effects of this rupture are devastating in terms of their disempowering consequences. Many, if not most, African people for generations now, do not believe that their languages are capable of serving the obviously powerful functions that the languages of the former colonial overlords performed, and continue to perform as so-called 'official' languages. The people, because of the linguistic attitudes and behaviour of the elites, are held in thrall by the hegemony of English and French, also known as the 'catechetical litany'[4]. It is, therefore, as a vector of the counter-hegemonic thrust of ACALAN's core projects that the translation project ought to be understood.

The ACALAN translation project

The word 'project' is well chosen, since at present there are only a few coincidental translations of texts into African languages that have their origin in an ACALAN organ. I refer here to the translations into 12 African languages of the plans for the Year of African Languages undertaken as a translation exercise by southern African participants in a postgraduate course organised by our PRAESA unit at the University of Cape Town and of a series of 'Little Hands' booklets that have been specially created to celebrate the YOAL within the framework of another ACALAN project known as the Stories Across Africa project.

The programme will be coordinated from the ACALAN headquarters in Bamako. Although a proposal exists at present, we are still in the process of moving towards operationalisation of this ambitious project. The proposed objectives are formulated as follows:

- To ensure efficacy in communication and in mutual understanding in cross-border languages in general, and in the AU's working languages in particular

Footnotes

3. See Alexander 2003; Alexander 2005a; Mazrui and Mazrui 1998 and Ngugi 1994, among others, for relevant analyses of the neo-colonial state-

4. This refers to the view that "English and French are international languages, the languages of science and technology, of commerce and industry , of higher education and universal culture -in short, the languages of education and development and international communication. Moreover these languages being foreign and therefore neutral, and being institutionalised through formal education, will unite us. Native languages cannot claim to perform the same functions, and must therefore take second place, and be used in those areas where we cannot do better for the time being. …" (Pio Zirimu, cited in Bamgbose 1976:16, n.25).

- To build the African and citizen consciousness through the development of African languages
- To develop tools and methods of translating and interpreting
- To promote inter-language harmonisation at continental level
- To facilitate the creation and production of bilingual texts (African languages-African languages, African languages-European languages and vice versa)
- To develop linguistic cooperation between specialists in common languages with a view to modernising them
- To promote socio-cultural and socio-economic exchanges between African communities in order to contribute to the realisation of the AU's integration and unity

As I have intimated already, the philosophical and historical rationale for any translation programme of this kind is necessarily the belief that through translation, people and individuals are enabled to appropriate a set of concepts and their material equivalents in ways that restore (if it has been ruptured) or establish (if it does not exist) the continuity between tradition and modernity in the consciousness of the people concerned. This phenomenon is of the utmost importance for Africa in the 21st century, since it is at the heart of the proclaimed Renaissance and since, through our languages, we will render all the achievements of the modern world, including those that are directly or proximately of African origin, familiar and indigenous, instead of experiencing them as the often alien objects and processes that they are today for most African people.[5] ACALAN welcomes the involvement in this programme of all interested parties and individuals both in terms of suggestions about key texts that should be translated and in terms of actual translation. In respect of the latter process, we have received the full support of the International Federation of Translators and of various national African translators' associations, including SATI itself.

Unfortunately, bureaucratic and legal complications as well as the ever-present issue of lack of financial resources have put a brake on this ACALAN project and others. This does not prevent us, however, from doing the necessary research and infrastructural preparation for the full-scale launch of the project. I will, therefore, use this occasion in order to address three of the main issues as we approach this ambitious language planning intervention. These issues are: the ideological climate that is necessary for the success of such a programme; the selection of texts; and the training of translators and related personnel, such as editors, proofreaders, ICT people. Let me make it clear that I shall not describe or analyse the corpus of texts translated into any or all African languages. That is a task that could well be proposed for a translation studies programme at one or more African universities.

Lessons from the Christian mission

Isabel Hofmeyr's recent work on the translation and reception of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in Africa has once again spotlighted the fundamental influence that the literacy activities of the Christian missionaries had in changing and shaping the lives of many African peoples south of the Sahara.[6] For the purposes of this essay, I want to stress the strategic, i.e. consciously planned, nature of these activities. It is clear that whatever the differences of approach and the sectarian, denominational conflicts, including all too often the personality clashes that tended to divide the various missionary efforts, they were all undertaken in order to convert to Christianity of one kind or another as many of the 'heathen' as possible. Ultimately, the agency of the missionaries and of other 'humanitarians' and 'philanthropists' was calculated to reinforce European conquest. This ideological driving force was indispensable for the undoubted success of the mission, whatever the failures in specific cases might have been.[7]

It is pertinent, therefore, to ask whether an ideological vision exists today such that the ACALAN project will be able to develop a momentum of its own, with only a lightly tacking central coordinating hand. The short answer to this question is that a new pan-Africanism, conceptualised and experienced as a counter-hegemonic anti-exploitation movement, is coming into being in direct opposition to the injustices that are consequent upon the many different ways in which the neo-liberal economic doctrine and economically discriminatory practices are imposed on the countries of the South. Pan-Africanism today is willy-nilly part of the movement for global justice, which finds its main symbolic public expression in the World Social Forum. I do not have the time to analyse the numerous duplicities, antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions that characterise both pan-Africanism and the World Social Forum. Suffice it to say that like the anti-slavery movement of the

Footnotes

5. For a fuller presentation of this line of argument, see Alexander 200Sb.

6. See especially the collection of essays in Vail (1991)

7. As the ideological concomitant of the political-economic project of colonial conquest, Christianity - in this loosely defined sense -played a similar role to that which the English language plays today with regards to the spread of 'globalisation', i.e., it was an essential means of imposing and intensifying the hegemony of the colonial project. The classic South African text for this interpretation of the Christian mission is Majeke 1952.

18th and 19th centuries in Britain and like the anti-apartheid movement in the 20th century, this movement provides a sufficiently widespread umbrella in the 21st century to give shelter to cultural activists committed to the liberation and modem development of the continent of Africa.

Having said that, however, it must be stressed that the enduring consequences ofwhat Ngugi wa Thiong'o called 'the colonised mind' are extremely difficult to counter in the absence of direct and immediate economic benefits flowing from the proposed alternative vision. Thus, for example, the people in general continue to be victims of what I call the static maintenance syndrome,[8] a social pathology that is based on the perception and the experience of the powerlessness of African languages in the general scheme of things. Because there is no, or hardly any, culture of reading in African languages even and especially among middle class people, notably in southern Africa, we have only a fragile *cultural* foundation from which to launch our translation programme. This is, of course, no reason for pessimism. All it means is that we will have to prepare for a long march, in which advocacy in the form of awareness campaigns, private and public sector commitment to adding market value to African languages and the resolve on the part of African universities to promote aggressively the use of African languages as languages of tuition at tertiary, secondary and primary levels of the educational system will all play a decisive role.

In summary, ACALAN is faced with the extremely demanding task of synchronising its work on language policy with other strategic strands of social policy in such a manner that all of these together become mutually strengthening. This task is made all the more difficult by the fact that the 53 independent African states are as diverse as one can imagine, they have contradictory and often conflict-ridden agendas and they consider the domain of language policy to be a matter of national sovereignty that will not brook any outside interference. Whether an academic association such as ACALAN can negotiate a path between the many Scyllas and Charybdises that confront it remains to be seen. What *is* certain is that the leadership, vision and political will to get this project off the ground undoubtedly exist today, much more so than even five years ago.

Which texts?

Following the model that one can abstract from Hofmeyr's study of Bunyan in Africa, it is clear that, initially at least, what she refers to as the 'translatability' of texts has to be a determining criterion. In this regard, it is important that, among other things, the chosen texts contain 'the right message' and that they appeal to the popular taste.[9] Since there is no such unifying ideological 'message' today as was the case with Christianity, it is clearly very important that, overall, and in specific domains, ACALAN and its collaborating organisations and agencies propagate the pan-Africanist message of total liberation and empowerment of all by means, among others, of the translation programme. As I have said above, this will call for skilful political tactics and clear-sighted vision, if the project is not to give rise to a divisive dynamic.

Besides ongoing translation work involving the classics and indispensable reference books and official documents such as country constitutions, it is in the realm of popular reading matter that the breakthrough will have to be made. Versioning of relevant texts to accommodate local, national and regional peculiarities of custom, beliefs and culture generally rather than 'true' translations of more or less equivalent linguistic contents will have to be produced with the understanding that the texts will influence African people but will in turn be changed by the perceptual grids of their target readerships. Their interests and preoccupations necessarily influence 'the material shape, form and content of the translated text' (Hofmeyr 2004:21). Indeed,

> The exigencies of proselytisation mean that texts have to be experimentally disseminated in bits and pieces and in a variety of media (image, illustration, photograph, postcard, magic lantern slide, pageant, sermon, hymn). Popular taste consequently registers itself in how these media are configured. … (and) … popular judgment has a decisive impact on whether translated forms become portable. (Hofmeyr 2004: 21).

Today, as the result of the micro-electronic revolution, the forms and shapes that the 'bits and pieces of text' can assume have been multiplied a hundred times. I stress this aspect of the many different dimensions of the How of translating and disseminating texts in such a systematic programme, since it makes it immediately obvious that the project is eminently feasible and, potentially, extremely popular and mass-based. In the context of phenomena such as AIDS, voter education, literacy campaigns, popular sport and religion, it is abundantly obvious that there is more than enough scope for many

Footnotes

8. See Alexander 2002

9. Hofmeyr's study analyses an array of specific factors peculiar to the mission project and the colonial project that do not have a bearing on the post-colonial situation, even though some of them, like the fetish character of books in the perception of the local people, still have the same power in many parts of the continent. (See Hofmeyr 2004: 11-31)

valuable ways of popular modernisation and intellectualisation of the languages of the continent. An important method of exponentially increasing the corpora of scholarly and scientific literature available in African languages is the proposed permission to Masters' and other senior students to translate into an African language one or more key texts in their chosen discipline(s) as a means of assessing their comprehension of the fundamentals of their subject. Once this proposal is approved and routinised, the momentum will increase rapidly.

It is also important to remind ourselves that there are existing systematic translation practices, notably into Afrikaans, Kiswahili, Haussa, Yoruba, Igbo, Amharic, Oromifa, Tigrinya and a few other major languages in different countries, from which much can be learned. It is really not necessary to reinvent the wheel. Translation of their own creative works from their mother tongue originals into English and French and even into other African languages by great artists such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Antjie Krog, among others, can also be recruited in order to demonstrate the value of translation and of bi-multilingual versions of a text.

Which languages will be prioritised? In principle, ACALAN is committed to giving preference to the so-called cross-border languages, since it maintains that it is these languages that are most likely to promote African unity because of their vehicular status. In practice, however, we are finding that those languages – including some cross-border languages – that have at their disposal networks of committed scholars and practitioners necessarily get prioritised. It is none the less the case that in all matters of translation, we are trying to find the people and the consensus on matters such as orthography, that will enable the cross-border and other numerically large languages to become the target languages of choice.

It would be self-deluding to ignore the critical issue of dissemination with respect to the success of the translation project. Today, the existence ofmore or less organised educational systems ought to render this problem negligible. However, we know from experience that this cannot be taken for granted. Advocacy, monitoring and aggressive intervention will be required in order to ensure that this project, which depends, ultimately, on a well established culture of reading in African languages, not only gets off the ground but keeps on flying, as it were.

At the time of writing, sub-regional symposia of linguists and other relevant scholars as well as the political leadership of the countries concerned are taking place. At these symposia, the structures of ACALAN as well as its programmes and their modalities are being finalised and we hope that the mechanisms that will determine the core texts as well as the priority languages will emerge from this process, so that the hard work of systematic translation can begin in 2007.

Human resources

Without the optimal corps of translators and related professionals, such as terminologists, terminographers, lexicographers, editors, proofreaders, illustrators, etc., this project is a non-starter. For this reason, another ACALAN core project, the Pan-African Masters and Doctoral degree in African Languages and Applied Linguistics (Panmapal) is being initiated, so that over the next ten to 15 years, this cadre of professionals, most of whom will have gone through a similar rigorous training, will be available to service the project and to assure the quality of what is produced.

The purpose of the programme is to provide financial and academic support to students who will strengthen the corps of language professionals on the continent. The central coordination will be undertaken from the University of Yaounde, Cameroon. According to the proposal for this programme:

> The aim of PANMAPAL is to train qualified linguists, language professionals, educators and other practitioners to become specialised in African languages and the application of relevant linguistic theory in the resolution of the issues and challenges that arise in the implementation of status, corpus and acquisition planning connected with the intellectualisation project. In this regard, we are especially concerned about the facilitation and establishment of mother tongue-based bi/multilingual educational systems on the continent. As in most other regions of the world, African culture in general and African languages in particular are also threatened by the current trend of globalisation, manifested in, among other phenomena, the global hegemony of English. The role of African universities in this context is to ensure that the languages of the people are appropriately positioned in all domains of life. If African languages are to be strengthened in order to be one of the decisive features of the African renaissance and of the 'African century' (with all that this implies in social, economic and political terms), a dedicated, competent corps of language professionals has to be created and consolidated in the course of the next ten years, more or less.

"ACALAN is committed to giving preference to the so-called cross-border languages, since it maintains that it is these languages that are most likely to promote African unity because of their vehicular status"

At the time of writing (August 2006), it is envisaged that the programme will begin in the last quarter of 2007 in the northern regions of the continent and at the beginning of 2008 in southern Africa, depending on the relevant academic year.

Is this a utopian project?

Utopias are essential both in order to hold up a mirror to the present and to sketch the possible direction of future developments. Of course, if they bear no relation to the real situation, they remain on paper and there is no chance of their ever being realised. ACALAN's translation project undoubtedly belongs in the realm of 'grand designs'. However, this is no reason to consider it to be some idealistic, unrealistic pipe dream. On the contrary, the time for such a project has come. The realisation by ever more African leaders and by the people, more generally, that more than 40 years of independence has not resulted in educational and economic success and that these two deficits are causally related to each other, if we confine ourselves to the dominant economic paradigm, has brought back into contention the view that it is essential that development be promoted in the language(s) of the masses of the people and not in the second language of the elites. In the Western Cape province, we have couched this realisation in the demand for a mother tongue based bilingual educational system. The conditions for getting this demand accepted are better today than they have been for decades. Given technological developments, including advances in human language technology such as machine assisted translation programmes, it is possible that we will leap over obstacles that earlier similar systematic programmes (such as that undertaken in Japan during and after the Meiji Revolution in the 19th century) took decades to overcome. If the political will is present and if the sense of social responsibility and historical redress of the much called upon 'international community' can be trusted, we ought to be able to look back at the end of this, African century' with a genuine feeling of collective accomplishment. That, in any case, is the scenario that I believe we should be driven by. And, I believe, it is a wonderful challenge to and a noble aspiration on the part of the translators' profession to playa central role in this world historic process.

"It is essential that development be promoted in the language(s) of the masses of the people and not in the second language of the elites"

References

Alexander, N. 2002. Linguistic rights, language planning and democracy in post- apartheid South Africa. In Baker, S (ed.), *Language Policy: Lessons from Global Models.* Monterey, CA.: Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Alexander, N. 2003. *The African Rennaissance and the Use of African Languages in Tertiary Education.* Praesa Occasional Papers, No. 13. Cape Town: Praesa/University of Cape Town.

Alexander, N (ed.). 2005a. *The Intellectualisation of African Languages. The African Academy of Languages and the Implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa.* Cape Town: Praesa, University of Cape Town.

Alexander, N. 2005b. The potential role of translation as social practice for the intellectualisation of African languages. In Salmi, S and Koskinen, K (eds), *Proceedings of the XVII World Congress International Federation of Translators,* Paris: International Federation of Translators.

Bamgbose, A (ed.). 1976. *Mother Tongue Education. The West African Experience.* London and Paris: Hodder and Stoughton and The Unesco Press.

Beukes, A. 2006. Translation in South Africa: The politics of transmission. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 24(1): 1-6.

Hofmeyr, I. 2004. *The Portable Bunyan. A Transnational History of the Pilgrim's Progress.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Majeke, N. 1952. *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest.* Cumberwood: APDUSA (Reprint 1986).

Mazrui, A and Mazrui, A. 1998. *The Power of Babel. Language and Governance in the African Experience.* Oxford: James Currey.

Ngugi wa Thiong' 0. 1994. *Decolonising the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Literature.* London and Portsmouth: James Currey Ltd and Heinemann.

Prah, K. 1995. *Mother Tongue for Scientific and Technological Development in Africa.* Bonn: German Foundation for International Development.

Vail, L (ed.). 1991. *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

SATI president and former chairperson, Jan Picard, with the current chairperson, Anne-Marie Beukes

Multilingualism and translation in South Africa

I would like to thank SATI for inviting me to this august and historic occasion, although the organisers will know that this is an honour I accepted very reluctantly. I had hardly put down the phone after agreeing to Dr Beukes's request when I started to wonder what it was that I could come and say here about translation in South Africa that has not been said before.

Trying to figure out what I could say that would be worthy of this august occasion took me back to my days at school. Our religious studies teacher (it was called scripture then) was a very dramatic person. Although I cannot claim to still remember all that he taught us, it was a very great joy to listen to his lessons. However, the lesson that I have never forgotten – because it turned out to be the one that seemed to continue to affect my school and professional life and is so relevant for the purposes of this paper – is the one about the building of the tower of Babel, sometimes called the tower of Babylon. Some of the things he told us happened at that event are not to be found in any Bible. I have not found them in any Bible, I should say. He told us that people in the whole world spoke one language. They then decided to construct a building that would be so high it reached heaven, so that they could just walk into heaven, so to speak. Apparently God was not impressed by this idea, and so he decided to sabotage the project and bring an end to it. So he made them speak different languages so that they would not understand one another. According to my teacher the bricklayers and the workers started swearing at one another, and even fought physically. It became a very dangerous situation. The project collapsed and the people split and went different directions.

As a primary school pupil I did not have a problem with this, except having to remember it for tests and examinations. However, when I went to high school and was enrolled for Latin I began to think more seriously about this event when I had to grapple with declensions, conjugation and the translations of Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Caesar's Gallic Wars, etc. I would feel angry about what happened at Babel, and wonder why God could not have thought of another way of sabotaging that project, instead of creating many languages, thereby creating multilingual societies in which poor souls like me had to struggle with the translation of Latin texts. It was as a result of this anger and disappointment with God that I kept on going to the part of the Bible where this story is told. When God came down to see the project he said:

> *"Now then, these are all one people and they speak one language. This is just the beginning of what they are going to do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want! Let us go down and mix up their language, so that they will not understand one another." So the Lord scattered them, and they stopped building …*

My anger and disappointment with this event continued throughout my days at university when I had to cope not only with Latin, but also with the Latin professor. I think this is anger and disappointment that somehow I enjoyed, because I continued with Latin and included it as one of my teaching method subjects when I did my teacher's diploma. Perhaps this is a situation for which I should be thankful, because as my life began to revolve around language and became free from Latin teachers and professors and my interest in language began to mellow a bit, I began to look at this event differently. It began to assume a new meaning for me.

This was the beginning of multilingual societies; the beginning of multilingualism. In fact this was the beginning of something that would turn out to be the highlight of my professional life and source of enjoyment and comfort in my retirement. That is translation.

