

MURATHO

APRIL 2007

Language practice – A typical day:

Freelance Corporate Government
Parastatal Agency



Interpreter Editor Translator
Dictionary-maker Terminologist Teacher

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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.

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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.



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**Journal of the South
African Translators'
Institute**

**Jenale ya Mokgatlho wa
Bafetoledi wa Aforika
Borwa**

**Joernaal van die
Suid-Afrikaanse
Vertalersinstituut**

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

Muratho, ke lereo la SeVenda le le kayang "borogo", sekai sa tiro ya tllhaetsano e e dirwang ke badiri ka puo

Muratho is die Venda term vir 'n "brug", die simbool van die kommunikatiewe aktiwiteit wat deur taalwerkers gefasiliteer word

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

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

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Cover photo: The Taj Mahal, India, by Marion Boers



Editor's Notes

Have you ever wondered what other language practitioners do with their days? Whether their lives are also as hectic as yours and filled with all sorts of interruptions and distractions?

Or have you simply wondered what other types of language work there are out there and whether there might be something that appeals to you (even) more than what you are currently doing?

Well, in this issue of *Muratho*, you have an opportunity to answer at least some of those questions. I suspect that many of us sit in our offices and beaver away, in fact giving very little thought to what anyone else does – probably because we have little time to spend on such idle thoughts. But if you were to reflect on it, you might be astounded at how many different guises language practitioners work under, how many different configurations there are and how many different environments language practitioners operate in.

Take just translators as an example. There are the freelancers who work for a variety of clients. There are those who work for the government, which may be at national, provincial or local level or in a statutory body or parastatal institution. There are those who work in the corporate world, in a variety of fields. There are those who combine translation with other elements like interpreting, editing or writing. There are those whose job is actually something else but who translate as part of the package.

And then don't forget those who train the translators, those who produce the tools of their trade – terminology and dictionaries – and those who run agencies to ease the burdens on clients and freelancers of finding one another.

For this issue of *Muratho*, I approached various members to write about a typical working day in order to give others a glimpse into their working world. I must thank all our contributors – they responded positively and generously, though often protesting that “those who can't write translate”, and produced their articles promptly and within a short timeframe. I hope that you are as

impressed as I was at the enormous variety of work that is carried on in our profession, at the number of dedicated professionals there are out there, at the dedication displayed and the love of language that shines through.

We have not even covered all the options in this issue. There is nothing here about what it is like to be a literary translator, little about the trials of working as a parliamentary interpreter, nothing about the challenges faced by lexicographers working in the African languages. But I hope that what we have covered will make you marvel at the enormous variety in this profession of ours, fill you with pride to be associated with such worthy professionals, make you chuckle and nod in recognition of shared experiences, and engender gratitude in you that we work in a community of generous, helpful and dedicated professionals.

Congratulations on choosing such a wonderful career!

Until next time

Marion

Preparing language practitioners for the real world

When I was asked to write something about my experience of teaching translation and interpreting I was somewhat perplexed. Who on earth would want to read about something as mundane as a day in the life of an academic training translators? And then as I went about my work during the course of the last week, I realised that perhaps it is more varied than people might imagine.

I have been involved in training translators since my first academic appointment in 1988. Frighteningly, that is almost 20 years. During that time I have taught several hundred students, many of whom have gone on to follow successful careers as translators and interpreters (as well as other, varied, careers such as editing, computing, teaching, management and public relations). Students are at the heart of all teaching activity, and everything that I do as a teacher has to revolve around them. This means that each batch of students brings its own challenges, and I find that the style of teaching, and even the content of the course, varies according to the students registered in any particular year.

The teaching element

Indeed, the most rewarding part of my job is the interaction with students. While there are usually not more than 20 or 25 in any one year, they are always interesting in their diversity, coming from different backgrounds, cultures and nationalities. They also vary widely in age – we have had ‘mature’ students in their fifties and sixties, and others as young as 22, although the majority are in their twenties or early thirties. Some come straight from their first degree, while others already have experience in translation but wish to obtain a professional qualification. All are similar in that they share a passion for languages and working with language. Very few students drop out of the course (and if they do it is usually for health reasons) and the majority of our graduates tell us, and their friends, that they thoroughly enjoyed the course and felt well prepared for a career in which they could put their love of languages to good use.