However, the relevance of this event for the purposes of this paper is the extent to which it compels the reader to ponder on what the world would be without a means to mediate a multilingual situation. It is the extent to which it compels one to think more deeply about the relation between translation and multilingualism. Something that strikes one in this passage is the relation that obtains between language and power. It would seem that the reason for this act of God was that he knew that language empowers and

Paper read by Sydney Z Zotwana at the SATI 50th Anniversary International Conference 'Language Practice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' at the University of Johannesburg, 25 August 2006

Sydney is a language practitioner and consultant in the Western Cape

enables people to do anything they want to do – "… and they will do anything they want". People who have seen the film Roots (or read the book) will recall a scene in which one of the slave captives from the Mandika called to his fellow Mandika tribesmen and said, "… Mandika, speak to the man next to you; teach him your language and learn his!" Faced with such strong enemies as their captors, he felt that they needed to unite, and that there was no way that could be done if they did not understand one another's languages. Thus, when one reads this passage one finds oneself confronted with a number of issues – depending on one's area of interest. I have no doubt that anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists would also find issues that are of interest to them. However, for us the issues that we are confronted with are the challenges of multilingualism, the link between multilingualism and translation and the role of translation in the empowerment of languages and their speakers. Needless to say, these issues do lead to others, such as culture, education. Interpreting is one of the issues that come to mind, since it is usually not possible to deal with translation without dealing with interpreting, even though it is the intention of this paper is to skirt the issue of interpreting. As my experience in language practice is in isiXhosa and English, the examples I use will be in these languages.

"For us the issues that we are confronted with are the challenges of multilingualism, the link between multilingualism and translation and the role of translation in the empowerment of languages and their speakers"

When wearing our caps as students of theoretical linguistics we all agree that languages are equally worthy of theoretical analysis. No language is inferior to another in terms of their structure. However, as students of sociolinguistics we know that it is an unfortunate reality of multilingual societies that they tend to be characterised by inequality of languages in their status and stages of development. These inequalities always tend to coincide with and be conditioned by the prevailing socio-economic inequalities in any given society. The socio-economic inequalities themselves are usually an outcome of historical processes that have evolved and continue to evolve in that society. Invariably those that emerge as the ruling elite out of these historical processes will codify and standardise their language and then initiate and implement support systems to help its development. I need to mention here that this is the case even with dialects in monolingual societies where the dialect of the ruling elite is the one that is chosen as the language of government, commerce and education. Thus multilingualism, in any society that is rooted or that seeks to root itself on democratic values, presents that society with a number of challenges.

According to Stewart (in Fishman 1972:532) in Asia, Africa and Latin America the challenges presented by multilingualism "have been of a serious enough nature to have prompted a number of national governments to initiate remedial programmes." Although Stewart does not give any examples, he says a majority of Latin American governments opt for the easiest way out of dealing with this challenge, which is that of the elimination, by education or decree, of all but one language which is to remain as the national language. This option, he says, is taken with the aim of eliminating linguistic diversity, something which is part of a more general policy whose goal is the eventual assimilation of all ethnic minorities into a national culture. This option obviously does not recognise the link between language and identity and between language and human rights, and with an option like this it is not surprising that language is always implicated in political revolts, such as it was in the 1989 revolts in Eastern Europe and as it is in the separatist movement of the Basque province in Spain.

It is not within the scope of this paper to go into the language policy scenario out of which South Africa emerged in 1994. However, it should be said that it was inevitable for South Africa to go for the option that is more tolerant of multilingualism and of the recognition and preservation of languages. This option manifested itself in the entrenchment of language and cultural rights in the Constitution (section 30), the elevation of the nine African languages to the status of official languages together with Afrikaans and English and the legislation that established a Pan South African Language Board (zection 6) whose mandate would be to "promote and create conditions for the development and use of all official languages" as well as the Khoi, Nama and San languages and Sign Language.

The challenge I would like to start with is the issue of language attitudes, because it seems to be the most difficult to address. Usually the speakers of the language of the ruling elite tend to develop negative attitudes towards those languages that have a lower status than theirs. Quite often such attitudes are a reflection of their attitudes towards the speakers of the lower status languages. Sometimes these attitudes are conditioned more by ignorance than by malice. As language professionals I am sure we have no doubt that we have, at some time or an-

other, come across situations of negative attitudes that are bred by ignorance. However, I would like to share with you the following extreme ones:

Jeff Opland (1983:5) quotes an anonymous traveller who commented on Xhosa music:

> I could not hear any traditional songs. The wild chant in which the red Kafirs uplift themselves when they assemble for a feast is most monotonous. A sort of see-saw chant, from the highest pitch to the lowest bass, continued without variation, except as it is now and then broken by a shrill whistle or long-drawn howl. One cannot imagine it expressing any kind of sentiment.

Rev. WB Norton, the first professor of African language studies at the University of Cape Town, in his inaugural address (1921: 1) quotes a Bishop he met in 1903 who said, "… it is hardly worthwhile to fash oneself about Native tongues very deeply, because they are doomed to die out soon through adoption by English."

Our own Jan Smuts when he was giving the Rhodes Memorial Lecture at Oxford University in 1929 described the South African Blacks as follows:

> This type has … largely remained a child type with a child Psychology and outlook … No indigenous religion has been evolved, no literature, no art since the significance promise of the cavemen.

Even the person who wrote the first Xhosa grammar book, William Boyce, said in the introduction to his book: "The languages of the Aboriginal tribes offer no literary treasures for the amusement of the student."

The other side of the language attitude coin is that, in a society that is characterised by the domination of other languages by one language, because of bread-and-butter considerations, even the speakers of the dominated languages tend to begin to develop unfortunate stereotypes about their own languages, such as believing that these languages retard career development, inhibit the dissemination of scientific knowledge, and so on.

The examples I have given above are extreme indeed, but I have used them to emphasise the role that translation can play in situations of multilingualism to reorientate attitudes. People can speak like this only when they lack insight into the consciousness or the soul of the speakers of the languages they are talking about. Such insight can be gained by either learning these languages or by translating them.

Negative attitudes can also be reorientated through the broadening of the horizons of the use of those languages that are the objects of such negative attitudes. That too can be achieved through translation. Such broadened use would not contribute only to the reorientation of negative attitudes, but also to the restoration of lost pride in identities. Therefore translation can be said to be a leveller of linguistic inequalities. Language and culture are inseparable, and so the restoration of lost pride in identities means restoration of lost pride in culture – both material and spiritual. Leon Trotsky says that "… the most precious part of culture is its deposit on the consciousness of man himself …" (1970: 84). Thus in a multilingual/multicutural society each language group represents a particular consciousness that is expressed in the language of that group. It is therefore through translation that access to the consciousness of another group is made possible. It is translation that holds the various 'consciousnesses', so to speak, together in a manner that enables the citizens of a country to aspire to a national consciousness. Invariably the manifestation of such national consciousness is national unity. It is therefore clear from this that translation cures the human condition of alienation in all its forms.

The other challenge that faces governments that opt to embrace multilingualism, having recently emerged out of situations of linguistic inequality, is the apprehension of the speakers, or some the speakers, of the previously dominant languages that some of the strategies adopted in the promotion of multilingualism may result in the diminished use of their languages. Given what has been said above regarding the link between language and group consciousness, this apprehension is understandable. However, sometimes it can be of such magnitude that it leads to the development of very high levels of scepticism and a tendency of some sections of society to see an enemy behind every bush. Although this is not an easy challenge to overcome, it is possible to allay when speakers are assured that they shall not only continue to receive government services in their languages but also to access knowledge through their languages, irrespective of the language in which such knowledge was originated. This can only be made possible through translation.

The significance of this challenge is that governments that opt for the changing of the linguistic status quo and embark on pro-

"The other side of the language attitude coin is that, in a society that is characterised by the domination of other languages by one language, even the speakers of the dominated languages tend to begin to develop unfortunate stereotypes about their own languages"

motion of multilingualism must be able to predict possible reactions. Stewart says it is also possible that the levels of acceptability of new language policies may catch governments off guard. How, for instance, would the South African government deal with a situation in which speakers of English and Afrikaans throughout the country demanded that their children be taught the African languages spoken in their respective regions and the speakers of African languages demanded that their children be taught an additional African language? Would there be enough capacity to teach African languages as second additional languages, bearing in mind that second language teaching is easier when the educator knows the language of the learners, and that virtually no training in the teaching of African languages as additional languages is given to mother-tongue speakers of African languages at South African teacher training institutions.

The other features of a multilingual society in which the majority of languages are dominated by one language are low levels of language awareness, underdeveloped languages and indifference to language development. Improved visibility of languages contributes to the raising of language awareness levels. Improved visibility is made possible through translation. Translation in turn reveals the true state of the development of languages and the extent to which they are capable of coping with their new responsibility of disseminating information in domains that were previously the reserve of one or two languages. So suddenly governments find themselves confronted with the need to devise intervention strategies to address the need for language development. Language development itself leads to the need for standardisation – standardisation of terminology and orthography – to ensure the practice of translation does not degenerate into a situation of a free-for-all. Thus translation has the force of compelling governments to set up and support structures aimed at meeting these needs and to initiate the necessary partnerships, to ensure the success of these intervention strategies. Hence the language boards, the terminology units, commissions for the promotion and protection of language rights, etc.

Another spill-over benefit for multilingualism from translation is that governments are compelled to address the issue of illiteracy. Invariably, situations of socio-economic inequalities are characterised by very high levels of illiteracy. Thus, in order to extend the benefits of translation to as many beneficiaries as possible, governments are compelled to embark on vigorous campaigns to lower the levels of illiteracy. Although the issue of illiteracy is outside the scope of this paper, I shall comment on it later.

To say that information is power is a cliché, but it is so true. From the above it can be seen that multilingualism is power and that it draws most of its power from translation. Thus translation empowers. This brings us to the question I am asked to attempt to answer in this paper, that is whether translation *is* promoting multilingualism in South Africa. This, in my view, is a question that can be satisfactorily answered on the basis of findings of extensive research. This paper is not based on any empirical research. However, I have a feeling that the observations I make would, to a very large extent, be confirmed by empirical research findings.

"I think it would be useful to recognise and accept the reality that South Africa is very tightly entangled in what I call the trap of English. Unfortunately this is a trap that is so comfortable that it inhibits the desire of the trapped to disentangle themselves. "

In trying to answer this question I think it would be useful to recognise and accept the reality that South Africa is very tightly entangled in what I call the trap of English. Unfortunately this is a trap that is so comfortable that it inhibits the desire of the trapped to disentangle themselves. It is one that reminds me of what I once heard a preacher say, namely that it is highly unlikely that, after seventy years of slavery, all the enslaved Israelites were keen to go back home when the Assyrians liberated them from the Babylonians. I do not think there is a better example of people that are still in Babylon than that of a security company in KZN which, according Fred Kumalo's column in the *Sunday Times* of 20 August, deducts money from Zulu-speaking security guards who make grammatical mistakes when they speak English. This is not surprising when we consider the extent to which English has established itself as the lingua franca of the previously disadvantaged language groups, and the prestige that it has acquired for itself. I think it would also be useful to acknowledge that South Africa does not lack in policies and legislation that are multilingualism-friendly, and that are capable of providing government with good excuses to refute any criticism of its commitment to the promotion of multilingualism.

In 2002 I was invited to participate in a black empowerment conference and share my views on how African languages could be used as empowerment tools. At that conference I expressed the view that our national parliament should take the lead in the promotion of multilingualism. In supporting my view that that was not happening, I took the first Hansard book of the National Assembly, which contained the

speeches made on 12 and 13 February in that year, and analysed the spread of languages used. Sixty-two speeches had been made. Of these only nine were in African languages (one Setswana, four isiXhosa and four isiZulu). Only two of these were delivered in African languages throughout; in the other seven the speakers had switched codes. Of the remaining 53, only six were in Afrikaans; the rest – 47– were in English. Of the six Afrikaans speeches only two were in Afrikaans throughout. On 13 February, the then Deputy Speaker in the National Assembly said, "What we are saying is that, as a nation, we should do everything in our power to ensure that our cultures and languages are fully developed." On 28 February Minister Mdladlane expressed concern in the National Assembly that members were not using their mother tongues during parliamentary debates, "… because in doing that the member will be contributing to the quest to create employment opportunities, for someone will have to get into the interpreting booth and interpret and thereby be able to put a plate on his/her table." It would be interesting to find out how much ground has been covered since then in improving the use of African languages, including Afrikaans, in our national parliament.

The present practice in the national parliament is that only speeches made in Afrikaans and African languages are translated, into English only. Speeches delivered in English are published untranslated. The books themselves are distributed only to legal deposit libraries and provincial legislatures – and to members and staff obviously. Members are entitled to take copies for their constituencies. However, when I phoned the Clerk of the Papers to find out how often do members ask for bulk copies to take to their constituencies, his answer was that it happens once in a blue moon. From 2005 Parliament stopped publishing soft cover copies of Hansard books. Only bound volumes are now published. When I asked the Head of Hansard, Mr Hector Tshabalala, if this did not inhibit access to records of parliamentary debates, seeing that it takes so long before the bound copies are available, his answer was that these were available on the Web, and that the decision was taken as part of the drive to cut down on costs. However, what this means is that in the area of legislation, the visibility of the majority of languages is quite low, especially when one considers that the majority of Bills and Acts are in English and Afrikaans and that even these are not freely available. They have to be purchased from the Government Printer.

The issue of the Web is also worth commenting on here. Because of the work I do I know that all the departments of the Western Cape provincial government do translate their annual reports, strategic plans, performance plans, etc. into isiXhosa and Afrikaans and then they put these in their respective Webs. I phoned three community/municipal libraries in Cape Town to find out if they received copies of these documents. The library assistant in Gugulethu did not know what Hansard was, but the librarian told me that they did not have any Hansard copies, any Acts and any annual reports of the provincial government departments. This was also the case at the Langa library. The librarian at the Heideveld library told me the only annual report they had was the 2004/05 report of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, in the three official languages of the province, as well as this department's performance plan. They also had a copy of the Cape Town City Council's budget 2005/06 as well as that of its Integrated Development Plan, in English. Heideveld is an Afrikaans-speaking area but the librarian said most of the documents they received from the City Council, were in English. All three of these community libraries have computers from which the users can access these departmental Web-sites, but because many people cannot use computers, these were used mainly by students when doing their assignments, each being allowed only 45 minutes. It was, however, not possible to know what the webs were being accessed for. Web-sites are no doubt useful facilities to access information, but it still remains questionable whether they would contribute much to improving the visibility of all languages, even if all government documents were translated, given the socio-economic inequalities that are still prevailing in the country and the high levels of illiteracy, as well as the vast differences between the rural and urban communities in the provision of infrastructure.

It is my view that unless translated materials are made available to speakers of the languages, translation becomes just a ritual, a mere fulfilment of an obligation, the value of which is neither understood nor appreciated. The cumulative effect of that of course is that efforts to promote multilingualism through translation are undermined. Also contributing to the undermining of efforts to promote multilingualism, language awareness and positive language attitudes is the

"The present practice in the National Parliament is that only speeches made in Afrikaans and African languages are translated, into English only. Speeches delivered in English are published untranslated."

"All in all the mediocrity that pervades these translations ..., challenges us to ask how much training is given to translators in public service, and what measures are used to determine skill levels of those to whom translations are outsourced"

issue of the quality of the translation. Two studies in this regard have been done in Cape Town. Ncebakazi Saliwa did a qualitative analysis of government documents translated into isiXhosa for her MA degree at Stellenbosch University. I think her supervisor is here, and she will agree with me that the findings of the study make very sad reading, even though one cannot help laughing at some of the back translations given. Example: *The status which the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa confers on local government is as follows:* Back translation of isiXhosa: *The constitutional status in the province of South Africa which it (the Province) confers on one local government is the following one*. All in all the mediocrity that pervades these translations, in such areas as spelling, knowledge of orthography and grammar, challenges us to ask how much training is given to translators in public service, and what measures are used to determine skill levels of those to whom translations are outsourced. Even more seriously we are challenged to ask questions about the attitudes of those who commission translations. With the kind of translations that are analysed in this study, it is not surprising that many speakers of isiXhosa who can read English prefer to read the English versions of government and municipal documents.

Tessa Dowling and Thandi Mpambo-Sibukwana carried out some research on the translation of signs in public places in Cape Town. The *Weekend Argus* of 12 March 2005 ran an article on the findings of this research, which also reflect very poorly on the attitudes towards isiXhosa of those who, by virtue of their positions should be the drivers of the campaign to promote multilingualism in the country, and which make one despair and wonder whether the use of translation in South Africa is not being counter-productive. Example: At the Afrikaans Taal Monument in Paarl: *You can book for picnics*. Back translation of isiXhosa: *You can bring a book for picnics*.

We may say that government should develop strategies to remedy this situation, but what chance of success do such strategies have when the numbers of students who register for African languages at tertiary institutions are dwindling as at present?

The scenario I have referred to in this paper pertains to the Western Cape. However, having done that I would still like to put on record my view that the departments of the Western Cape provincial government are doing very well in ensuring that important documents are translated into all three official languages in the province. The problem is at the levels of quality control and accessibility of these documents. There are many activities and campaigns aimed at promoting language awareness initiated by the Provincial Language Committee, the PanSALB regional office and some lobby groups. But again there is the problem of partnership with the private sector, because the job market is still dominated by English, something which makes it difficult to convince the speakers of the other languages that their languages can also improve their marketability. I do not know what is happening in other provinces. I can only mention that last year I was invited by the isiXhosa National Language Board to their meeting in East London. At this meeting we were asked to go through some translated documents from the National Language Service. The standard of translation in those particular documents left too much to be desired. I also know that the translation into isiXhosa of some OBE-related documents from the National Department of Education drew a lot of criticism from the teachers of isiXhosa in the Western Cape. It would seem, however, that this is not a scenario that is peculiar to South Africa only. It is to be found in all situations where there are campaigns to promote multilingualism through translation. When I told a friend I was going to read a paper at this conference, he drew my attention to a news item from Reuters news agency on 16 August, about the translation of a sign in Wales between Penarth and the capital Cardiff. The sign is for cyclists and says: *Cyclists dismount*. The back translation of the Welsh was: *Bladder inflammation overturn*.

In conclusion, I will say I do not have an answer to the question I have been asked, except it seems to me that the road ahead in the drive to promote multilingualism in South Africa is still very long.

References

Hansard (Soft Cover Copy). *Debates of the National Assembly*, 12-13 February 2002.

Norton, WA. *African Life and Language.* Inaugural lecture, University of Cape Town, 1921.

Saliwa, FN. *A Qualitative Analysis of Government Documents Translated into isiXhosa*. MA thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2005 (unpublished).

Siegel, PN. *Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art*. Pathfinder, New York, 1970.

Smuts, JC. *Rhodes Memorial Lecture*. Oxford University, 1929.

Stewart, WA. A Sociolinguistic Typology for Describing National Multilingualism. In Fishman, JA (ed.). *Readings in the Sociology of Language*. Mouton, The Hague, 1972.

Sunday Times of 20 August 2006.

Speaking in tongues: Did the TRC open the floodgates?

In her article '*Seizing the surge of language by its soft bare skull': The ideology of simultaneous interpreting in South Africa*, Wallmach (2004a) provides a detailed discussion of the background that led to the establishment of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She states: "Simultaneous interpreting was central to the Truth Commission process. In fact, the Truth Commission could not have operated at all without simultaneous interpreting and the use of relay interpreting from English, the pivot language of the proceedings, since the majority of the victims and perpetrators who spoke at the Truth Commission testified in languages other than English. It is quite ironic that just as the multilingual Nuremberg Trials at the end of World War II marked the beginning of the use of simultaneous interpreting with sophisticated electronic equipment worldwide, so the first time many South Africans first became acquainted with the marvels of simultaneous interpreting was through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings: either on the news, or as a member of the audience."

In this paper I will attempt to answer the following question: Did the TRC open the flood gates for interpreting and in particular institutionalised interpreting? In order to answer this question, I will focus on a number of institutional service providers and attempt to indicate how the service they render is hampered by the absence of, or the inadequate use of interpreters.

Language barriers and their impact on institutional service providers

The SA Police Service

A study done by the Institution for Race Relations in 2004 once more alluded to the low level of English language proficiency amongst police officers. A follow-up study by Vergie (2006) which involved 485 student-constables and constables in Gauteng pointed towards the over-reporting of English language proficiency by the respondents themselves. When the student-constables' and constables' opinions were discussed with their supervisors a completely different picture emerged, with a clear indication of the impact of the lack of English language proficiency on service rendering. As yet, the SAPS has no final language policy. Unofficially the official language of the SAPS in Gauteng is English and to a much lesser extent Afrikaans. Meetings and correspondence primarily take place in English. Importantly statements are mainly taken down in English (but sometimes also in Afrikaans). Student-constables, who leave school after Grade 12 to join the SAPS, receive a six-week basic training at the police college, where no further language training is provided. Given that the majority of these student-constables are not mother-tongue speakers of English, they find themselves in a position where members of the public who prefer to make use of a language other than English come to the charge office to lay complaints. Apart from being called upon to assist if the language at hand happens to be a language student-constables are presumably familiar with, they often find themselves in the role of translator/interpreter, where that which is said by the complainant has to be translated to take down the statement in English – a language in which the student-constables do not have a high level of proficiency. This statement forms the basis for further police investigation and according to some of the supervisors interviewed these statements are sometimes of such poor quality that the investigating officers refer them back (Vergie, 2006: addendum 2; 8). In such an instance, the complainant needs to be contacted and the statement taken down once more. A docket that contains two conflicting statements may be problematic in court. In response to a question concerning the possible value of language proficiency courses for student-constables, one of the constables said:

> "Maybe to improve their grammar, or like spelling ... in English, because some of their statements that get taken down, are not so well ... I think a lot of information gets lost in the dockets from the statements that are taken down due to the … what shall I say?... inefficiency of the English or their lack of knowledge thereof, of the grammar and everything. Finer matters get lost in that statement because

Paper read by Marné Pienaar at the SATI 50th Anniversary International Conference 'Language Practice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' at the University of Johannesburg, 25 August 2006

Marné is a lecturer in Translation Studies and Interpreting in the Department of Linguistics and Literary Theory at the University of Johannesburg

of the translation or it's just not being written down properly ..." (Vergie 2006: addendum 2:8).

Courts

The South African court system relies heavily on the use of interpreters in the lower courts. Moeketsi (1999: 131-142) describes the extent of the training of these interpreters. The current minimum requirement is Grade 12 and knowledge of English, Afrikaans and at least two African languages from different language families. The candidate is tested for language proficiency. The test comprises translating short texts from and into the candidate's working languages as stipulated in his application. (Written and not oral proficiency is thus tested – rather odd if one considers the task of the interpreter.) If successful, the candidate is appointed on a temporary basis for 12 months. According to Moeketsi, the first two or three days after the appointee has taken up his duties, he is oriented to his new position by the principal court interpreter. After this brief orientation, he starts to work as a trainee interpreter under the supervision of his principal. He does this for two or three weeks until his principal is satisfied that the trainee has reasonable experience in court interpreting, and that he has been exposed to a wide variety of crimes that an accused person can be charged with in that particular court. Thereafter, the principal withdraws his surveillance partially and assigns the court interpreter to a particular courtroom where he works the entire working day interpreting a variety of cases. In effect therefore, the interpreter received three weeks of training. The trainee may then work in this way for up to six months before he is formally trained as a court interpreter at the Justice College in Pretoria. "However, for reasons that pass all understanding, several court interpreters have worked for up to five years and have still not been taken for training" (Moeketsi, 1999: 6).

"As a rule of thumb, South African state hospitals do not provide interpreters and interpreting is mostly done by whoever is at hand – the nurse, the janitor, the next patients' mom-in-law"

In the light of this state of affairs, one cannot but wonder what the quality of the interpreting would be. The situation is even further complicated by the hierarchy in the court, which places the magistrate on the highest level, followed by other officials such as the prosecuting authorities and the attorney for the defence, and leaves the interpreter at the bottom. And then there is the matter of so-called *legalese* (see Gibbons, 2003). The fact that one is able to speak more than one language does not mean that you are comfortable in all possible domains in which that language is used. Legal discourse is a highly specialised register, but in South African courts it is assumed that someone with Grade 12 and no formal training can cope with the challenge. Language is also the bearer of culture and even well-trained interpreters and translators know that resultant cultural gaps can be tough to deal with. Given the lack of training, the nature of legal discourse and the hierarchy involved it is then no wonder that misinterpretation in courts has become a source of endless anecdotes and jokes. But the point is: does this system allow South Africans to use their languages of preference in court, or are they jeopardising their chances for a fair trail in the process?

State hospitals

As a rule of thumb, South African state hospitals do not provide interpreters and interpreting is mostly done by whoever is at hand – the nurse, the janitor, the next patients' mom-in-law (see Crawford, 1994). Apart from the obvious flaw in the system, namely the non-provision of interpreters, the hierarchy issue referred to above also applies in this context. Within a hospital setting, doctors rank highest in the hierarchy and nurses find themselves at the bottom (see Drennan, 1999: 11). Crawford (1994) points out that the nurse does not only have to act as interpreter but also bridge cultural gaps that become extremely complex if one bears in mind that two completely different medical models are involved (especially in rural settings). The Western medical model sees infections, bacteria and viruses as the main cause for illness and stands in direct contrast to the African model, which views spirits and curses as the primary reason for a person not being well. Furthermore, the Western model relies on a question and answer mode of consultation, where the doctor asks questions and the patient provides answers. How strange this must seem for a person coming from a traditional African medical model where the healer is suppose to know the answers and asking questions could indicate incompetence on the part of the healer. Clearly a doctor who asks so many questions is not up to the task. This situation has been described in detail by Crawford and it should also be noted that it is not only the nurse-cum-interpreter or the patient who is compromised in the process. The doctor too, finds himself in a precarious position (Crawford, 1994):

"But if you are stuck with something that's

> recurrent and going to be there for the rest of the patient's life, epilepsy for instance, or high blood pressure or something like that, you do try and explain a bit and then if you have an impatient translator you realise your whole sentence is down to three words and that in fact the patient isn't being explained". (Doctor)
>
> "Sometimes [you lose touch with the patient]. With experienced interpreters you don't but with inexperienced interpreters there is quite often a long discussion between the two and in the end the interpreter says to you, "The patient says yes." Now, for what has the patient said yes? Your original question? Any of those things?" (Doctor)
>
> "When I'm giving advice then I know for a fact that what I'm saying is being reinterpreted and put across quite often erroneously. If I pick it up then I correct, but very often I don't, and it's only subsequently on a return visit you'll find, "But you told me to do this." " No, I didn't, I told you to do this." "The nurse said to me or the interpreter said to me I must do this." (Doctor)

In this regard reference should also be made to initiatives by the Western Cape Language Committee, which is investigating the possibility of training interpreters for the Tygerberg and Hottentots Holland hospitals. To date these incentives have not materialised. The Helen Joseph Hospital in Johannesburg has decided not to train interpreters, but is rather investigating the possibility of offering language courses to doctors who are busy with their year of community service. The reason for this course of action lies with the fact that money is available for the further training of doctors, whilst no provision is made for the appointment of interpreters.

In his discussion of the organisational factors that influence the provision of language services in mental health care, Drennan (1999: 112) points out that institutional racism in new integrated services has been replaced by covert disadvantage via language. As in the case of state hospitals, provision for the use of trained, professional interpreters is seldom made in psychiatric hospitals.

State pharmacies

Languages preference and differences are generally also not accommodated in state pharmacies. Smit (1999: 165 and further) investigated the situation at Kalafong Hospital and found "that a disparity exists between the language skills of the health care workers (or pharmacists) and those of the patients. Most of the patients are only capable of speaking an African language and have little or no knowledge of Afrikaans or English". The mother tongue of the majority of the pharmacists is English (70%), with respectively 20% and 10% being speakers of Afrikaans and Northern Sotho. The pharmacists have only a limited knowledge of African languages, with 90% of them being incapable of communicating efficiently in any of the African languages. The two pharmacy assistants are called upon to do the interpreting, but both of them are Northern Sotho native speakers, yet only 27% of the interpreting requires a Sotho language, 54% of the interpreting is done to and from an Nguni language and the balance is made up of the other languages. Needless to say, the quality of the interpreting is very low. This inevitable leads to a very high 'come back' figure as patients do not take their medication in the correct manner and are therefore not cured. The hospital's resources are thus further stretched as the whole process of seeing a doctor and being referred to the pharmacist is repeated. This is just one more example of the high cost of not implementing multilingualism on grass roots level.

The use of simultaneous interpreting as an aid in parallel medium tertiary education

Another domain in which attempts are being made to facilitate the bridging of language barriers is that of tertiary education. In South Africa the language policies of tertiary educational institutions have been a point of serious concern and debate over the past number of years (see Johl 2001: 5-8; Van Rensburg 2001: 9-14; Roodt 2001: 15-20; Smit 2001: 21-26; De Klerk 2001: 27-32; Dlamini 2001: 33-40 and Pienaar 2001: 41-47). Historically Afrikaans-medium universities especially have been affected by pressure to re-evaluate their policies and to provide teaching in English.

In 2004, the Potchefstroom campus of North-West University implemented the use of simultaneous interpreting into English in some selected classes. The Potchefstroom campus does not offer parallel medium teaching but uses Afrikaans as medium of instruction. According to Mr Johan Blaauw, students who spoke an African language as first language in particular were disadvantaged by the university's language policy. An experiment was subsequently conducted to establish if such students would benefit from English tuition – be it by means of simultaneous interpreting or by the direct use of English as medium of instruction. At the same time the experiment also sought to

"... institutional racism in new integrated services has been replaced by covert disadvantage via language"

establish if Afrikaans-speaking students would be disadvantaged by the use of English as medium of instruction. Van Rooy (2005: 86-87) reports as follows: "As far as the straight-forward comparisons between Afrikaans and English as media of instruction are concerned, it is clear that Afrikaans learners perform much better in Afrikaans classes than in English classes, while Black learners perform much better in English classes than in Afrikaans classes". Classroom interpreting has since been extended to the Vaal Triangle campus of the North-West University and in 2006 a total of 254 lecture hours are interpreted per week. However, at this stage the service does not extend to include African languages.

"This apparent unwillingness to make use of an interpreting service comes as no surprise and ... is directly attributed to the status of English in South African society"

A similar experiment was conducted at the former Rand Afrikaans University (now the Auckland Park campus of the University of Johannesburg). In contrast to the Potchefstroom case study, a series of classes was interpreted from English into Afrikaans. Although the students who made use of the interpreting were mother-tongue speakers of Afrikaans and second-language speakers of English with varying proficiency in English, it was conspicuous that when not explicitly asked whether they needed the service, they did make use of it. However, when they had to make a conscious decision to use the service, they declined it. The research concluded that students felt uncomfortable admitting they had a problem with English, even though (and the lecturer agreed) some of them were clearly at a loss in the class without the service. This apparent unwillingness to make use of an interpreting service comes as no surprise and tallies with other findings (see Pienaar, 2002: 274 and Wallmach 2004: 8) and is directly attributed to the status of English in South African society.

Follow-up research at the University of Johannesburg met with a new challenge. An investigation into the linguistic profile of one first year class consisting of 103 students indicated that the students' linguistic repertoire covered 25 languages, which made it virtually impossible to interpret into the languages suggested by the University of Johannesburg's draft language policy, namely English, Afrikaans, Sepedi and isiZulu, seeing that only a small percentage of the students would have benefited from the implementation of an interpreting service (Beukes and Pienaar, 2006).

Further domains in which interpreting is not done justice

The list of institutional domains where language facilitation, and interpreting in particular, either does not take place, or where the process, if indeed it does take place, is hampered by the lack of insight into the role of the interpreter is almost inexhaustible. The impact of the lack of or the use of untrained interpreters has been documented in state departments and local government, South African provincial legislatures and in the field of social work.

State departments and local government

In a discussion of language rights and language mediation, Marivate (2000: 136) points out that state institutions are the perpetrators in more than 90% of the complaints PanSALB receives concerning the violation of language rights. She also refers to the case of Carstens vs. Post Office, where it was found that the Post Office violated the rights of its employers through the predominant use of English.

In a study on language policy and language planning in municipalities in the Free State, Strydom and Pretorius (2000: 115) conclude that debates in municipal council meetings mainly take place in English and Afrikaans and reports are also made available in these two languages only. As far as interpreting is concerned, they note: "When another language is used interpretation takes place, often by other members of the council – *a professional interpretation service not being available*" (my emphasis).

South African provincial legislatures

The provision of effective interpreting services in multilingual contexts and in this case South African provincial legislatures is not only dependent upon well-trained, competent interpreters and adequate equipment, but also depends on the predisposition, attitude and support of the users of such services. Pienaar (2002: 272) alludes to the underutilisation of simultaneous interpreting services in the Gauteng Legislature. She discusses the ignorance concerning interpreting as is apparent from statements made by members of the legislature who inter alia criticise the interpreters for not saying everything that is said by members during a sitting of the house and also for lagging behind the speakers and not rendering the interpretation at the exact same moment as it is given by speakers. In spite of the fact that the kind of text being interpreted poses immense challenges to the interpreters due to the time limitations set on speakers, the topics under discussion and code-switching (Wallmach 2004b) the majority of the polit-

ical parties refused to make documentation available to the interpreters prior to the sittings of the house for fear that it might be 'leaked'.

The process followed by the Limpopo Legislature when it first implemented an interpreting service also bore testimony to ignorance when translators were expected to double up as simultaneous interpreters (see Pienaar, 2002: 272).

Social work

Devenish (1999: 176) argues that one-eighth of all social workers in South Africa are black, whilst the black population comprises seven-eighths of the client base. The implication is that seven-eighths of all social workers need to render a service in a language (English or Afrikaans) other than clients' primary language. Devenish's study focuses on the role of interpreters in interviews social workers conducted with the members of the Portuguese speaking community of Pomfret in the Northern Cape. The clients were former member of 32 Battalion, a group of Angolans recruited by the SADF. Following Resolution 435 of the Security Council of the United Nations which resulted in Namibia's independence, they were withdrawn from the Caprivi in Namibia by the SADF and relocated in South Africa in 1989. The process of relocation was repeated when the military unit in Pomfret closed its doors in 1992. The continued loss of security, the exposure to foreign cultures and traditions as well as emotional uncertainty concerning their future home, the preservation of their identity and fear of the unknown had to be dealt with. Because the social workers who had to assist the community did not speak Portuguese, interpreters were called upon to mediate.

Devenish (1999: 180-181) analyses the process where interviews were conducted with members of the community with the help of interpreters, and comments, as far as the interpreting is concerned, as follows:

- Interpreters are not always viewed in a positive manner by the client, as the presence of a third person influences the principles of social work and the communication process.
- Not one of the interpreter respondents had ever received formal training regarding involvement in a social work situation. This lack of training could lead to a relatively negative view of the communication process.
- The interpreter is the third person in the communication process and is a medium through which the communication takes place. The interpreter is thus perceived as an extension of the social worker.
- There is uncertainty with regard to the role clarification of the interpreters during the interview process.
- The interpreters themselves indicated that they were uncertain about their role and function.
- All the interpreters indicated that their interpreting services were supplementary to their actual terms of employment.

The fact that the study gives neither an indication of the interpreters' actual job description nor how they were selected implies that the selection process, as was the case in some of the examples cited above, took place at random and it is therefore not surprising that Davenish arrives at the general conclusion that interpreters should be trained to understand the nature of social work interviews. One can only speculate about the need to train the interpreters as interpreters.

TISSA and CHITEP

However, *over the past few* years, some attempts have been made to alleviate the situation. Two that deserve attention are TISSA and CHITEP.

TISSA

In 1995 the Cabinet approved investigating the possibility of establishing a Telephone Interpreting Service for South Africa (TISSA) under the auspices of the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST). Such services are available in several countries, for example Australia, England and the Netherlands. The best known services in Australia are TIS Canberra (which handles approximately 175 000 interpreting jobs per annum) and TIS Melbourne (about 100 000 during the night and 200 000 during the day) and Perth (about 75 000) (Schuring, 1999). The idea was to establish such a centre whereby telephone interpreting services would eventually be available to any person in South Africa who has access to a phone. The project envisaged a situation where institutions such as police stations and hospitals would have access to the centre via telephone lines and video monitors. If a member of the public arrived at a hospital or police station and could not be served due to the inability of the service provider to speak his or her language, a call could be placed to the centre

"One-eighth of all social workers in South Africa are black, whilst the black population comprises seven-eighths of the client base. The implication is that seven-eighths of all social workers need to render a service in a language (English or Afrikaans) other than clients' primary language."

and an interpreter would be made available to mediate. In 2003 the pilot phase of the project was launched. Technically it succeeded, but owing to politics and a lack of funding by the state, the project came to a standstill.

However, in May this year the service was re-launched in Tshwane. Currently there are 23 interpreters and a few state departments as well as the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and the Pretoria Police are among the first who had the special telephones (with two head-sets – one for use by the client and one for use by the official) installed. The idea is to roll out the project over the next three years from a half-day shift to a 24-hour service. According to the communications officer of TISSA: "The new project is cheap and cost-effective. It is better than the departments spending money to appoint individual interpreters" (*Beeld*, 10 May 2005: 4) – not that interpreters were generally appointed by state departments in the past.

CHITEP

The National Language Project (NLP) launched the Community Health Interpreter Training and Employment Programme (CHITEP) in 1998. The overall aim was to facilitate the access of linguistically marginalised people (in this case isiXhosa-speaking patients in the Western Cape) to health care services (Ntshona, 1999: 144). In spite of various challenges, namely finance, attitudinal factors such as stereotypical perceptions, and bureaucracy, the programme met with some success and it was decided to implement it nation-wide. However, the dissolution of the NLP also put an end to this programme and as far as could be ascertained no similar initiatives are currently in the offing.

"The use of South Africa's indigenous languages deepens democracy by giving access to crucial information and knowledge that benefits all our people, but especially the rural population, who are doubly deprived when services are available only in languages they cannot understand"

Opening the floodgates?

In a discussion on interpreting at the public hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Wallmach (2004: 5) poses the following question: "So if interpreting is such a vital part of the process, why is it so invisible?" After contemplating the application of simultaneous interpreters in South Africa, she comes to the following conclusion: "Thus the ideology of interpreting is often very apparent in South Africa, fulfilling an important nation-building function – and of course, simultaneous interpreting is the only practicable mode of interpreting when a country has eleven official languages. *But sometimes, nation-building becomes tokenism, the use of conference interpreting nothing but a symbolic gesture*" [my emphasis].