So, teaching is the core of what I do, but that

is by no means my sole activity. In order to run effective courses the curriculum has to be continually revised and developed and teaching material has to be kept up to date, which means keeping abreast of new books and articles in the broader fields of Translation and Interpreting Studies. This is becoming more and more difficult, as the number of publications seems to increase every year as the discipline grows in popularity across the world.

In addition, practice texts have to be found in the different language combinations, real-life projects managed and divided among students whenever possible, and assignments and examinations have to be set and marked. This part of my work has been made much easier with the advent of the Internet. Before then I had to wade through endless newspapers and journals and send students off to companies and banks, all in quest of texts suitable for the students to practise on. Now one can surf the Internet, cut and paste into a Word document, count the number of words automatically, and come up with five or six suitable texts in a few hours.

Admin and research

Apart from teaching and assessment, South African universities generally require academic staff to assume a number of administrative activities. In my case this involves processing applications and assessing entrance tests, keeping student records, recording marks, sitting on seemingly endless committees (such as the Graduate Studies Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Finance Committee, Selection Committees, Faculty Board, Senate ...) and dealing with queries from students, potential students, clients looking for translators, interpreters and editors, and so on. Publicity is also an important part of this job, as it is up to us to target potential students and ‘sell’ our course to future students. Admin is probably my least favourite area of activity, but it is an essential one that cannot be avoided.

That brings me to a much more enjoyable activity that is part of the life of a translator trainer in a university – one also has to be ‘research-active’, meaning that time has to be

Article by Judith Inggs. Judith is a Senior Lecturer in Translation and Interpreting Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her current research interests include the translation of children's literature and the relationship between cognitive linguistics and translation. She is SATI-accredited for French-English, German-English and Russian-English translation.

“... the reward is that every day is different and that many of the students keep in touch, even years down the line.”

spent doing original research, reading work by other academics and writing articles for publication. This is the area of my work that is the most stimulating and inspiring – and which hopefully helps to stimulate and inspire students to read widely and ultimately carry out their own research.

Research by students brings me to supervision – another important area of my work, especially as all our students are postgraduates and all have to produce a piece of research, whether 30 pages or 200 pages. This requires hours of time spent mentoring, reading, advising and reading draft after draft before the work can be declared ready for submission. It also inevitably involves input from me in terms of editing, as many students are not first-language English-speakers, and generally cannot afford to pay an outside editor. The reward comes when a student graduates and you are introduced to beaming relatives at the graduation ceremony, so proud of their child, grandchild or even parent. Supervising topics as varied as the translation of children’s literature, the need for translated material in the tourist industry or the use of African languages in the news media may be onerous, but is always fascinating and stimulating in some way. Learning is a two-way process – students may learn from me, but I am also constantly learning something new from them.

Freelancing

Training translators also means translating yourself, because, as we all know, if you can’t do it, you can’t teach it. So besides the work I do every day related to teaching, admin and research, I also translate on a freelance basis – which generally means in the evenings or over weekends. Despite 20-odd years of activity as a translator, I still find it enjoyable – and often actively look forward to getting up early on a Sunday morning to tackle a translation. Nowadays I try to be selective about the kind of translation work I do, and the texts I most enjoy tend to be the most difficult kind – academic texts and articles written by scholars in German or French. Such texts are often humbling and remind me of how my students feel when they simply cannot decode a particularly difficult and opaque section of text or when students working out of German are baffled by the strange and convoluted structure of a complex German sentence. But there is always the sense of achievement when the problem is solved and an appropriate rendering is found.

Another, perhaps surprising, part of my job is dealing with students at an individual and

personal level. Given the small number of students we have each year, I spend a considerable amount of time listening to difficulties they are experiencing and, of course, their excuses for work not done or assignments not handed in on time. Students, like anyone else, have problems that interfere with their work or prevent them from focusing on their studies. Sick relatives or children, bereavements, divorce, marriage, financial problems, hijackings, robberies, car accidents – there are very few things that have not come up over the years. And that means listening, sympathising, giving advice and sometimes lending or giving students money for transport, food or books.

The worst aspect of the work is dealing with matters of administration and student registrations – a mechanical task that often involves interacting with other university structures and that can be time-consuming and sometimes frustrating. But the reward is that every day is different and that many of the students keep in touch, even years down the line. Indeed, I am still in contact with students who graduated in the early 1990s, and frequently an e-mail will pop up in my inbox from an ex-student, just to ask how things are and to let me know what they are up to now. Often ex-students come back to teach for us in language combinations not covered by the full-time staff, or to act as external examiners, or to study further for a doctorate. Knowing that the majority have successful careers is immensely satisfying, and the thought that I might just have made a slight difference to the quality and professionalism of translation in South Africa and elsewhere is very important to me.

So teaching translation is not just a matter of turning up for a ten o’clock lecture and then going home to put my feet up when it ends at twelve o’clock. It is a constant and ongoing activity and there is never any time when you can say “all my work is done” at the end of the day. ☺

FIT’s quarterly newsletter *Translatio* is sent free of charge to all FIT member associations, committee chairs, special delegates and partners and is also available at conferences, seminars, round tables, etc. The latest issue of *Translatio* can also be downloaded in Acrobat PDF format from the FIT Website. The April 2007 issue concentrates on South Africa and contains much of interest. Download a copy from http://www.fit-ift.org/download/translatio2007_n1-2.pdf.

The lexicographer – specialist language practitioner

Making sure you're never at a loss for words

The invitation to write about the work of a lexicographer as a specialist language practitioner is a welcome opportunity to assess one's work and take stock of one's progress, especially since lexicography demands such an intense focus on minutiae. But I hope that by giving such an overview of my own work I shall also give a general impression of what the work of a dictionary-maker entails.

Background

Although the lexicographer requires a sound knowledge of the linguistics of the language he or she works with – knowledge of semantics, morphology, phonetics, syntax, language history and sociolinguistics – the practice of lexicography relies in equal part, if not more so, on experience of translating, editing and proofreading. There are courses available that are tailored for the practice of lexicography, but I don't think lexicography is a profession easily entered into straight after one's tertiary education. Not because the academic study of lexicography does not prepare one adequately, but rather because the profession requires a confidence and an ease with language that comes only after many years of dealing with the nitty-gritty of it. Moreover the profession demands a long-term commitment and the perseverance a young professional may not be willing or even able to provide. Let's face it, dictionary-making is a bookish and desk-bound job that would hardly appeal to the young and restless at heart.

Personally, I completed a Master of Arts in Linguistics and a Higher Diploma in Education at the University of Cape Town. After serving two years at the Navy's Language Bureau translating technical and training manuals, I spent several years teaching Afrikaans language and literature, especially at the University of the Witwatersrand. There I had the privilege of working with luminaries such as Edith Raidt, Gerrit Olivier, John Miles and Marlene van Niekerk.

It was not to last though. Afrikaans lost its status as a compulsory subject for law stu-

dents in the early nineties, and when the Afrikaans department at Wits started to implode, I left and eventually joined Hansard at Parliament. There, as a translator, editor and interpreter, I experienced first-hand the advent of our new democracy. My tenure at Hansard not only served to hone my language skills; it also established me as a language practitioner. It is at this stage in my career that I joined SATI and became accredited.

There is one more requirement for lexicography that, like good language skills, is accumulated over the years and is not easy to quantify. Since the human lexicon describes the entire natural world around us and all of humankind's endeavours, a good general knowledge (and an insatiable inquiring mind) gives the lexicographer an edge and allows him or her to handle his or her material with confidence. Ultimately the lexicographer should know a little bit about everything or at least where to ferret out the hidden pieces of the puzzle. In fact, one of the keys to a broad field of reference lies in formulating succinct Internet search queries.

Pharos Dictionaries

When I joined Pharos in 1999 I was given the task of assisting Madaleine du Plessis, the Chief Editor, with the revision of the eighth edition of the *Tweetalige Woordeboek/Bilingual Dictionary* (the TW) originally compiled by Bosman, Van der Merwe and Hiemstra and extensively reworked by Joubert and Spies. We were soon joined by Wanda Smith-Muller and Jana Luther. At that stage preliminary work had already been done, but it would take another six years before the new *Pharos Afrikaans-Engels / English-Afrikaans Woordeboek / Dictionary* (Pharos One) was published at the end of 2004 – all in all almost a decade's work and the biggest task undertaken by Pharos to date.