When the Minister of Arts and Culture launched the telephone interpreting service in May 2005, he said: "The use of South Africa's indigenous languages deepens democracy by giving access to crucial information and knowledge that benefits all our people, but especially the rural population, who are doubly deprived when services are available *only in languages they cannot understand."* (www.sabcnews.com/south-africa/general)

Thus far I have sketched a rather grim picture of the current state of interpreting in South Africa and it would only be fair to acknowledge what has been achieved in this regard so far.

- *Increased awareness and visibility*

In the first instance there is a growing awareness regarding the nature of interpreting and interpreters are slowly but surely becoming more visible. It does seem as if there is an increasing demand for interpreters (compare the various legislatures, metro councils, National Parliament and the Pan African Parliament, to name but a few). An increasing number of articles appear in the print media (in particular on issues pertaining to court and educational interpreting, see Williamson 2005 and Pienaar 2005).

- *Educational interpreting*

Educational interpreting is proving to be a unique South African domain of application and as far as could be established the only other mode of interpreting that is internationally readily used in class rooms is Sign Language interpreting.

- *The expansion of SA Sign Language interpreting*

One of the biggest achievements concerning SA Sign Language is the finalisation of the accreditation system and six persons have already been accredited. A further important development is the establishment of SASLINK – an agency that currently employs three full-time interpreters. It is also encouraging that the Health and Social Welfare SETA has put its weight behind this initiative and became involved in the training of interpreters. National Parliament has obtained the services of a SA Sign Language interpreter to fulfil the needs of one of the LPs. SA Sign Language is recognised as an official medium of tuition and as such is offered at the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of the Free State and the Durban Institute of Technology. The

first world conference for Sign Language Interpreters (World Association of Sign Language Interpreting) took place in Worcester last year and drew more than 600 delegates.

- *Formal training*

A growing number of universities are involved in interpreter training. Although there are differences in emphasis, it is encouraging that more trained interpreters across the various domains are annually entering the market.

- *TISSA*

The re-launch of TISSA is a step in the right direction.

- *Increased research*

A growing body of research that focuses specifically on the South African context is evident from the increased number of conference papers, articles in accredited journals, MA dissertations and doctoral theses.

- *SATI accreditation system*

The South African Translators' Institute has developed an accreditation system that contributes to improved standards in the profession as well as an Interpreting Chapter that focuses on the concerns of interpreters.

- *The Standards Generating Body for Translation, Interpreting and Language Editing (Tile SGB)*

Five qualifications are already in plac,e which is all the more noteworthy if one considers that Europe only started their process in 2001. A further positive development is the Law SGB's involvement in the new court interpreting diploma.

Conclusion

In the above, the impact of language barriers on the ability of institutional service suppliers such as the South African Police Service, courts, state hospitals and pharmacies, tertiary education institutions, state departments and local government, provincial legislatures and social work to render such services has been discussed.

The absence of proper interpreting services to facilitate communication between the state and its citizens leads to a distressing level of miscommunication and disempowerment. The level of the service provided is hampered as citizens' access to information and assistance is effectively barred. In cases where trained interpreters (liaison and conference interpreters) are available, a lack of insight into their role as well as an assumed breach in confidence cause frustration for all concerned.

Yet, the interpreting industry has established itself over the past decade and as such it contributes to the breaking down of language barriers. However, much work lies ahead and there are still many challenges, especially as far as the provision of liaison interpreters and general awareness are concerned.

In response to the original question *"Did the TRC open the floodgates for interpreting in South Africa?"* one could therefore probably answer: *"Yes, but not widely enough"*.

Citizens who find themselves unable to communicate with institutional service providers in their own country are exposed to exclusion and estrangement.

"A growing number of universities are involved in interpreter training. Although there are differences in emphasis, it is encouraging that more trained interpreters across the various domains are annually entering the market."

References

Beukes, A and Pienaar, M 2006. Simultaneous interpreting – an alternative to parallel medium teaching in tertiary education? Paper read at the IATIS conference in Cape Town, 12-15 July 2005.

Crawford, A. 1994. Black Patients / White Doctors: Stories lost in Translation. Cape Town: National Language Project.

Devenish, K. 1999 Interviewing with an interpreter in social work. In Erasmus, M (ed). *Liaison Interpreting in the Community*. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 175-183.

De Klerk, V. 2001. From the sublime to the ridiculous – or somewhere in between? A Language policy for an historically English medium university. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1): 27-32.

Dlamini, CRM. 2001. The attainability of multilingualism at universities. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1): 33-36.

Drennan, G. 1999. Organisational factors affecting the provision of language services in mental health care. In Erasmus, M (ed) *Liaison Interpreting in the Community*. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 109-122.

Erasmus, M (ed). 1999. *Liaison Interpreting in the Community*. Pretoria: Van Schaik

Gibbons, J. 2003. *Forensic Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Institute for Race Relations. South African Survey, 2003/2004. Johannesburg: Institute for Race Relations.

Johl, CS (ed). 2001. Die Taal van Universiteite in Suid-Afrika. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1): 5-8.

Marivate, C. 2000. The mission and activities of the Pan South African Language Board. In Deprez, K & Du Plessis, T (eds) *Multilingualism and Government*. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 130-137.

Moeketsi, R. 1999. *Discourse in a multilingual and multicultural courtroom: A court interpreter's guide*. JL van Schaik: Pretoria.

Pienaar, M. 2001. Op pad na veeltaligheid: Uitdagings op grondvlak, die waarde en beperkinge van

References continued on page 36

Word power: Are we winning the terminology battle?

The short answer to this question is NO.

A brief definition of terminology and lexicography

There are various definitions of terminology, but for the purpose of this exercise a few loose ideas are picked up for the definition:

- An explanation of the meaning of words
- The process of using words to describe, define or analyse things or concepts
- Terminology is also about defining characteristics or propeties of concepts
- The documentation of information on the specialised concepts used in specific subject areas
- According to the Longman dictionary, a term is a word or expression with a precise meaning, especially one that is peculiar to science, art, profession or subject.

If these are some of the main aspects of terminology/ terminography, we are still far from winning the battle.

In the African language context we need to develop and find new ways of genereting new terms that reflect a technologically and economically advancing world. In an ideal world, terminographers need the expertise of the lexicographers, but in African languages there are very few or no lexicographic products that terminologists and other language practitioners can work with and from as linguistic resources.

Lexicography is about gathering and documentation of lexical iterms. Explaining in a systematic (e.g. alphabetical) sequence. Sometimes lexicographers define a word/ term by listing synonyms and giving contexts where they are used. Ideally lexicographers record and document words/word classes occuring in a natural, organic and spontaneous environment.

Who are the role players?

- Individual African language practitioners
- PANSALB and its structures (the NLBs, NLUs and the PLCs)
- Department of Arts and Culture – National Language Service
- Some academic institutions
- SATI
- Media (especially SABC)

What and where is the battle?

Language practitioners are expected to use assegais, knopkieries and shields to face the machine guns.

- African language practitioners work in isolation with little or no resources and with no battle plan (without any professional and infrastructural support).
- Linguistic materials/resources are not available/ published/printed.
- Available linguistic resources are not very useful in a modern techonological world.
- Terminology and lexicographic work need dedicated and professionally trained people (at the moment most work is on an ad hoc basis).
- There's no reliable and coordinated database of linguistic resources and people.
- Language development agencies work in isolation from one another (poor or no consultation processes in place).
- The rate of new terminology development is too slow and too low (lagging behind).

Challenges and constraints

- Prescriptive vs descriptive approach to terminology development (An approach and mindset problem on how to deal with terminology)
- Undemocratic processes of terminology development
- Terminology process and language development in general not seen as part of social transformation and also being subject to transformation
- Lack of accessible on-going intensive training of language practitioners
- Inadequate resources (finances) for language practitioners' training and development
- Lack of developmental infrastructure for language practitioners (professionalisation)
- Not involving other professionals/field specialists, e.g. scientists, lawyers, busi-

Paper read by Khethiwe Mboweni-Marais at the SATI 50th Anniversary International Conference 'Language Practice: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' at the University of Johannesburg, 25 August 2006

Khethiwe is a language practitioner and owner of the agency Communications for Organisational Development

ness ,in terminology/language development
- An institute/association by and for African language practitioners and dedicated to African languages
- Few guaranteed jobs for language practitioners and where available not commensurate with skills required to retain high calibre of language practitioners
- Career pathing and promotion of viable language professions (most people working in this area are freelancers – not viable for them to work full-time)
- Putting financial resources into language development work (in a planned and sustainable manner)

What should be done

According to RB Kaplan and RD Baldauf in *Language Planning* (1997: 44), in any "culturally, technologically changing conditions, thousands of new terms must be generated each year in a language if that language is to be fully expressive in every domain". Speedy development of vast amounts of vocabulary and terminology across different fields of knowledge is thus required.

- Undertaking a progressive approach that requires modernisation and elaboration of terminology.
- Terminology development structures required to work in a transparent and democratic way and in a consultative manner with all sectors of society.

This will not only expand the knowledge base of African languages into new areas but will also improve communication. This should also go hand in hand with increasing functional literacy. This should also be done if we hope to see African languages being used for educational, literary, academic and scientific purposes, in the workplace and other higher functional domains beyond just the religious and family/communal arenas.

- Field research and data gathering in speech communities and contexts where language is used.
- Incorporating language issues into different government programmes, e.g. ensuring that the Community Development Workers (CDWs) have got good language and communicative skills

Terminology development should include popular definitions, social definitions, academic and scientific definitions in a way that can be easily linked to existing lexical items. Terminological development in particular and language development in general should be seen as part of a broader process of social transformation and also at the same time be subject to transformation. As a non-racial and non-sexist society we need to develop democratic processes, practices and terminology.

For instance in a democratic non-sexist society there should be sensitivity to sexist terminology, like referring to government services as 'Vukorhokeri' as is the case at the moment in the SABC and other academic fields. The term 'vukorhokeri' comes from the verb 'ku korhoka', which is a traditional practice in the Tsonga community and other African traditional marriage practices whereby a new bride has to go to the in-laws to serve/work for them. This is expected of women only and not men. This kind of terminology has an impact on the principle of equality between men and woman and sharing of responsibility within a family environment.

Choices of terminology and language usage are not only neutral linguistic matters, but also reflect and impact on socio-political aspects of the day. These choices can either reinforce or negate the current political philosophical developments, for instance terms that undermine the efforts and process of the African Renaissance, integration, development, fundamental human rights and transformation (*Izifiki*/ *Izifikanamthwalo*) for foreign nationals. The prefix 'i' refers to objects and not humans. So this term or phrase refers to 'things that arrive/things that arrive with luggage.

There are various other negative terms that need to be evaluated, like terms for albinoism, the Department of Correctional Services being referred to as *Umnyango wezamajele* and the Department of Social Development as *uMnyango wokuthuthukiswa kwaBantu*; *Ndzawulo ya Nhluvukiso wa vanhu*, which refers to the Department of Developing People, etc. The process of terminology and language development should not be prescriptive and static.

Some of the strategies for terminology development would invariably include the following:

- Using the existing linguistic resources
- Adaptation of the existing linguistic resources into new domains (recycling old terms for new use)
- Creation of new terms (especially in dealing with new concepts, ideas and products)
- Borrowing

"Terminology development should include popular definitions, social definitions, academic and scientific definitions in a way that can be easily linked to existing lexical items"

- Transliteration (to suit the orthography and sound system of the target language)
- Using properties and derivation of the concept
- Using sound systems (eg *ugandaganda*, *isithuthuthu*, *isikhahlamezi*)
- Conversion (e.g. noun to verb or verb to noun)

A note on borrowing

All technically advanced languages have used different forms of terminology development including transliteration and borrowing terms from other languages. Some of these borrowed terms help language practitioners to make clear and accurate distinctions. This is important given the fact that most dictionaries and orthographies are outdated and we are dealing with new discourses and concepts. For example, in Zulu the traditionally used term for budget is 'isabelo', which means allocation. But in a context where both these concepts of allocation and budget are used, one needs to make a distinction. For example, 'the budget allocation needs to bring a balance in different votes. Another good example where one needs to use different terms to make a distinction is: test, assessment, examination, evaluation and monitoring. Another example of such terms where clear distinctions need to be made are: Act, rules, regulations, statutes and legislation.

"All technically advanced languages have used different forms of terminology development, including transliteration and borrowing terms from other languages"

Technology should be employed to speed up language development and standardisation of terminology with programs such as TRADOS and other text-recognition, TM (translation memory) and CAT (computer-assisted translation) programmes. Public-private partnerships should focus on investing resources for language development and linguistic resources. For instance the new Government Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) initiative should also focus on linguistic skills development for practitioners and on the creation of sustainable jobs in language fields.

One cannot over-emphasise that in the formative and developmental phase in which most of our African languages still find themselves, new concepts with new terms need to be introduced all the time. Just yesterday, in translation we were having a discussion on the concept of 'qualification'. Most African languages do not distinguish between education and qualification. The subject of the discussion was SAQA and the fact that one of its roles is to accredit qualifications.

References continued from page 33

'n taaloudit, belowende inisiatiewe. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1): 41-46.

Pienaar, M. 2002. Simultaneous interpreting services at South African provincial legislatures: a few cautionary notes. In *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 22(4): 271-281

Pienaar, M. 2004. Simultaneous interpreting as an aid in parallel medium tertiary education. Paper read at the conference on Intercultural communication – the linguistic challenges of cultural diversity. Stellenbosch, September 2004.

Rand Afrikaans University. 2001. The Language of Universities in South Africa. *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1).

Roodt, HC. 2001. Taalbeleid in Hoër Onderwys: Veeltaligheid as vereiste van die grondwetlike en wetlike raamwerk. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1): 15-20.

Schuring, G. 1999. Telephone and video interpreting. In Erasmus, M (ed). *Liaison Interpreting in the Community*. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 184-189.

Smit, H. 1999. Interpreting serives in the pharmacy of the Kalafong Hospital: a case study. In Erasmus, M (ed). *Liaison Interpreting in the Community*. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 165-174.

Smit, F. 2001. Die demografie van taal in Suid-Afrika met spesiale verwysing na die onderrig- en wetenskaptaal aan universiteite. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29(1): 21- 26.

Strydom, H & Pretorius, L. 2000. On the directives concerning language in the South African Constitution. In Deprez, K & Du Plessis, T (eds). *Multilingualism and Government*. Pretoria: Van Schaik: 111-120.

Van Rensburg, FIJ. 2001. Taal en Universiteit. In *Aambeeld/Anvil* 29 (1): 9-14.

Van Rooy, B. 2005. The feasibility of simultaneous interpreting in university classrooms. In *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies,* 23(1): 81-90.

Vergie, MP. 2006. Taalprobleme in die opleiding van SAPD-konstabels: Beroepseise in Gauteng. Unpublished DLitt et Phil thesis. Auckland Park: University of Johannesburg.

Wallmach, K. 2004a. "Seizing the surge of language by its soft, bare skull": The ideology of simultaneous interpreting in South Africa. Paper read at the European Society for Translators Conference (EST), Lisbon, 26-29 September 2004.

Wallmach, K. 2004b. 'Pressure players' or 'choke artists'? How do Zulu simultaneous interpreters handle the pressure of interpreting in a legislative context? In *Language Matters* 35(1): 179-200.

Personal communication: Mr Johan Blaauw; North-West University (Potchefstroom campus), Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom. 2520.

Internet:http://www.sabcnews.com/south-africa/general (accessed 13 June 2005)

Newspapers:

Die Beeld, 10/5/2005 "Tolkdiens gee SA al 11 sy tale" – Eagan Williamson, p.4

Die Beeld 27/10/2005 "Tolke in die klas" – Lackie Pienaar, p. 1

In practice: The profile of a professional

Each of the participants in the panel session on 'The Profile of a Professional' was asked to make some introductory remarks on what they saw as making a professional and what language practitioners needed to bear in mind in this regard. Their remarks are reproduced below.

Peter Krawutschke

As President of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), I probably do not need to establish my credentials, but you should know that before I became a medievalist, I did serve as an interpreter and translator in the US Army, was a partner in a commercial translation cooperative, worked as a freelancer, and later created and directed at Western Michigan University for ten years the premier undergraduate translator training programme in the United States.

In the few minutes allotted to my remarks, allow me to offer some personal observations about translator (and interpreter) training and education:

- Both training and education in T and I need to be localised, i.e. in purpose and content both need to address national or local needs.
- I was delighted to hear Dr Neville Alexander's remarks this morning as he described the ACALAN Translation Project since it addresses precisely the criteria of national need.
- T and I education and training need to be global in approach and content. National isolation in T and I education is no longer possible in today's electronic information age. Involvement in international T and I organisations such as FIT becomes essential to a successful programme.

Specifically, I believe the following desiderata are essential to the technical aspects, i.e. to training of future translators at the MA or PhD levels:

- Opportunities for remedial work if the individual does not bring excellent language skills to the programme.
- A course or courses with laboratory experience involving the most recent tools available to translation.
- A course covering the national and international norms governing the translation industry (ASTM, DIN, ISO, CEN).
- A course discussing the national and international translation industry, including operating a T and I company, working as a freelancer, and project management.
- A course discussing national and international associations and organisations representing the T and I industry.
- Most importantly, T and I training should include a professionally supervised internship programme.

As far as disciplinary work, i.e. education, is concerned, I can envision the following disciplinary course work, particularly at the PhD level.

- Course work covering the history and the theories of translation and interpretation.
- Course work reviewing linguistic and neurological aspects of translation and interpretation.
- Course work discussing the significance of translation and interpretation in the political and cultural realm. Ethical aspects of these disciplines should be included here as well.
- Course work covering future research and societal aspirations of the disciplines of translation and interpretation.

In the latter context and in conclusion, I wish to cite the work of FIT in offering the FIT ID Card to translators and interpreters globally. By doing so, it followed the example of the International Federation of Journalists, which has been offering such a professional identification globally for some time. It is my personal hope that translators and interpreters will one day be identified as non-combatants as is the case with medical and journalistic personnel.

I thank you for your attention and wish you the best for your socially significant work ahead.

Peter Krawutschke is the president of the International Federation of Translators and a language and translation lecturer at Western Michigan University, USA

Sheryl Hinkkanen

The Triangle of Professional Ethics

It is indeed an honour to be asked to sit on this distinguished panel. It's also quite a challenge to be allotted only three short minutes in which to make some sort of meaningful contribution about the panel topic, *The Profile of a Professional.* I've decided to talk about professional ethics and ethical concerns I have noticed in my own professional practice as a translator and a translation agency owner.

I've grouped the ethical concerns I'll address into three categories that make up what I call *the triangle of professional ethics*. I'll refer in my talk to 'the language professional'. I mean this term in a comprehensive way, incorporating translation, interpreting of all types – whether simultaneous, consecutive or community-based – and terminology professionals and including, among others, Sign Language interpreters.

I see the ethics of a language professional as having three components, three sides to the triangle: i) ethics in the language professional to client relationship, and here by client I mean the end client who has ordered the work, is paying for it, and is not a colleague; ii) ethics in the language professional to language professional relationship, which is usually referred to as subcontracting; and iii) professional ethics to oneself.

The first aspect, ethics in the language professional to client relationship, is the most commonly discussed side of the triangle. In my view, mutual respect is the key to an ethical language professional to client relationship. One cannot expect to be treated with respect if the client is not treated with high regard in one's own business dealings.