As the TW was published in 1984, its successor, *Pharos One*, had to catch up two decades' worth of vocabulary. And these were not just any two decades. During this time the Berlin Wall fell and at home 1994 heralded a political and social revolution. On the techno-

Article by Fred Pheiffer. Fred is an editor with Pharos Dictionaries. He is SATI-accredited for English-Afrikaans translation.

logical front these were equally revolutionary times – PCs became common and the Internet and cellphones opened up a whole new world. Of course all such developments are reflected in new vocabulary – exciting times for the lexicographer, but also a myriad of new words to record, define and translate.

Adding new material to an existing dictionary is probably the easier part. Far more complex is updating and revising the material already contained in a dictionary. Working on the *TW* we as Pharos editors came to the realisation that since the thirties successive editions were augmented with new material, but older, existing material was rarely reworked. As a result the *TW* contained ingrained material dating from before the Second World War, some of which, especially in the English half, was quite Victorian in sentiment and style. The Afrikaans half on the other hand contained a number of words and expressions that were clearly Dutchisms, probably included by the earlier editors in an effort to beef up the Afrikaans content.

Updating the English half was facilitated by the availability of splendid English dictionaries such as *Oxford* and *Collins*, and equally good American offerings such as *American Heritage* and *Webster's*, both freely available on the Internet. These reference works were used to source new material, to establish the currency of existing words and expressions and to determine the order in which semantic distinctions ought to be listed. The bilingual English-Dutch *Van Dale* also proved very useful at times.

On the Afrikaans side dealing with racist language presented a particular problem. Just scrapping anything vaguely derogatory would not have been feasible, since the dictionary is supposed to reflect the language in its totality. Furthermore, in a society now based on the rights contained in our new Constitution, how, for example, does one deal with all those Afrikaans idioms gleefully extolling the virtues of corporal punishment? And how does one keep the language real for a modern, urbanised youth when most of its idioms are steeped in an agrarian past? Such issues require a particular awareness and sensitivity of the lexicographer. The Pharos solution has been to be as comprehensive as necessary, but also to freely employ usage labels indicating which words and expressions have become derogatory or which are just plain dated. Thus the dictionary user is made aware of the pitfalls posed by using such language.

Compounding the complexities on the Afrikaans side was the paucity of fresh Afrikaans

lexicographical sources during the editing period. Both the *Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (the *HAT*) and Pharos's own *Verklarende Afrikaanse Woordeboek* (the *VAW*) predated 1994 – that benchmark date for all modern South African reference works – by a couple of years. The standard reference work of the Afrikaans language, the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (the *WAT*) had barely reached the letter P, and many of the earlier letters were severely outdated and plagued by exactly the same problems *Pharos One* was trying to avoid.

Pharos did have at its disposal the Media24 newspaper and magazine archives and the archive Pharos has built up from manuscripts from its sister companies like Tafelberg and Human & Rousseau and from other material. These electronic databases are invaluable for checking the frequency, usage and most current meaning of words and expressions. However, gleaning information from these sources is a laborious process and because time was of the essence, this research method was employed only when as an editor one could not with certainty judge the validity or correctness of an existing dictionary entry. As a final method of quality control, we employed the services of a few seasoned Afrikaans journalists and linguists to read the *Pharos One* manuscript. Their input proved very worthwhile.

Pressurised by the information explosion and by shareholders demanding the timeous delivery of marketable dictionaries, it goes without saying that lexicographers have had to turn to computerisation to get the job done. However, ordinary word-processing programs are not powerful enough to handle the demands of lexicography. More than just text formatting is required. One needs a program providing embedded codes for not only the structural elements of a dictionary entry, but also the lemma's linguistic features and aspects of its usage such as context, formality and currency. An inordinate proportion of the time spent on the editing of the *TW* was in fact used to try and wrestle the text from some pre-PC electronic format into XYWrite, an antiquated yet very stable text-formatting program, and from there into the mark-up language (SGML and XML) offered by ArborText. Although this was a tortuous process, it has positioned Pharos to benefit fully from the next phase of computerisation – working on a dedicated lexicographic workbench.

After Pharos One

The production of *Pharos One* represents a

“Adding new material to an existing dictionary is probably the easier part. Far more complex is updating and revising the material already contained in a dictionary.”

considerable investment in time and money, especially human capital, and for a relatively small publishing company to sustain such a major project for the better part of a decade without any returns has been difficult. Sales of *Pharos One* have been steady but slower than anticipated, especially considering the number of copies the *TW* sold over its two-decade print run, copies which *Pharos One* was designed to replace. However, certain publications just need to be done, for the greater good as it were, and *Pharos One* will provide a benchmark for bilingual dictionaries for many years to come. Furthermore, the intention all along has been to utilise *Pharos One* as a mother dictionary from which smaller, more marketable dictionaries could be generated.

The first publication to be extracted from *Pharos One* was the *Pharos English Pocket Speller* and its Afrikaans counterpart, published in 2005. Essentially the lemma list from *Pharos One*, it is intended as a spelling aid in the absence of a dictionary or when you've flummoxed your PC's spellchecker, and it is especially handy when proofreading.

The second extraction project was far greater in extent and came about as a direct response to the perceived demand for a dictionary offering the same scope and quality as *Pharos One*, but of a more economic price and a more manageable size. The result, the *Concise* (the *Pharos Afrikaans-Engels-English-Afrikaans Kernwoordeboek/Concise Dictionary*), is a 30% reduction of *Pharos One*, achieved mostly by culling dated and purely technical material. It has just been published and it is the first major publication for which I take final editorial responsibility. The *Concise* contains more than a thousand new words and expressions, mistakes in *Pharos One* that we were aware of have been corrected, and the structure has been simplified where possible.

A new course

Having worked continuously on bilingual translating dictionaries for eight years, it was time for a change. On the horizon looms the revision of the *VAW*, an asset too valuable for *Pharos* to leave fallow for too long, but that undertaking poses a major challenge to *Pharos's* limited resources – akin to the revision of the *TW* – and will take careful planning. In the meantime I am getting my teeth into the revision of the *Beknopte Verklarende Woordeboek* (the *Beknop*), the kid brother of the *VAW*. Apart from it being refreshing to work on definitions instead of translations, the revision of the *Beknop* breaks new

ground for *Pharos* on two fronts. It is the first project to be compiled from the start with the *TshwaneLex* dictionary program. Some of the features of this workbench are that it offers a fully-coded framework within which to compile lemmas and that alphabetisation and cross-referencing – two processes notoriously difficult to keep track of manually – are done automatically. Secondly, this is the first time we are compiling a dictionary on the basis of frequency lists generated from our archives. In the case of the *Beknop* that would be a list of the 30 000 most frequently used words in Afrikaans.

Conclusion

As a practising language practitioner I have come to appreciate that compiling dictionaries must be one of the most rewarding and stimulating occupations one could hope to have. It is certainly one of the highlights of my career and intellectually the most challenging job I have had since those heady days at Wits. If you have a passion for words – recording, defining and translating them – have a tough backside and know of a good physiotherapist, there is none better. ☺

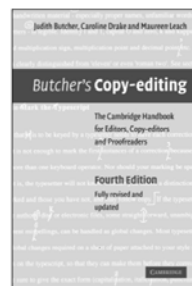
“... the TshwaneLex dictionary program ... offers a fully-coded framework within which to compile lemmas, and alphabetisation and cross-referencing – two processes notoriously difficult to keep track of manually – are done automatically”

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The truth about conference interpreting

One would think that the remuneration for one day's conference work is good relative to the number of actual hours spent actively working by the interpreter. Depending on the team combination, which may be two or three in a booth, and the programme of the conference – plenary, morning and afternoon sessions with the normal coffee and lunch breaks – an interpreter may effectively end up 'working' three to four hours in a day! (Dire Straits in the background ... 'Money for nothing and your chicks for free...')

However, the real working hours are more than a regular nine-to-five office job. Preparation before a conference may entail any number of hours doing research, reading up on the subject, compiling glossaries, sourcing specific terminology, etc.

The interpreter has to make sure that he/she arrives at the conference venue with ample time to check the booth and the sound equipment with the technicians, get accredited, meet the interpreters' team members, review any available documentation and be ready to start the day's work. Mentally, one has to be engaged with the job long before one takes the microphone and utters the first word into the delegates' ears.

The conference interpreter is a facilitator or mediator of communication, therefore his/her performance is valued in relation to the ability to decode the speaker's message, process it and immediately encode it into the language of his/her audience, taking into account the receiving group's cultural composition. This means that the interpreter has to maintain his/her concentration at 100 per cent in order to be able to apply his/her intellectual knowledge of the conference matter and to understand and decode the message delivered by

the speaker (which may be delivered at various speeds, intonations, grammatical accuracy or inaccuracy, authority, seriousness, emotional involvement, detachment, and indeed as many human variations as exist!). The speaker and the delegates may or may not be concentrating, but the interpreter has to concentrate absolutely, otherwise doing his/her job becomes impossible.