In concrete terms, respect for the client involves the following considerations:

- Respect for commitments and taking them seriously, not promising what one cannot deliver, for whatever reason
- Respect for deadlines and timely delivery of work
- Professional conduct, including respect for the confidentiality of information acquired through work
- Accepting only work one feels one can do well
- Respect for the client's needs as reflected, for instance, in contacting the client immediately should any problems arise, whether terminology-related problems, text-related problems, deadline-related problems or whatever

The second side of the triangle is ethics in the language professional to language professional relationship, i.e. ethics in subcontracting. This aspect of the language professional's ethics is discussed less and thus is not always well conceptualised or clearly formulated.

As I see it, ethical subcontracting, too, is based on mutual respect. It involves all of the above considerations about professional ethics: respecting commitments, keeping to deadlines, taking only work one feels confident with, notifying one another of difficulties or complications of any kind. In addition, respect for the client-supplier relationship has certain special features that are reflected in the following:

- Subcontracting is no different from other work, and as the person placing an order, a language professional is no different from any other client. One should not assume that a language professional will check the work a subcontractor delivers, or will understand lateness of delivery, or will be lenient about sloppy work, or will verify the terminology unless this has been agreed in advance, or will do some other part of the subcontractor's work. A language professional who orders work from a subcontractor has every right to expect the same high quality of work as anyone else who orders work. To deliver less than that same high quality is unethical.
- Solidarity among language professionals. A casual remark can do far-reaching, often undeserved damage to a colleague's reputation. So, one shouldn't judge a colleague on the basis of the end result alone. One doesn't know the conditions under which a job was done nor can an outsider be sure that the final result is a true reflection of the job as it was delivered by the colleague.
- Solidarity among language professionals means each party receives a reasonable share of the income generated.
- Solidarity among language professionals also means not 'stealing' work from colleagues. Competition is ethical only when it's above board.

The third side of the triangle of professional ethics is the least remembered. It is professional ethics to oneself. Again, the key concept is respect – respect for oneself and solidarity to oneself. What does this mean in practice? Naturally it encompasses the features of ethics I've already mentioned. In

Sheryl Hinkkanen is the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Translators and a freelance translator and translation agency owner in Finland

addition, it means the following:

- Not pushing oneself by accepting utterly impossible timetables and if deadlines are too tight to meet alone, enlisting help and doing so in time to prevent panic
- Not compromising one's own principles
- Sticking to one's own core competence and specialisations
- Not jeopardising one's own health and wellbeing through overwork. Remember to take breaks during the day, to get enough rest daily, to refresh and revitalise oneself through exercise and outside interests, and to take vacations. We all tend to forget this, myself included, because in the face of day-to-day pressures, respect for oneself is overlooked all too easily.
- Being honest with oneself, recognising jobs well done and those less well done and learning from one's shortcomings
- Remembering continuing education, keeping one's knowledge and skills up to date
- Acknowledging and respecting one's own professionalism.

Thank you all for your attention.

Simon Kemisho

When the word 'professionalism' or a 'professional' is mentioned it certainly conjures up a number of meanings and definitions in one's mind. Among the definitions given by *dictionaries* are the following: "*Extremely competent* in a job; a job produced with competence and skill." Another dictionary defines it as "having *impressive competence* in a particular activity; the competence or skill expected of a professional."

However, I found the following definition to be rather unique and of particular interest in the context of our discussion here this afternoon. This comes from the organisation called BCS, which stands for the *British Computer Society,* the leading body for those working in IT. BCS is the qualifying body for Chartered IT Professionals (CITP). Their definition of the word 'professionalism' is as follows: "Professionalism is an *aspiration to meet the highest standards* that the public has the right to expect rather than a set of minimum requirements.

We need to have relevant, up-to-date skills and capabilities appropriate to the particular task. That task-specific competence must be built on to a broader foundation of relevant experience, knowledge and understanding and it is important that it is supported by appropriate qualifications and maintained through a *systematic process of continuous development*.

Morry Sofer, one of the leading experts in the translation field, founder of a highly successful translation company, a lecturer on translation topics, lists 10 requisites of a professional translator, in the book entitled *The Translator's Handbook.* Among others cites the following: thorough knowledge of both the source and the target languages; *the importance of feeling at home in both cultures; the necessity to keep up to date with the growth and change of the language, its nuances and neologisms; developing a good speed of translation* (typing speed, the level of the text difficulty, familiarity with the text, size of the text); research skills; *today's translator cannot be a stranger to hardware, software, fax, modem, the internet and the latest developments in all those media.*

Professor Douglas Robinson, in his book entitled *Becoming a Translator,* isolates three additional traits of a professional translator, namely reliability (to be a professional, therefore, implies that a person is good in his job and can be depended upon), *involvement* in the profession and adherence to a *code of ethics*.

In conclusion, I would like briefly to refer to what Morry Sofer calls 'The threshold of a new golden age for translations'. We have witnessed this surge in the demand for services related to our profession here in South Africa and around the global village. We therefore want to meet this demand with flawless professionalism – professionalism as defined by the end-users of our services. We always want to aim to be extremely competent, to have impressive competence and to aspire to reach the highest standards that the public has the right to expect from us. By so doing, we will keep the current doors of demand open and make sure that even more doors are opened in our industry.

Pieter Wilkinson

Four short words describe the qualities that elevate most successful individuals above the crowd: "A LITTLE BIT MORE", according to A Lou Vickery. Also, If you are committed and disciplined, you will find a way – *indlela yokuhambela* – if not, you will find an excuse *not* to do it.

It stands to reason that there are various

Simon Kemisho is a SATI-accredited translator and owner of the translation agency The Translation World

angles of approach, guidelines and ideas when defining the profile of a professional translator. I honestly believe that none of these angles of approach, guidelines and ideas are wrong or completely off the mark.

With my academic qualifications and background I could have presented you with a highly academically and scientifically founded version of what the profile of a professional translator should look like. I have, however, opted for a very practical and down-to-earth presentation. So please allow me to start off with a very human story I read the other day. It is about an uncle, his violin and his sister's child, an eight-year-old boy. The uncle lives in a room at the back of the home where the boy and his parents live.

The uncle is blind. He is very fond and proud of his violin playing in the town square. The boy accompanies him when they travel by train to the square.

When they arrive at the square, the man opens the violin case, takes out the violin, tucks it under his chin and as he starts stroking the strings with the bow he chuckles softly, out of sheer delight. Then he starts playing: "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, you make me happy when skies are grey". Then he starts playing the National Anthem and as the first notes reverberate over the square the flower-sellers stop their gossiping and listen. Then they look across the square towards the blue of the mountain.

And the boy? He closes his eyes and feels the sunshine on his face. He feels very contented. Like when his mom tucks him in at night. He thinks of his mom and also of Madiba, with his striking shirts and soft, wise eyes. To him the sound of the violin is the most beautiful sound in the world.

He tells his uncle that he would one day like to have his own violin. And his uncle tells him to be patient – his day will come. He will find that one day his chance will come.

Time passes quickly and the boy is looking forward to playing the violin one day the same way as his uncle. He wants to play for a real audience. His uncle starts to teach him how to hold the violin, how to lift his elbow, how to fold his fingers over the strings. And then his uncle starts teaching him to play "You are my sunshine …'' and some other folk songs.

Always, when a certain and very special woman passes them on the square on her way to work at the flower market, the uncle starts playing "You are my sunshine …" and often tells the boy she smells nicer than all the roses at the flower market. Eventually the uncle asks the woman to marry him and the boy has his big day when he plays at the wedding in front of a real audience.

My question now is: How do you play your *language violin*? Do you play it with the same passionate *love* as the uncle? Do you have the same feeling and affinity for your work and *languages* as the uncle, a blind man, playing his violin? How do you play *your* violin? How do you do your *work*? How *committed* are you? What is the *quality* of your work? Do you have the necessary *skills*? Do you *love* your work? Are you committed to *delivery*? Do you have the necessary *equipment*? Do you have a violin case? Do you hold and care for your violin meticulously?

Let me focus on ten characteristics or qualities a professional translator should have and that, according to my personal view, should form the make-up of his or her profile.

The ten-point profile

1. Skill
2. Natural language ability and inborn talent
3. A passionate love and affection for languages
4. Formal and informal language training
5. Experience of a physical/practical language environment with other language practitioners. Language practitioners should not work in total isolation
6. The ability to translate in the correct context.
7. Free access to all possible sources and the ability to create new terminology, or to make use of or exercise at all times existing orthography and terminology rules of the different languages
8. Liaison and close contact with institutions such as SATI, PROLINGUA and the NLS
9. Access to the latest electronic equipment
10. Discipline, commitment, delivery and punctuality

Does your profile as translator or language practitioner look like this? This is what we at Afri-Lingo aim at with our network of more than 20 translators. Since our establishment almost 12 years ago as a multilingual translation enterprise, we have built a reputation for professionalism, accuracy and excellence.

Pieter Wilken is the quality control manager at the translation agency Afri-Lingo

In order to make a success of your profession you have to know how to hold the violin, how to lift your elbow, how to hold your fingers and how to stroke the strings. *A little bit more*, says A Lou Vickery, and *if you are committed, you will find a way and not an excuse*.

Alet Kruger

From the Ivory Tower to the Market Place and Back: Completing the Circle

Highly competent translators are needed to meet the rapidly developing requirements of the professional environment. These requirements place a heavy responsibility on universities and tertiary institutions to train professionals in translation, interpreting and language practice. Neubert (1989: 5 in Ulrych 2005: 23-4), is quoted as saying that "the study of translation and, in particular, the academic institutions where the practice of translation is taught do not exist in an intellectual ivory tower. They serve social needs."

Are these broader social needs met? The answer is not always positive despite the fact that marrying theory and practice seems an obvious requirement in a subject such as Translation Studies. The various conferences that are held all over the world and the myriad publications that see the light every year clearly demonstrate that Translation Studies as a discipline is still very much divided into 'us' (the professionals working in the market place) and 'them' (the academics in the ivory tower).

After attending the 2005 FIT World Congress on the rights of language professionals in Finland, Jackie Naudé of the University of the Free State remarked that very few academics attended this particular conference (SATI 2005: 27). What struck him was the fact that professional translators accused academics of producing incompetent graduates and also that they "repeated problems already addressed and solved by academics". He does not elaborate further but this accusation seems all too familiar!

This controversy between theory and practice was one of the main reasons why Alet Kruger and Kim Wallmach established a translation and interpreting agency. Little did we realise how important the direct links to the profession and the market-place that this step afforded us would be in the future: we needed to practise what we preach and to ensure that our teaching is relevant to practice. The agency also arose out of the need for a link between prospective clients and the many competent professional freelance language workers with whom we have close contact. Owing to the nature of the work accepted by the agency, at least 75% of the freelancers employed are from the previously disadvantaged language groups in South Africa. We knew that in the years prior to 1994 large-scale privatisation resulted in rationalisation and the reduction of staff translators at big government departments and parastatals, and newly qualified translators could not receive in-house training, and it was therefore also one of our aims to provide some in-service training and development. Enhancing our managerial and business skills was of course also on the list and our freelancers are aware that we add a small handling fee to the fees paid to themselves, and that this fee is used to cover marketing, administration and invoicing costs as well as procurement and tendering costs. Although mentioned last, collecting data for research purposes played an important role in our decision to form the agency because of the obvious possibility to do research.

The aim of this short presentation is to provide insight into the activities of this small translation and interpreting agency and its impact on academic research. Both owners are academics, trainers and examiners of translators, interpreters and editors themselves. As such, they may be regarded as subject specialists regarding language-related activities and have approximately 35 years of experience between them.

What services does the agency offer?

We offer translation, editing and interpreting services in the following languages:

- All the official South African languages and Swahili
- The major European languages (German, French, Spanish, Portuguese)
- South African Sign Language

Similarly, we work in domains such as the following, in which we have built up considerable expertise over the years:

- Scientific/technical: cell phone and webwsite localisation, geology, mining
- Medical/health: HIV/AIDS material, medical questionnaires, patient consent forms
- Financial: annual reports, tax and balance sheets

Alet Kruger is a lecturer in Translation Studies at Unisa and co-owner of the translation agency Multilingua

- Legal: bills, acts, bylaws, patents, court orders
- Literary: TV and radio scripts, children's books, foundation phase educational material

Interpreting settings in which we coordinate and manage interpreters:

- Conferences, workshops, legislature, AGMs
- Disciplinary hearings, court cases, polygraph tests, training issues and pension fund road shows

Profile of freelance translators

The profile of professional translators is forever changing to meet the requirements of a demanding world in a constant state of flux. According to Ulrych (2005: 5), evidence shows that the range of competence required of translators is expanding to encompass diverse kinds of interlingual and intercultural mediation and rewriting, once considered as lying beyond the confines of translation proper, and includes such activities as large-scale multilingual project management, localisation, technical writing, editing and multimedia translation.

"The range of competence required of translators is expanding to encompass diverse kinds of interlingual and intercultural mediation and rewriting, once considered as lying beyond the confines of translation proper"

We give preference to translators and editors who fit the following profile:

- *Over 30 years old.* Experience has taught us that older and more experienced translators have a vast knowledge of the world around them (e.g. how the national budget or health system works).
- *Good English proficiency across a broad range of registers.*
- *Tertiary training with postgraduate training in languages and translation studies.*
- *Legal/financial qualifications* for legal/financial translation.
- *Accreditation* with the South African Translators' Institute is recommended. Accreditation is a good indication of competence, but alone it is not necessarily an indication of sustained competence.
- *Computer literacy.*
- *Reliability.* We value someone who is reliable, who has professional pride, integrity and self-esteem.
- *Competency.* In line with Robinson (1997: 29), we value translators who check their work closely and carefully and, if there is any doubt, we have the translation checked by an expert before delivery to the client. In particular, we value translators who know their own abilities and working habits well enough to make realistic promises to us regarding delivery dates and times. We appreciate it when a translator demonstrates that she is aware of her limitations and politely refuses to accept a job that she knows may be outside her field of expertise or to translate a text that she finds morally or politically loathsome.
- *Loyalty and strong sense of ethics.* We value translators who do not disclose confidential matters learned through the process of translation/interpreting or through working with the agency to third parties; and in particular, who do not try to undermine and undercut us by contacting our clients directly to secure contracts for themselves.

Profile of freelance interpreters

In many respects interpreters and other language professionals such as editors share the characteristics of the ideal translator. Interpreters too must have an in-depth knowledge of both languages and the two cultures, possess a comprehensive vocabulary, have a powerful memory, possess a comprehensive general knowledge; in addition, they should be calm but quick-witted and able to think on their feet (Mahmoodzadeh 1992: 233). We give preference to interpreters who fit the following profile:

- Over 30 years old
- Excellent proficiency in the mother tongue; preferably grew up in this particular linguistic community
- Good English proficiency across a broad range of registers; be able to understand different accents of users of South African English
- Excellent public speaking skills
- Tertiary education is preferable
- Postgraduate training in languages, translation/interpreting is highly recommended
- At least 80 hours of simultaneous interpreting experience; clearly demonstrate professionalism as regards booth etiquette
- At least 10 days of consecutive interpreting experience; clearly demonstrate familiarity with ethics involved in this mode of interpreting
- SATI accreditation is recommended

Overcoming various problems

A successful business depends not only on good managerial skills and business savvy but more often than not also on how one overcomes obstacles and problems. Some of the problems that we encounter time and

again are ignorant clients, quality control, project management, terminology development, professionalism and tax issues.

Educating the client

As Kim Wallmach (2004: 14) states in her article on good translation practice, clients usually do not know what is involved in the translation process. What often happens is that a client says something like: "I have this English text which needs to be translated into Afrikaans and two African languages, but I don't know which ones." Here the client needs to be carefully guided as regards the intended readership of his translated text and the national and regional use of our African languages. If the client wants to target as wide a readership as possible, it will probably be a good idea to advise him to have the text translated into Zulu as this is the most commonly spoken home language of the Nguni language group in the country. Choosing between Sepedi or Sesotho in order to target Sotho speakers will depend on whether the translation will be used north of Johannesburg or south of Johannesburg.

We often find that clients need to be more educated about interpreting issues than translation ones. They often do not know what the different modes involve and that they will also have to hire simultaneous interpreting equipment for a conference. When a client complains about the price of simultaneous interpreting services and equipment he can be persuaded to opt for four active working languages in Gauteng, namely English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Sepedi. This would mean only eight interpreters and four booths instead of 20 interpreters and ten booths as the Zulu interpreters will be able to interpret speakers using any of the Nguni languages and the Sepedi interpreters will be able to interpret speakers using any of the Sotho languages. Extending the team with one Venda and one Tsonga interpreter means that these two interpreters can take turns and although they will be providing an interrupted service of 20 minutes of Venda followed by 20 minutes of Tsonga, it also means that they can interpret any speaker using these two languages. Two extra interpreters will mean one booth extra – ten interpreters and five booths will still be cheaper than 20 interpreters and ten booths. And in this manner all 11 languages can be accommodated passively in the interpreting service.

Part of this education process is also getting the client to accept a written quotation in writing by e-mail or signing the quotation and faxing it back, supplying an appropriate order number and their VAT number which has to appear on a VAT invoice.

Writing clear translation briefs

Translation never occurs in a vacuum; there is always a reason why translation should take place, and the reasons for translation are usually independent of the reasons for the creation of a source text. It very seldom happens that translators (or agencies) decide on their own to translate a text 'for the love of it'. They are usually asked to do so by someone else, called the initiator by Christiane Nord (1992). The initiator (in most cases the client) starts the translation process because he has a specific purpose in mind for the translation. This purpose or function of the translation is usually encompassed in the translation brief which is basically a set of instructions on why the translation is needed and for whom, elicited from the client by the agency. However, even though the agency may have a pretty clear picture of the type of product that is required after personal contact with the client or by email, this information may not always be passed on to the translator.

Experience has taught us never to request a translation without giving an accompanying brief in the form of a contract letter, whether it is one word to be translated into all official languages or a text of 7 000 words to be translated into one language. Our translation brief to each translator therefore always contains (explicit or implicit) information about aspects such as the following:

- The (intended) function of the target text
- The target text readership (age, class, literacy level, etc.)
- The word count and fee that the agency will pay the translator for translation
- The word count and fee that the agency will pay the translator for proofreading, i.e. checking the page proofs before printing if this process is included in the job
- The date and time at which the translation is to be delivered to the agency. In most cases the agency specifies delivery on an 'internal' date a day or so before the agency in turn has to deliver the final translation(s) to the client
- The format in which the translation is to be delivered and how the file containing the translated text has to be renamed so that it is identifiable to the client.

Similarly, each interpreter receives in writing a clear brief as regards the setting, back-

"We often find that clients need to be more educated about interpreting issues than translation ones. They often do not know what the different modes involve and that they will also have to hire simultaneous interpreting equipment for a conference"

ground information, date, time, number of days/hours, fee, address, telephone numbers of contact person or representative of our client, etc. of each interpreting assignment.

Quality control

A major concern of clients is whether agencies do quality control of the work they deliver. As already mentioned, we choose our translators and interpreters carefully. We prefer using accredited SATI translators, but being accredited alone is no guarantee of consistent good work and superior translation competence. We personally evaluate the quality of Afrikaans, English, German and French translations and outsource the checking of translations done by translators in the other languages. Any feedback received is sent on to the translators. Doing back translations into English is another way to carry out quality control and we have found this useful in the past.

Project management

"A major concern of clients is whether agencies do quality control of the work they deliver"

Unlike freelancers who usually work alone and can easily keep track of each job they receive, a translation company acts bidirectionally: it receives documents from clients and distributes them between freelance subcontractors. An agency therefore needs a strict and clear project management procedure to determine the exact work flow for all stages of a job. When we receive a translation job we enter details about the project such as the client's name, file name, date received, number of words or pages (whichever is applicable), the names of the languages and the translators who are involved, and the deadline on a spreadsheet. When a job is divided between more than one translator per language the number of words or pages sent to each translator is added to the spreadsheet. And when the translated material is received, the actual work performed by each translator is again recorded on the spreadsheet for future payments.

In the case of interpreting assignments the names of the various interpreters are also entered, the number of days or hours actually worked, as well as the travel allowance that will be paid to each interpreter.

Capturing data in an orderly manner such as this facilitates planning the workflow, invoicing to the client (and in due time, recording payment or follow-up requests for payment), as well as checking and processing the claims received from the freelancers.

Terminology development and standardisation

Government has explicitly acknowledged the important role played by translation in raising the status of a language and has put forward various policies to enhance the status of the African languages. As a result of these policies, as well as the desire from companies wishing to communicate with all South Africans, we have found that the demand for translation (and interpreting) services has increased exponentially and have been involved in translating texts ranging from legislation to HIV/AIDS brochures, banking to local government issues such as water, sanitation and electricity.

Translation and interpreting are therefore main mechanisms by means of which the technical registers of African languages (and Afrikaans) are being elaborated and standardised, but in the normal course of events translators and interpreters do not record the terms created and translation strategies used as part of a particular translation or interpreting job. This valuable data is therefore excluded from official corpus planning initiatives. However, because both members are academics and practising translators we are only too aware of the problems that languages of limited diffusion (LLDs) experience in the translation/interpreting process. We therefore allow translators working on a particular project access to our clients and their expertise in, for instance, mining safety standards or lexicography. We provide printed material in such a domain (parallel texts), arrange for the extraction of terms and hold workshops so that freelancers working in the Nguni languages and in the Sotho languages can discuss the use of equivalent terms. Even the Tsonga and Venda translators/interpreters benefit from such information/contact sessions as this helps them to decide which term formation processes to use to create appropriate terms.

Professionalism

No matter how competent the freelancers are that we employ, they are only human and invariably they all display non-professional behaviour in some or other form. Unprofessional behaviour is always a problem, for example:

- Delivering a translation in which a section to be translated was omitted; or of which the presentation as regards layout (e.g. in a spreadsheet) deviates from the original layout
- Missing translation deadlines and not

informing the agency in advance
- Accepting a job but underestimating the speed and ability at which they can produce delivery
- Being late for an interpreting appointment
- Displaying inappropriate or unethical booth behaviour
- Overstepping the boundaries in a consecutive interpreting situation by rendering an advocacy service (but this is something that is almost expected of consecutive interpreters in South Africa)

Tax issues

The two most common problems as regards tax issues that we experience are the following:

- Freelancers who invoice us via VAT registered closed corporations and submit invoices that do not conform to legislative regulations.
- Our agency is registered as an employer with SARS. We are legally obliged to deduct 25% PAYE tax from the earnings of each of our subcontractors (except from the VAT-registered closed corporations). We experienced problems with freelancers who were very upset about the PAYE deduction and did not believe that PAYE tax "functions as credit that is set off against the final tax liability of an employee" (SARS, 2005); in most cases they could receive a tax rebate by submitting the IRP5 certificate together with their annual tax returns.

So how does having an agency, i.e. having a foot in the market place so to speak, impact on our activities in the ivory tower?

Reaping the benefits

As stated above, both members of the agency are first and foremost academics. We know that any training programme for translators should ideally aim to develop, within the framework of continuing education, a series of skills and competences that are relevant to both their professional status and their future work. This entails not only an awareness of real professional conditions, but also devising flexible and multidimensional translator training courses which can be updated to keep abreast of changing requirements.

The first translation course taught on a distance basis, a postgraduate Diploma in Translation, was introduced in 1979 at the University of South Africa. Fourteen years later, in 1994, a more theoretically oriented honours course was introduced for students who wished to continue with a master's and the Diploma was revised to cater for students who preferred a more specialised course that allowed them to enter the professional market as soon as possible. The two courses were taught alongside each other until 2005 when we discovered that the National Department of Education was subsidising all postgraduate diplomas at undergraduate level. It was just not worth our while to carry on teaching the diploma and it was subsequently discontinued.

The time was ripe for yet another revision of the existing honours course and to restructure its contents to form a profession-oriented, academic programme in translation that would meet the demands of industry. And this was where an intimate knowledge of the market place and the requirements of the profession proved to be invaluable.

The honours course offered at Unisa focuses on efficient translation and interpreting strategies in particular so as to reconcile theory and practice (cf. Chesterman 2000: 82-85). The object of the course is therefore twofold: on the one hand, to increase students' understanding of translation/interpreting theory and to pave the way for master's and doctoral studies in translation/interpreting; on the other hand, to provide students with a basis on which to continue enhancing their proficiency in translation/interpreting practice and to become competent professionals.

The curriculum for the honours comprises four papers. The first two papers involve both practical and theoretical assignments. Paper 3 and Paper 4 also require portfolio work. The minimum admission requirement for this qualification is a recognised Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) with 60% in one major. Students should have a high degree of proficiency in the two languages that they choose for this course. Students who do not have a language major are required to pass a translation aptitude test before their registration will be accepted. We offer translation training in the following languages, always in combination with either English or Afrikaans: Afrikaans, English to Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Portuguese, Russian, Southern Sotho, Spanish, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu.

Apart from the Honours in translation offered at post-graduate level, Unisa also

"Any training programme for translators should ideally aim to develop, within the framework of continuing education, a series of skills and competences that are relevant to both their professional status and their future work"

offers an undergraduate BA (with specialisation in Court Interpreting). Detailed information about these courses can be obtained from krugea@unisa.ac.za.

As mentioned above, one of the reasons behind establishing the agency all those years ago was to collect ideas and data for research purposes.

Impact on our research outputs

Corpus-based translation and interpreting studies are a major research focus in our department. Kim Wallmach is currently compiling electronic corpora of interpreted sittings of the Gauteng Legislature into Afrikaans, Zulu and South African Sign Language (cf. Wallmach 2004). Alet Kruger has established an English/Afrikaans corpus of Shakespeare translations (cf. Kruger 2004). There are also master's and doctoral students interested in this methodology – some of whom are not only academics but also professional translators in their own right (e.g. Moropa 2004; 2006). We are in the process of building a multilingual health corpus of approximately 150 000 words in English, Afrikaans and Zulu and if we add the translations of the HIV/AIDS public information leaflets in all of the official languages of South Africa to which we have access as a result of the agency work, it will exceed a million words. We welcome prospective postgraduate students who would like to work in this particular domain.

"We believe that we have managed to show our students how to be successful practitioners, but only our students' success in the market place will bear testimony to this"

Conclusion

Malmkjær (2004: 2) remarks that one of the ways in which a "split between a profession and its academic discipline" can be avoided is to ensure that the training programmes have face validity both for members of the profession and for students. How can academics who offer such programmes and who train prospective translators ensure that they bridge the divide between ivory tower and market place? Viaggio's (1992: 308) answer is as follows: Medicine is not developed merely by closely watching successful physicians any more than the boundaries of musicology are pushed by mere listening to successful instrumentalists. Now we do know enough about mediated interlingual communication to be unabashedly prescriptive. We can show our students how to be successful practitioners.

We believe that we have managed to show our students how to be successful practitioners, but only our students' success in the market place will bear testimony to this.

References

Chesterman A. 2000. Teaching strategies for emancipatory translation. In Schäffner C & Adab B. 2000. *Developing translation competence*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 77-90.

Kruger A. 2004. Shakespeare in Afrikaans: A corpus-based study of involvement in different registers of drama translation. *Language Matters* 35(1): 275-294. (Special issue: Corpus-based Translation Studies: Research and Applications, edited by Alet Kruger.)

Malmkjær K. (ed.) 2004. *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes*. Amsterdam: John Bejamins.

Mahmoodzadeh K. 1992. Consecutive interpreting: Its principles and techniques. In Dollerup C & Loddegaard A. (eds.) 1992. Teaching translation and interpreting: Training, talent and experience. Amsterdam: John Bejamins, 231-236.

Moropa K. 2004. A parallel corpus as a terminology resource for Xhosa: A study of strategies used to translate financial statements. *Language Matters* 35(1): 162-178. (Special issue: Corpus-based Translation Studies: Research and Applications, edited by Alet Kruger.)

Moropa CK. 2006. An investigation of translation universals in a parallel corpus of English-Xhosa texts. Unpublished DLitt et Phil. thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Niska H. 1999. Status quaestionis: Community interpreting in Sweden. In Erasmus M, Mathibela M, Hertog L & Antonissen H. 1999. *Liaison interpreting in the community*. Pretoria: Van Schaik, 138-142.

Nord C. 1992. Text analysis in translator training. In Dollerup C & Loddegaard A. (eds.) *Teaching translation and interpreting: training, talent and experience*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 39-48.

Robinson D. 1997. *Becoming a translator: An accelerated course*. London: Routledge.

SARS. 2005. Small Businesses: FAQs. www.sars.gov.za, accessed 28/2/2006.

SATI 2005. 'Rights On!' Impressions of the XVIIth FIT World Congress. *Muratho*, 26-27.

Ulrych, M. 2005. Training translators: Programmes, curricula, practices. In Tennet, M. (ed.) 2005. *Training for the new millinnium: Pedagogies for translation and interpreting*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 3-33.

Viaggio S. 1992. Translators and interpreters: Professionals or shoemakers? In Dollerup C & Loddegaard A. (eds.) 1992. *Teaching translation and interpreting: Training, talent and experience*. Amsterdam: John Bejamins, 307-312.

Wallmach K. 2004 Good translation practice: Asking the right questions. *Muratho*. Johannesburg: South African Translators' Instititute, 14-17.

Wallmach K. 2004. 'Pressure players' or 'choke artists'? How do Zulu simultaneous interpreters handle the pressure of interpreting in a legislative context? *Language Matters* 35(1): 179-200. (Special issue: Corpus-based Translation Studies: Research and Applications, edited by Alet Kruger.)

Die implementering van taalbeleid in die Wes-Kaap Provinsie, Suid-Afrika

In die lig van die feit dat daar in die Suid-Afrikaanse Grondwet gestipuleer word dat 11 tale in Suid-Afrika amptelike status geniet, het die onderskeie provinsies besluit om dié amptelike tale wat dominant is in spesifieke provinsies, aktief in die staatsdiens te gebruik. In die Wes-Kaap is op Afrikaans, Engels en isiXhosa besluit. Die 2001 sensusstatistiek vir moedertaalsprekers in die Wes-Kaap is: Afrikaans 55,3%, isiXhosa 23,7% en Engels 19,3%. Die demografie is egter dinamies en daar is jaarliks 'n toestroming van meer as 50 000 Xhosa-sprekers na die Wes-Kaap. Dit vereis uiteraard gereelde monitering en die uitvoer van taaloudits om die nodige beplanning te kan doen, veral ook met betrekking tot die doeltreffende verskaffing van onderwys.

In ooreenstemming met die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, die Grondwet van die Wes-Kaap (Wet 1 van 1998) en met inagneming van die Pan Suid-Afrikaanse Talewet (Wet 59 van 1995), het die Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Talewet (Wet 13 van 1998) tot stand gekom. Hierdie wet het voorsiening gemaak vir die totstandbring van die Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Taalkomitee, 'n statutêre liggaam bestaande uit taalspesialiste en kenners wat deur die publiek genomineer word, en dan deur die die Staande Komitee van die Wes-Kaapse Regering en die Provinsiale Minister verantwoordelik vir Kultuursake aangewys word.

Die Grondwet van die Wes-Kaap verwys in artikel 5 as volg na die provinsie se verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van taal:

"Die drie amptelike tale van die Wes-Kaap is Afrikaans, isiXhosa en Engels en geniet gelyke status. Die Wes-Kaapse Regering moet by wyse van wetgewing en ander maatreëls die gebruik van hierdie drie tale reël en moniteer en ook praktiese en daadwerklike maatreëls tref om die status van dié inheemse tale van die mense van die Wes-Kaap waarvan die status histories ingekort is, te verhoog en te bevorder."

In 1998 is die eerste Wes-Kaapse Taalkomitee van 11 lede aangewys met die visie van 'n veeltalige Wes-Kaap wat mekaar se tale respekteer. Amptenare van die Departement van Kultuursake en Sport is aangewys om administratiewe en professionele steun te bied, en dit is waar ek my die afgelope amper nege jaar as hoof van die Taaleenheid bevind. Daar is gou besef dat om die mandaat van die nastreef van gelyke status van die drie amptelike tale te bereik en voorheen gemarginaliseerde, inheemse tale se status te bevorder, 'n taalbeleid nodig sou wees. 'n Subkomitee het daaraan begin werk en in November 2001 is die Taalbeleid in beginsel deur die Wes-Kaapse Kabinet aanvaar.

In 'n poging om vas te stel wat die taalbehoeftes en taalgebruik van die inwoners en amptenare van die Wes-Kaap is, is 'n omvattende taaloudit in die Wes-Kaap gedoen wat in Maart 2002 afgehandel is. Van die bevindings het ingesluit dat daar 'n verskansde kultuur van veral Afrikaans en Engels in die staatsdiens is, dat Engels 'n hoër status geniet en dat isiXhosa ernstig gemarginaliseer word, veral ten gunste van Engels. Daar is ook bevind dat daar min bewustheid is vir die behoeftes van gehoorgestremdes en dowes.

Om hierdie bevindings aan te spreek deur die Taalbeleid te implementeer, het uiteraard finansiële implikasies, en daar is gevolglik 'n koste-analise gedoen wat in Maart 2003 voltooi is. Die konsultante het 'n bedrag van R 205 miljoen aanbeveel om die Taalbeleid suksesvol in al die departemente van die Wes-Kaap te implemeteer. Teen die agtergrond van die beperkte begroting van die Wes-Kaapse Regering, moes hierdie bedrag aansienlik ingekort word en is 'n kabinetsmemorandum opgestel waarin die minimum begroting wat implementering sou moontlik maak, voorgelê. Teen die einde van 2004 het die Kabinet die Wes-Kaapse Taalbeleid ten volle goedgekeur en het die provinsiale Tesourie 'n paar miljoen rand beskikbaar gestel om dit te implementeer. Sedert 1 April 2005 word die Taalbeleid aktief implementeer.

Verhandeling aangebied deur Quintus van der Merwe by SAVI se Internasionale Vertaaldag-seminaar 'Baie tale, een beroep – in Afrika', Kaapstad, 30 September 2006

Quintus is die hoof van die Taaleenheid by die Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Regering

"Deel van die Taalbeleid verg ook dat terminologie ontwikkel word en taal-standaarde ontwikkel en gehandhaaf word"

Wat behels hierdie Taalbeleid en die bevordering van meertaligheid in die praktyk? Dit sluit die volgende praktiese stappe in:

- Alle wetgewing, amptelike verslae en besluite moet in al drie amptelike tale beskikbaar gestel word.
- Alle advertensies en amptelike kennisgewings moet in al drie amptelike tale gepubliseer word.
- Alle uitstallings, reklame- en bemarkingsmateriaal is in die drie tale.
- Alle plekaanduidings is in die drie tale.
- Alle openbare vergaderings, veldtogte en opleiding moet in die drie tale gedoen word, of met behulp van tolke, of in die taal van keuse van die mense wat betrokke is.
- Daar moet voortdurend voorsiening gemaak word vir gehoorgestremde mense deur ondermeer Gebaretaaltolke.
- Alle publieke plakkate (bv oor gesondheidsake soos HIV/VIGS-voorkoming) moet in al drie amptelike tale wees.

Wat is die voordele van meertaligheid en die toepassing van die Taalbeleid? Vir die Wes-Kaapse Regering is dit belangrik om die leuse, ''n tuiste vir almal', vir al sy inwoners te verseker, ongeag van die feit dat die inwoners verskillende tale gebruik.

Veeltaligheid bevorder die beginsel van *Batho Pele* (mense eerste) in terme van goeie dienslewering. Dit dra ook by tot 'iKapa elihlumayo' (die ekonomiese groei en geniet van die Kaap, by wyse van spreke) deur opleiding en dienslewering in tale wat alle taalgroepe verstaan.

Boonop word negatiewe persepsies en stereotipering deur veeltaligheid verander en dra dit by tot beter begrip vir kultuur-en taalverskille.

'n Beleid is natuurlik goed en wel, maar om dit te implementeer bied allerlei uitdagings. Die eerste groot potensiële struikelblok is 'n billike begroting, maar veeltaligheid, soos demokrasie, is nie goedkoop nie, maar steeds veel goedkoper as die alternatief. Deel van die uitrol van die Taalbeleid behels die daarstel van Taaleenhede in die onderskeie departemente en die aanstel van veral isiXhosasprekende taalpraktisyns. Verder moet daar tolktoerusting aangekoop word (ons departement het 40 gehoorstukke vir fluistertolking aangekoop), opleiding verskaf word en voorsiening gemaak word vir gehoorgestremdes. Veral die opleiding van tolke van Gebaretaal behoort aandag te geniet.

Dit is belangrik om te beklemtoon dat implementering ingefasseer moet word. Daar is dus op 'n vyf-jaar periode besluit en volledige implementering slegs na 10 jaar. Dit vereis ook volgehoue assessering en gereelde taaloudits, sowel as bewusmakingsveldtogte en opleiding.

Vennootskappe met ondermeer plaaslike regering en opleidingsinstansies is lewensbelangrik. Om die finansiële las van die regering te verlig, is befondsing deur vennote buite die regering uiters belangrik. So kan borge vir spesifieke projekte bekom word en bv doelgerigte opleiding verskaf word. Deel van die Taalbeleid verg ook dat terminologie ontwikkel word en taalstandaarde ontwikkel en gehandhaaf word. Vir hierdie doel is 'n Provinsiale Taalforum saamgestel wat bestaan uit al die taalpraktisyns van al die provinsiale, plaaslike en nasionale regering in die Wes-Kaap. Hierdie forum ontmoet gereeld om ondermeer gemeenskaplike probleme, opleiding en die ontwikkeling van terminologie in die drie amptelike tale te bespreek.

Die hoof van die Taaleenheid skakel gereeld met ander departemente en help met die opstel van taakbeskrywings en aanstel van taalpraktisyns. 'n Voltydse isiXhosa-dosent is ook reeds by die Kaapse Administratiewe Akademie aangestel waar voltydse Xhosalesse aangebied word. Dit sal hopelik na Afrikaans en Engels uitgebrei word.

Ten einde die implementering van die Taalbeleid te moniteer, het die Wes-Kaapse Taalkomitee vraelyste in die drie amptelike tale aan al die provinsiale Regeringsdepartemente sowel as Plaaslike en Distriksmunisipaliteite gestuur met die doel om vas te stel tot watter mate die Taalbeleid implementeer word. Daar is ook reeds besluit om 'n werkswinkel oor taaldiversiteit aan te bied om verdere begrip en bewustheid te stimuleer. Die Taalkomitee en Taaleenheid bied ook gereeld taalprojekte en werkswinkels aan om veeltaligheid te bevorder. Dit sluit in hulp met bv tolking en tolkgeriewe by funksies soos hierdie, Kreatiewe Skryf-werkswinkels in al drie amptelike tale, 'n reisende Literatuuruitstalling, Afrikaanse Dialek-en Storievertelfeeste, Nama-werkswinkels, stigting en bedryf van boekklubs, 'n Veeltaligheidsweek, isiXhosa Bewustheidsweek en die steeds groeiende isiXhosa-fees. Die Taalkomitee bied ook elke jaar vier studiebeurse aan ter waarde van R15 000 elk vir taalverwante studies.

Die bevordering van veeltaligheid is 'n opwindende en bevredigende taak. Dit skep

werk, dit bevorder sosiale eenheid en breek kultuur-en taalverskille af. In die Wes-Kaap dra dit ongetwyfeld daartoe by om 'n tuiste vir almal te skep.

Implementing language policy in the Western Cape

The official languages of the Western Cape are Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. The 2001 census statistics for mother-tongue speakers in the Western Cape are: Afrikaans 55,3%, isiXhosa 23,7% and English 19,3%. However, the demographics are dynamic and some 50 000 Xhosa-speakers move to the Western Cape each year.The province is therefore required to undertake regular monitoring and language audits to enable it to carry out the necessary planning, especially in education.

In accordance with the Constitution of the country and that of the province, the Western Cape Provincial Languages Act was promulgated in 1998. This Act made provision for the establishment of the Western Cape Language Committee, a statutory body consisting of language specialists and experts.

In terms of the Western Cape's constitution, the three official languages of the province have equal status. The Western Cape Government is obliged to regulate and monitor the use of these languages and take measures to raise the status of the previously disadvantaged languages in the province.

The first Western Cape Language Committee was appointed in 1998. Officials from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport were appointed to provide administrative and professional support. It was soon realised that to operate successfully the province needed a language policy. Work was begun on this and in November 2001 the Western Cape Language Policy was accepted in principal by the provincial cabinet.

In an effort to establish the language needs and usage of the inhabitants and officials in the Western Cape, a comprehensive language audit was carried out.

What this Language Policy means in practice is the following:

- All legislation, official reports and decisions must be made available in all three of the official languages.
- All advertisements and official notices must be published in all three of the official languages.
- All exhibitions, advertising and marketing material must be in all three of the official languages.
- All signboards must be in all three of the official languages.
- All public meetings, campaigns and training must be conducted in all three of the official languages, either with the assistance of interpreters or in the language of choice of the community concerned.
- Provision must always be made for the hard-of-hearing, among other things through the provision of Sign Language interpreters.
- All public posters (e.g. relating to health matters like HIV/AIDS prevention) must be in all three of the official languages.

Having a language policy is well and good, but implementing it obviously offers a variety of challenges. Among these is the matter of costs. Multilingualism, like democracy, does not come cheap, but it is still cheaper than the alternative. Part of the roll-out of the language policy involves establishing language units in the various provincial government departments and the appointment of isiXhosa-speaking language practitioners in particular. Interpreting equipment also has to be bought. Training has to be provided and provision made for the hard-of-hearing.

A timetable for full implementation of the language policy has been drawn up, and the policy will be implented over a period of ten years.

"In terms of the Western Cape's constitution, the three official languages of the province have equal status. The Western Cape Government is obliged to regulate and monitor the use of these languages and take measures to raise the status of the previously disadvantaged languages in the province."

The role of the language professions in the promotion of African languages

I would like to begin by thanking the organisers of this International Translation Day celebration seminar for inviting me to give a presentation on the role of language professions in the promotion of indigenous African languages in South Africa. African languages are faced with many challenges across the continent. In South Africa, these languages continue to suffer marginalisation and remain underdeveloped as compared to colonial languages such as English. The question of crucial concern, which is the main focus of this presentation, is: What role can the language professions play to improve this state of affairs.

The aim of this presentation is to address this question with special reference to the role of translation in the promotion of African languages in South Africa in different domains. It is the argument of this paper that translation is pivotal in implanting African languages in domains where they were previously excluded. Accordingly, the paper begins by giving a brief historical overview of the role of translation in implanting languages in new domains and then discusses translation strategies that may be used to promote the use of African languages in different domains in South Africa. As Venuti (1998: 159-160) rightly points out, although translation strategies in developing countries assimilate those prevailing in Anglo-American cultures they deviate from them in remarkable ways.

Paper read by Mbulungeni Madiba at the SATI International Translation Day seminar 'Many languages, one profession – in Africa', Cape Town, 30 September 2006

Mbulungeni is with the Multilingualism Education Project at the University of Cape Town

The role of translation in promoting African languages

Throughout history, translation has played a vital role in implanting languages in new domains. According to Kelly (1979: 1), the national languages of Western Europe such as English, French and German owe their emergence to translation. From the Roman Empire to the Common Markets, the use of these languages in international commerce and administration was made possible by translation. The ascendancy of English, for example, was achieved through the use of translation from other languages. As early as the ninth century, King Alfred of England, who had translated (or caused to be translated) a number of Latin texts, identified translation as a means to support the English language and to help the English people to recover from the devastation of the Danish invasion that had laid waste to the old monastic centres of learning and had demoralised and divided the kingdom. Thus, in his preface to translation of the *Cura Pastoralis* (a handbook for the parish priests), Alfred urged a revival of learning through greater accessibility of texts as a direct result of translations into the vernacular, and at the same time asserted the claims of English as literary language in its own right. According to him, emerging literatures with little or no written tradition of their own were to draw upon developed languages across Europe, and as a result works produced in other cultural contexts were translated, adapted and absorbed on a vast scale. He urged the English people to translate some of the books into their language so that all men should access knowledge in the language they can understand in the same way the Romans translated texts for their own purposes, as did all other Christian nations (Bassnett 1980: 51). Thus translation was perceived as having a moral and didactic purpose with a clear political role to play, far removed from its purely instrumental role, and writers used their abilities to translate as a means of increasing the status of their own vernacular.

Translation also became pivotal during the Renaissance period in Europe. As George Steiner (1975: 247, quoted in Bassnett 1980: 58) says:

> "At a time of explosive innovation, and amid a real threat of surfeit and disorder, translation absorbed, shaped, and orientated the necessary raw material. It was in full sense of the term, the matire premiere of the imagination. Moreover, it established a logic of relation between past and present, and between different tongues and traditions which were splitting apart under stress of nationalism and religious conflict."

During the Renaissance in Europe, trans-

lation played an important role in shaping the intellectual life of the age, "changing the role of the translator almost to that of a revolutionary activist rather than the servant of an original author or text" (Bassnett 1980: 58).

In Germany, translation was considered by scholars such as Wilhelm von Humboldt as pivotal to the development of German as a modern language. Wilhelm von Humboldt was fully convinced that translations "can augment the significance and the expressivity of the native language" (Eco 2003: 81-82).

In Japan, translation also played a vital role in the development of the Japanese language during the Meiji Revolution of the second half of the 19th century. The Meiji Revolution was accompanied by the systematic translation into the Japanese language of the main features of what was perceived to be the 'Western genius' (Coulmas 1990).

There are many examples of languages that were promoted through translation; the list is endless. The examples discussed in the foregoing only serve to illustrate the point that if translation has played such a crucial role in the consolidation and development of imperial and national languages, there is no intrinsic reason why translation should not be of benefit to our South African indigenous languages. Scholars such as Neville Alexander are fully convinced that a consciously structured translation programme is one of the most effective ways of changing both the body and the functional potential of the country's indigenous languages.

The need for translation in the indigenous languages of South Africa should be viewed against the emergence of English as a global language. As Alexander (2005) rightly points out, globalisation has led to the emergence of English as *the* global language, with all "the other contenders finding themselves on the defensive". Accordingly, translation is viewed as a counter-hegemonic strategy to English. The European Union, for example, following its adoption of a policy of official multilingualism, produces huge volumes of translations. According to Tosi (2003: 3-4) "Altogether in the Institutions of the Union more than 3 000 translators are employed and they produced over two million translated pages every year. In the European Parliament 500 translators organised in 11 language divisions produce 700 000 translated pages a year … every day each translation division receives around 300 pages to translate, the equivalent of translating a novel into ten different languages every day".

In South Africa, translation is increasingly considered to be central to the development and use of indigenous African languages as required by the Constitution, which accords official status to eleven languages at national level. However, despite this Constitutional policy framework, African languages remain confined to lower domains such as family and church. In government administration and communication, for example, the *Report of a survey of language infra-structure in government departments* conducted by the Department of Arts and Culture in 2001 clearly shows that there was not enough translation work in government departments (national and provincial). According to this report:

- Only 12 national departments have language units or sections that deal with language matters
- A total of 135 officials in these units deal with language matters, including translation and editing
- Nineteen national departments do not have language units (deal with language matters on an ad hoc basis); three of these departments have not assigned members of staff to deal specifically with language matters
- At provincial level, seven of the nine provinces have language units (the situation should be different now)

From the foregoing, it is increasingly clear that South Africa needs an integrated national translation strategy to implant indigenous African languages in higher domains. The National Languages Policy Framework that was developed by the Department of Arts and Culture a few years ago had great potential to promote translation and to implant indigenous African language in government departments in a more coordinated way. It is to be regretted that for very strange reasons the NLPF is still waiting to see the light of the day despite the pressing need to promote multilingualism and to implant African languages in different domains.

There is also a need to adopt a well-coordinated national strategy to implant indigenous African languages in domains such as education (school and tertiary), business and media. In education, translation can play an important role in the development of indigenous African languages as lingua academica or media of education. In fact, according to the Constitution (S 29(2)):

"The need for translation in the indigenous languages of South Africa should be viewed against the emergence of English as a global language"

> "Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the protection and promotion of these rights, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single-medium institutions, taking into account –
> (a) quality;
> (b) practicability; and
> (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices"

The educative role of translation may be traced back to the time of the Roman Empire where the early vernacular glosses were inserted in Latin manuscripts to provide literal rendering of the Latin original and promoted interlingual transfer of concepts. This system of glossing, amongst other factors, contributed significantly to the emergence of distinct European national languages as lingua academica. With modern technology, it should be easier for even publishers to incorporate multilingual glossaries to promote concept literacy. The Department of Education should find a creative way to use translation to implant African languages in teaching in school education.

"Although translation is recommended as a strategy to promote African languages, it needs to be careful planned as it may have the opposite results. … the target languages may because of pressure, succumb at lexical and syntactic level so that over time they become mirror-images of the dominant language"

In higher education, the use of translation has the potential to promote the development of registers and style for the different special subject fields. A more balanced approach may be to provide translation for tutorial matter which can be made available to students in hard copies or online to save cost. Already, there are universities that have started to use translation in this way and to develop multilingual glossaries to promote concept literacy. As Schiffman (1992: 1) points out, attempts to promote indigenous languages to replace colonial languages in education fields such as law, medicine, science and technology fail because of the lack of registers and style relevant to these subject fields in the target languages. According to him, registers are not simply lists of vocabulary, but instead they are developed primarily by a community of language users interactively employing them to solve a particular task; they are essentially constructed in use, by their users, and cannot be developed by bureaucrats or outsiders to the register. For example, the evolution and development of a register for computer science in English has developed along with the evolution and development of computing hardware, software and computer science as they themselves have evolved. Thus, translated materials in different special subject fields can yield a large number of registers and styles in African languages which would not have developed if the languages were not put into use.

In summary, the translation of African languages to function in domains such as commerce, law and education has the potential to make them become lingua economica, lingua legalese and lingua academica. In business, it is important also to note the initiatives of banks such as ABSA, Telkom, Microsoft, etc., which have started to translate some of their documents into African languages. The SABC is increasingly making use of translation in its programmes. TV and radio news, for example, is translated into and broadcast in all nine of the indigenous African languages.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although translation is recommended as a strategy to promote African languages, it needs to be carefully planned as it may have the opposite results. As Cronin (2003:141) warns, the target languages may, because of pressure, succumb at lexical and syntactic level so that over time they become mirror-images of the dominant language. Thus, according to him, there is a need to promote translation as a reflexion rather than a reflection. The term reflection "refers to the unconscious imbibing of a dominant language that produces the numerous calques", whereas the term reflexion "refers to the type of translation that gives critical consideration to what a language absorbs and what allows it to expand and what causes it to retract, to lose the synchronic and diachronic range of its expressive resources" (Cronin 2003: 141).

To maximise and safeguard the use of translation to promote indigenous Afrcan languages, it is important to adopt a language planning framework that provides for continous evaluation to see if translation is resulting in assimilation or diversification. In the former, language speakers are assimilated through self-translation to a dominant language and in the latter, language speakers develop their language through the existing structures or institutions of translation and thus resist incorporation. (Cronin 2003: 142). Translation becomes threatening and oppressive if speakers of the target language have no control over the translation process and cannot use translation as an enabling force but have to suffer it as a disabling intrusion.

The references to this paper appear on page 58.

Publishing to promote African languages

The Minister of Education recently touched a raw nerve within the publishing industry when she made a call for a Language Colloquium, aimed, amongst other things, at the following:

- Promoting multilingualism and parity of esteem amongst all languages
- Promoting broad usage of all languages
- Achieving communicative competence in indigenous language by all learners

Ideally, these should be exciting times in the publishing industry, for here come a big opportunity to publish in all languages! Here is an opportunity for South African learners to learn in their home languages.

But far from being an opportune time for publishers, this development is currently causing untold anxiety within the industry. It has sparked an intense debate. It is quite unfortunate that this debate says little about the nobles that are embedded within the Language Colloquium. Instead, the debate sounds an alarm: how is it possible to think about learning in African languages?

One may understand the context of the anxiety. It is common knowledge that over the years, publishers have made huge investments in developing materials that promote English as a language of learning and teaching in South African schools. There are bound to be financial 'losses' if African languages were to become languages of learning and teaching.

A concern for this writer is the way in which key players in the industry are quick to seek support from prominent scholars to argue against the use of indigenous languages in learning and teaching. Equally concerning is the way in which scholars are quick to come to the party by advancing the old familiar argument: 'lack of terminology in African languages is hindering progress in terms of developing them as languages of learning and teaching'.

While there is degree of truth in this argument, the problem this writer has with this is two-fold. The first is that the scholars say very little about how to go about developing appropriate terminology in African languages. Usually, these scholars occupy strategic positions (at universities) which can influence the direction language policy could take. They are able to call all kinds of conferences except the language policy/ terminology one.

The second problem concerns the way in which scholars are almost oblivious to some of the steps undertaken and progress made so far in developing indigenous languages. Up to 1994, most textbooks in African languages were designed to teach linguistics, and little attention was given to using these languages as vehicles for teaching other aspects of the curriculum such as History, Science, Mathematics and Geography.

It was around this time that publishing companies such as Maskew Miller Longman pioneered a ground-breaking African languages publishing programme that went beyond teaching linguistics. Against the background of Curriculum 2005, Maskew Miller Longman was clear on its indigenous languages publishing strategy: develop textbooks that not only teach linguistics, but use Economic and Management Sciences, Natural Sciences, Life Orientation, Arts and Culture and so on as vehicles for teaching languages.

This was a huge undertaking that involved consultation with PanSALB, Provincial Language Committees, the national Department of Education and various other stakeholders in the field of language and language teaching. The purpose of the consultation was to establish the suitability of new terminology as dictated by the new curriculum. The success of Maskew Miller Longman demonstrates that terminology is a social construct, and today this company deservedly occupies a leading position in indigenous language publishing.

A new era had dawned in indigenous languages publishing and other publishers followed suit. A company like Nasou Via Afrika has established a department that is solely dedicated to indigenous languages publishing. Shuter and Shooter, Vivlia, New Africa Books, Heinemann, Macmillan, Oxford University Press and other small publishers are increasingly making their presence felt in indigenous language publishing.

Paper read by Thiathu Nemutanzhela at the SATI International Translation Day seminar 'Many languages, one profession – in Africa', Cape Town, 30 September 2006

Thiathu is an author and the business development manager at Oxford University Press

The result is that over and above textbook publishing, there are also reading schemes in indigenous languages. Yet, there are still many challenges going forward. To give an example, the Western Cape Department of Education recently called for a submission of graded readers in all official languages of the province. Many publishing staff spent extra hours in the office in order to make submissions in indigenous languages in a year already declared as a 'year of African languages'!

The big question still remains: how can publishing serve to promote African languages? This question is difficult to answer. One can only make a start by looking at the role played by publishing to promote Afrikaans as a first additional language in the 70s and 80s. One can look at the example provided by the *Môreson-Reeks: Afrikaans Leesboekies vir Primere Skole* reading scheme published by the then *Via Afrika Beperk* during the early 70s.

"How can publishing serve to promote African languages? This question is difficult to answer. One can only make a start by looking at the role played by publishing to promote Afrikaans as a first additional language in the 70s and 80s."

A major theme that comes out of this primary school reading scheme is that the Afrikaner intelligentsia of the time had passion and determination to promote their language, an aspect that is lacking in almost all South African languages today. They did not shy away from appropriating stories that were outside their cultural and belief system. If anything, they went out of their way to learn more about African myths, legends and folklore.

We have heard countless stories about how the Afrikaner intelligentsia used their gardeners and nannies alike as sources for their stories. As some of their folk had fun at local bars, and held *braais* in the evenings, it was story time with their nannies and gardeners. They exploited the evening story-telling sessions to the full, and the result was that they retold many African stories (using appropriate settings, African names etc.) in Afrikaans and got them read at schools, where the seeds of language development are planted.

The young minds wanted good stories to read and enjoy, and the Afrikaans language simply became another medium in which they could enjoy a popular story – and in the process learn how to read and write in that language. If the Afrikaner intelligentsia of the 70s and 80s successfully confronted new bodies of knowledge, and interpreted new culture and events, what stops all of us from doing the same today?

What is in a terminology? Language is dynamic and appropriates new words and meanings on a daily basis. The challenge is to standardise new words and their meanings, and we have what we are looking for: new terminology! So, how can we rise above current challenges and allow our languages space and opportunity to interpret Science and Mathematics?

Maybe our starting point should be with History – history tells stories! It uses real events and props such as dates and places to anchor its narrative. In the hands of a good historian (story-teller), any piece of history will make sense and be seen as 'true history'. Similarly, in the hands of a mediocre historian, a piece of history becomes questionable and seen as 'distorted history'. So, it is all in the narrative techniques employed in telling a story about a past event that really matters, not the language in which such an event is written.

In conclusion, do we want to leave it entirely to the government and the publishing industry to develop and promote the use of indigenous languages, and thereby promote multilingualism in South Africa? How can we tap into existing literary repertoire in order to foster multilingualism? How can we foster future literary creations that are geared towards generating a new body of literature in all languages? How can we move from 'publishers looking for authors and new materials' to 'authors with good multilingual projects looking for publishers'?

SATI chairperson Anne-Marie Beukes with the speakers at the International Translation Day celebrations in Cape Town (above)
Below: Welgemeend, the gracious venue for the celebrations

Interpreting to promote multilingualism

Multilingualism, empowerment and human dignity

In South Africa language rights are firmly entrenched in, inter alia, sections 6, 29, 30 and 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, but in practice the hegemony and overpowering use of one language, namely English, is prevalent in a country where 40% of the citizens do not understand one single word of English.

Consequently, cultural and developmental obstructions occur, preventing people from realising their full potential. They are also alienated from their culture and background. Interpreting can play a major role in this regard not only by promoting multilingualism but also by enhancing human dignity and contributing to empowerment because people will be able to speak in the language of their choice and listen in the language of their choice.

History

Interpreting has been practised for almost 7 000 years. It certainly predates writing, which has been in existence for at least 6 500 years. This makes interpreting the second oldest profession in the world!

The first time ever that simultaneous court interpreters were used was during the Nuremberg Trials in 1945 after the end of World War 11.The EEC and UN would also come to a standstill if interpreting services were not available.

In South Africa Jan van Riebeeck wrote about a Khoi interpreter (Eva) in the Cape and the negotiations between Piet Retief and Dingaan were facilitated by a missionary who acted as an interpreter. And then came the TRC in the 1990s and did for interpreting in SA what the Nuremberg trials did for interpreting in Europe.

Orientation to interpreting

Interpreting is not simply a matter of substituting a word or phrase or clause or sentence in the listener's language for the speaker's word or phrase or clause or sentence. Interpreting is an exceedingly complex task: interpreting a message and finding word equivalents are not the same thing. Interpreting is the faithful image of the original discourse and it is not transcoding; in other words interpreting conveys the message and not the words of the discourse. Avoid a flood of ideas drowned in a confusion of words and gestures!

Interpreting genres

Mode of interpreting		Interpreting genres
Consecutive interpreting	*Simultaneous interpreting*	
X	X	Conference interpreting
X		Court interpreting
X		Business interpreting
		Liaison (community) interpreting
X		• Health
X		• Education
X	X	• Local government
X	X	• Public service
X	X	Sign Language interpreting

Simultaneous mode of interpreting

SI is practised in booths with sophisticated equipment and used in conference situations. People rarely listen and speak at the same time. Simultaneous interpreters (SI) manage to utter their interpretations while they are listening to the source language message. Simultaneous interpreters are professional listeners and professional public speakers.

Simultaneous interpreters monitor, store, retrieve and translate the source language input while at the same time they are uttering their interpretations in the target language. SI relies heavily on complex cognitive processes: comprehension, retrieval, production and memory. It is an intensive and active form of processing requiring *extreme concentration* and excellent *capacity management skills*:

Listening, concentration, comprehension and analysis

- Identification/recognition of words/

Paper read by Dr Isabel Cilliers at the SATI International Translation Day seminar 'Many languages, one profession – in Africa', Cape Town, 30 September 2006

Isabel is a SATI-accredited interpreter and former head of the Western Cape Language Committee.

concentrated listening; no lapse in concentration.
- Comprehension beyond recognition of individual words/concentrate on MEANING/familiarity with linguistic structures, technical terms.

Short-term memory
- Short-term memory operations occur continuously
- Information is stored for 30-60 seconds in the short-term memory for later use

Speech production
- Mental representation of messages
- Speech planning/confidence, good voice
- Performance of speech plan (hesitations when searching for lexical units and when making syntactic decisions)
- Golden rule: produce the target language speech on the basis of meaning, NOT the words of the source language speech.

Problems arise when processing capacity requirements are increased by:
- External factors, e.g. quality of sound, noise
- Pronunciation
- High speed of delivery: 100 to 200 words per minute by interpreter.
- High density of information: 10 minutes of interpreting = number of words translated per day (6-15 pages)
- Unknown names, numbers, acronyms
- SI with text: added difficulty of following vocal speech and the written text as well as interpreting

Deterioration in quality can be avoided by *training* and *experience*:
- Effective *management* of processing capacity
- *Listening and hearing*: Delaying response for a fraction of a second; optimum start-up distance; ear-voice span: the longer the EVS the better the understanding of the message, but the greater the stress on memory; establish ear dominance and work with the weaker ear uncovered – this helps exercise good voice control
- *Extra-linguistic clues*: The visual channel supports the acoustic input: insist on seeing what you are listening to, seeing who is listening to you; interpret as if you are talking, gestures and all – a gesture will sometimes suggest a word that will not come, and it allows for better articulation and the constantly changing parameters involved in non-verbal messages, which the interpreter unscrambles: humour, pain, anger, pride and honour
- *Analysis*: Segmentation; changing order of elements in enumeration; reformulating last elements first; paraphrasing; abstracting
- *Production*: Confidence, voice quality, public speaking; melodic, dynamic and rhythmic accentuation of a speech
- Profound *knowledge of active and passive languages AND culture*
- Ability to grasp rapidly and convey the essential *meaning* of what is said
- Wide *general knowledge* and interests and a willingness to acquire new information
- Superhuman *concentration and stamina*!
- *Booth mate's assistance*: Work in a team of two. Each interpreter works 20 to 30 minutes, a total of 200 minutes per day. In SA this ideal is seldom possible; the passive interpreter assists her active colleague, but never disturbs the active colleague; one must be in complete control of the interpreting equipment – use the mute button for coughing, etc.; avoid irritating behaviour and mannerisms; consider personal hygiene; rest after 30 minutes because of the intense effort involved in interpreting; polish your social skills to enhance your aility to work as a member of a team

"The foundation for simultaneous interpreting in South Africa was laid by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. During the Human Rights Violation Hearings ... every victim and perpetrator had the right to listen in the language of their choice and to speak in the language of their choice."

Simultaneous interpreting in practice

The foundation for simultaneous interpreting in South Africa was laid by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. During the Human Rights Violation Hearings interpreters travelled the length and breadth of South Africa to smart halls in big cities and small rooms in dusty little towns, but every victim and perpetrator had the right to listen in the language of their choice and to speak in the language of their choice. Interpreting was a challenge because the interpreter had to unscramble extra-linguistic clues and the raw emotions of pain, anger, pride and honour. The Amnesty Hearings took place in a clinical courtroom atmosphere and the interpreter was taxed by the legal jargon and the transfer of exact information because so much depended on the interpreting. The interpreters trained and used by the Language Facilitation Unit at the Free State University for the TRC Hearings still form the backbone of interpreting in South Africa.

Simultaneous interpreting is used extensively in the public sector in the Western Cape. Recently approximately 60 interpreters and translators were appointed in the *National Parliament* in Cape Town. The ideal is to use all 11 official languages and also Sign

Language not only during all sittings of Parliament as is the case at present, but also for portfolio committees, etc.

In the *Western Cape Legislature* simultaneous interpreters are used for all the sittings of parliament and standing and portfolio meetings. Interpreting is into English from isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The *Western Cape Provincial Government* has purchased four Sennheisers – equipment with 20 earphones and one microphone each – which are portable and can be used in various departments for whisper interpreting as and when the need arises.

In the *City of Cape Town* all councillors can address a meeting in Afrikaans, isiXhosa or English, the official languages of the Western Cape, during Council and other meetings. Their contributions are simultaneously interpreted into Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English. At most *local councils* in the Western Cape simultaneous interpreters interpret into English.

At *Stellenbosch University* Sennheiser equipment is used for simultaneous interpreting at senate and some faculty meetings, at the Student Parliament and other meetings where the need arises. Students in the Faculty of Engineering have developed a device permanently fixed to a wall in a lecture hall to be used in conjunction with a cheap little transistor radio for simultaneous interpreting during lectures.

Many conferences take place in and around Cape Town, especially at the *Cape Town International Conference Centre*. Apart from the SA official languages and sign language, many European languages are used for simultaneous interpreting at these conferences.

Consecutive mode of interpreting

This is the mode of interpreting most widely used in SA. The interpreter is positioned near the speaker, who pauses from time to time to allow for interpretation. All attention is focused on the interpreter; no booth, no equipment, in direct contact with the audience.

Community interpreting is broadly defined as interpreting that takes place in the context of the local town, village or community: hospitals, clinics, schools, lawyers' offices, housing departments, agricultural sector, etc. Interpreters used in one-to-one situations e.g. health services, agricultural sector and in situations in which the power relationships between speakers are unequal, e.g. doctor/patient.

Five requirements for community interpreters

- Thorough knowledge of source and target languages (grammar, style and register) and cultures
- Adequate background of the domain in which they are working, e.g. pre-operative procedures in a health service or court proceedings in the legal system
- A standard knowledge of the formal and informal terminology to be used, e.g. describing parts of the body in basic anatomy
- Accurate transfer techniques
- A basic understanding of the code of ethics: confidentiality, impartiality, accuracy, etc.

Additional dimensions

- Familiarity with a wider range of registers than usually expected from formal languages: from legal to street language
- No time to prepare for assignments
- Working with people who are not used to working with interpreters and who are usually under personal stress

Consecutive interpreting in practice

Consecutive interpreting is widely used in the Western Cape, since no equipment is required, but using people without interpreting experience as interpreters on an ad hoc, informal, unprofessional basis whenever linguistic problems are experienced is *not* a cost-effective way of managing resources. Money can be saved by ensuring effective communication between service providers and customers. Unqualified interpreters tend to get over-involved, over-identified with the client, particularly if the client comes from the same culture.

Consecutive interpreting is needed at hospitals and clinics, at police stations, NGOs, trade unions, business meetings, etc. in the Western Cape, where it has a very important role to fulfil. Even at schools and universities interpreting can be used to solve the language issues.

A big challenge for consecutive interpreting is court interpreting. In *criminal cases* the Department of Justice is supposed to provide interpreting services. These services are readily available between Afrikaans and the African languages and between English and the African languages, but few interpreters can interpret between Afrikaans and English. Therefore Afrikaans-speaking people are often obliged to testify in English, which is not to their advantage.

In *civil cases* between two private parties

"Community interpreting is broadly defined as interpreting that takes place in the context of the local town, village or community: hospitals, clinics, schools, lawyers' offices, housing departments, agricultural sector, etc."

the state does not provide interpreting services. The procedures are in English and the parties have to provide interpreting services on their own costs if they require interpreting in another official language. In these cases the offices of the legal representatives phone an interpreter a few hours before the court proceedings start and since no interpreter is available at such short notice, the case has to be postponed.

Apart from this one wonders whether consideration has ever been given by stakeholders to purchasing Sennheiser equipment for use in courts. Time and money will be saved and the accuracy of the interpreting for legal purposes enhanced.

The City of Cape Town provides and pays for trilingual (Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English) interpreters at the following *municipal courts*: Wynberg, Goodwood, Blue Downs, Parow and City Hall.

"The South African Translators' Institute should devise guidelines for the promotion and protection of the interpreting profession and interpreters in South Africa"

Code of conduct

Interpreters have to be trained and they must be experienced in order to make a contribution to multilingualism. All interpreters must also adhere to a strict code of conduct based on the principles of honesty, integrity and dignity, reliability, confidentiality, competence, impartiality and accuracy. Freelance interpreters must sign a contract before accepting an assignment.

SATI

Unfortunately, it seems that the proposed Languages Act and Language Plan for South Africa will not be realised in the very near future. In this regard the South African Translators' Institute should devise guidelines for the promotion and protection of the interpreting profession and interpreters in South Africa. AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) serves as an excellent example for interpreters and their employers in this regard, e.g. "Given the physical and mental fatigue that are caused by sustained concentration … (Art. 6) the normal duration of an interpreter's working day shall not exceed two sessions of between two-and-a-half and three hours each" (Art. 7).

References from page 52

Alexander, N. 2005. The potential role of translation as social practice for the intellectualisation of African languages. Keynote address delivered at the XVII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators held at Tampere, Finland, 4-7 August.

Bassnett, S. 1980. *Translation studies*. London: Routledge.

Coulmas, F.1 990. Language adaptation in Meiji Japan. In Weinstein, B.(ed.). *Language policy and political development*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Cronin, M. 2003. *Translation and globalisation.* London: Routledge.

DACST. 2001. *Report of a survey of language infrastructure in government departments conducted by the Department of Arts and Culture.*

Kelly, L.G. 1979. *The true interpreter. A history of translation. Theory and practice in the West*. Oxford:Basil Blackwell.

Phillipson, R. 1992. *Linguistic imperialism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schiffman, H.F.1992. Resisting 'arrest' in status planning: structural and covert impediments to status change. *Language and communication* 12(1): 1-15.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). South Africa: Constitutional Assembly.

Tosi, A. 2003. *Crossing barriers and bridging cultures. The challenges of multilingual translation for the European Union.* Clevedon: Multilingual matters.

Venuti, L.1998. *The scandals of translation. Towards an ethics of difference*. London: Routledge.

The Western Cape Language Committee kindly sponsored interpreting facilities for the ITD celebrations in Cape Town on 30 September

The ITD celebrations were organised by SATI Boland – here members are busy at the registration table

Dictionary wins Prize for Outstanding Translation

At the ITD celebration in Cape Town on 30 September, SATI for the third time presented its Prize for Outstanding Translation, this year sponsored by the Via Afrika Group. The winner was the editorial team at Pharos Dictionaries for the *Pharos Afrikaans-Engels/English-Afrikaans Dictionary*, a reworked and revised edition of Bosman, Van der Merwe and Hiemstra's *Bilingual Dictionary*. The team was selected as the overall winner from the four category winners announced earlier in the month.

The award aims is to promote the translation and publication of works into and/or from the official languages of South Africa.

Dictionaries are an essential resource for translators. The revision of the original *Tweetalige Woordeboek/Bilingual Dictionary* by Madaleine du Plessis and her team that culminated into the publication of the *Pharos Afrikaans-Engels Woordeboek/ English-Afrikaans Dictionary* provides a valuable asset to both translation and lexicography in South Africa. The dictionary is a creative and ingenious piece of work and is of a very high lexicographical standard. Although it is a revision of an earlier dictionary, this product is able to stand as a text in its own right and will occupy a central position in the field of Afrikaans/English bilingual bidirectional dictionaries as its predecessor did.

The revision of this dictionary required considerable innovation and modernisation. The editorial team had to migrate from the old dictionary compilation methods to utilising modern lexicographical resources (a database rather than index cards; electronic corpora), requiring a manipulation of old data into a new reusable format. In addition, they made sure that the new dictionary complied with the latest Afrikaans spelling and orthography, consulting the latest version of the *Afrikaanse Woordelys en Spelreëls*. Obsolete and archaic words and terms were removed and new terminology that did not exist when the previous edition came out 21 years previously was added, culled from extensive corpora. The macrostructure (front matter, central text and back matter), the general layout and the typography assist the dictionary user, while the microstructural handling of data also facilitates use.

Both language practitioners and lay users will benefit greatly from the publication of this dictionary. Although it is a general dictionary containing a variety of general terminology, terms from various subject areas are also included to assist subject specialists, translators, editors, journalists and lay users. The dictionary succeeds in making the two languages accessible to other groups in South Africa and thereby succeeds in promoting cross-cultural understanding.

A total of 12 entries in five categories – fiction, non-fiction, poetry & drama, service translation and dictionaries – were received. The most exciting aspect of this year's entries was the first nominations that involved translations between two African languages. Unfortunately, none were winners.

Full details of the competition and the winners can be found on the Institute's Web-site at www.translators.org.za.

The category winners receive their prizes at the awards ceremony on 30 Sept:

1. *Fiction: Elsa Silke for* This Life*, the translation into English of Karel Schoeman's novel* Hierdie lewe *[Publisher: Human & Rousseau]*
2. *Non-fiction: Linde Dietrich for* Anton Rupert – a biography*, the English translation of the Afrikaans version of this biography, written by Ebbe Dommisse and Willie Esterhuysen [Publisher: NB Publishers]*
3. *Poetry and drama: Idil Sheard for* Lied van die vallei*, her Afrikaans translation of Athol Fugard's play* Valley Song *[Publisher: Maskew Miller Longman]*
4. *Dictionaries: Editor-in-chief Madaleine du Plessis on behalf of the Pharos team for their English/Afrikaans bilingual dictionary*

Scenes from the SATI anniversary celebrations through the year

Bloemfontein in March (left)

Pretoria in June (the three pictures below)

Durban in November (the two pictures below)

September in Cape Town (below)

A toast to the Institute in August (above), when the FIT Council (right) joined the celebrations

Mementos of SATI's 50th Anniversary

This has been a momentous year! Share in the memories by buying some of the special commemorative items featuring the special anniversary logo brought out specially this year. These products also make excellent corporate gifts for your clients, to keep you in their minds and to underline that you are a member of a professional body that has a healthy history.

The products shown below, all sporting the SATI anniversary logo, are available. Contact Marion Boers to discuss mailing or delivery details if you would like to order. Postage and insurance will be added to items that are mailed.

Beautiful Bohemian crystal glasses

290 ml

Price: R35 each

Set of 6: R180

Glass coffee mugs

290 ml

Price: R35 each

Set of 4: R120

Business card holders

Brushed aluminium with logo laser-engraved in black

Price: R35 each or R60 for 2

Fridge magnets

Bearing the SATI anniversary logo

R8 each or R30 for 5

Book or shopping bags

Lightweight and sturdy

38,5 cm x 42,5 cm x 9 cm

Available in blue, red and black with the logo printed in white

Price: R25 each or R100 for 5

Ballpoint pen

Funky design with rubber grip

Printed with the SATI acronym and anniversary dates

Pens available in blue and red, printed in black

Black ink

Price: R15 each or R70 for 5

Licence disk holders

White background printed with the anniversary logo in colour

Adheres to your windscreen – simply place your licence disk in the pocket. Ideal gift for clients – lightweight, easy to send, long-term reminder

R5 each or R20 for 5

Help for sworn translators

A manual on sworn translation is now available from the SA Translators' Institute

This comprehensive manual on sworn translation arose as a result of a lack of clear guidelines on exactly how sworn translators should be going about their business. Many conventions and requirements have arisen over the years, but they were not put together in a single source. Newcomers to the profession had difficulty finding out what they were supposed to be doing.

The manual should obviate these problems. It covers all aspects of sworn translation, from the requirements to qualify as a sworn translator to details of the various conventions, in addition to containing samples of documentation commonly used in South Africa.

Contents

The manual is in A4 format and soft-covered, with 100 pages. It costs R100 per copy for Institute members and R150 for non-members.

To purchase a copy of the manual, contact Marion Boers on (011) 803-2681 or publications@translators.org.za.

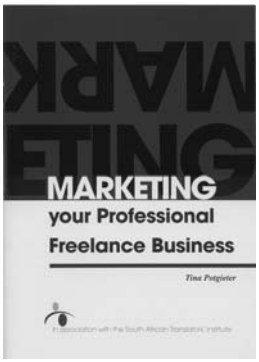
Marketing Solutions

Based on a highly successful workshop by Tina Potgieter, this book is a self-help guide to marketing your freelance business. The book teaches users to –

- assess where their business is at currently
- define exactly what their business needs are
- determine what their clients' needs are
- devise client-driven marketing strategies
- assess their competition
- determine which marketing methods work best for their business
- network successfully
- develop a practical marketing plan
- leverage themselves and build a successful business

A5 format, soft-covered, with 38 pages of excellent tips, many practical examples and implementable ideas.

Cost: R60 per copy for SATI members, R80 for non-members and R40 for registered students. To order, contact Marion Boers on (011) 803-2681 or publications@translators.org.za.



Other publications

The Institute has produced a special volume to celebrate its 50th anniversary, giving an overview of SATI's history since its establishment on 25 August 1956. Copies are available from Marion Boers.

The information on setting oneself up as a freelance language practitioner published in *Muratho* in October 2003 proved very popular and is being consolidated and issued as a stand-alone publication. It covers a range of issues and offers plenty of practical advice for those starting out in the profession. The publication will be available in March 2007.