During the time of 'resting' – while one's colleague is working – the interpreter has to follow the conference procedures, to remain alert in case his/her booth partner needs support (confirmation of a specific term, meaning of some other word, even just to hand him/her a glass of water) or, in some cases, quickly to take over the interpretation if the partner has a sudden incapacitating cough or some other problem.

Every conference is different and each day of any conference is different, so there isn't a typical day in the life of a conference interpreter one can describe. This is a live performance. Sometimes we will be brilliant, sometimes inspired and sometimes just good enough to fulfil the role of communicator. There are so many variables involved in the actual execution of the job that one has to be constantly training, improving oneself, observing one's colleagues, developing skills, techniques, booth manners and ethics, studying, practising ... that is, working at it all the time!

Experience gained over the years is invaluable, not only at a professional level but at a personal level as well, because one spends life learning about a wide range of subjects. The level of job satisfaction is high if one lives the profession with integrity. So what one can say about a day in the life of a conference interpreter is that it definitely is going to be one full of enriching experiences, of absolute mental concentration and dedication to the job, of learning, of giving and taking and of service to human interaction.



Article by Silvia Pratten. Silvia has a BA in Social Communications from the University of Lima, Peru, and has been doing conference interpreting since 1996. She is SATI-accredited for Spanish-English-Spanish simultaneous interpreting.



A group of interpreters relaxing after a busy day on assignment in Kenya

A translator in the National Language Service

The National Language Service (NLS) is a Chief Directorate within the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). The NLS therefore takes the lead in providing guidance on language policy and working towards standards for language use at all levels of the Public Service.

There are four main sections in the NLS:

- *Language Planning*, which focuses on the implementation of the National Language Policy Framework. A significant current project is the establishment of the South African Language Practitioners' Council, which will be a regulatory body to register and accredit language practitioners in South Africa.
- *Human Language Technologies (HLT)*, which is currently working on the development of spellcheckers, multilingual machine-assisted translation systems and a multilingual telephone-based information system for all the official languages.
- *Terminology Coordination*, which works with external collaborators to develop terminology in the official languages in various fields. Much of the focus is currently on education, in domains such as Human, Social, Economic and Management Sciences, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology, Life Orientation, and Arts and Culture.
- *Translation and Editing*, which provides a translation and editing service in the official languages and all foreign languages for clients at the national level such as the Presidency, government departments, public entities, and statutory and constitutional bodies. Where possible, services are also provided for provincial and local government departments that do not have their own translation offices.

As part of its work towards professionalising the language professions, the NLS and the DAC HR unit are currently working with the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) on revising and standardising the job descriptions of the language practitioner occupational class in the Public Service. The aim is to regrade all posts to ensure that language practitioners receive salaries that are commensurate with their qualifications and expertise. The DPSA is engaged in

the same process for other professionals such as teachers and social workers.

Working as a translator in the NLS

As a translator in the NLS, I am faced with many of the same issues as translators the world over: misconceptions about what translation entails, and the ever-present problems of time and money. You know – anybody who can speak two languages can be a translator; it takes just as long to translate a document as it takes to type it; and the cheaper, the better.

We're working on the recognition of the language profession, but I think time will forever be our biggest enemy. As for money, well, translators in the Public Service have a bottom line too. The NLS doesn't charge its clients for translation work, but with limited in-house capacity we have to outsource work to freelancers and, of course, our budget is limited. So, a typical day in the life of a translator in the NLS will involve discussion about at least one of these universal issues.

The fact that there's discussion on these issues is one of the best parts of working for the NLS. There are other translators about, you see, and terminologists and language planners. In the NLS, you always have someone to ask if you're not sure about a term or a phrase, someone who has dealt with a similar document before, someone to share a giggle with over one of those language jokes that other people just don't get. The pool of knowledge that you can tap into is just so much bigger and, since we're all language workers, we all know 'boffins' outside the office who can help, too. It's hard to imagine that other common misconception about translators: sitting all alone, with piles of work on the desk, and being expected to know everything there is to know about language and the subject matter of each document.

Of course, there are aspects of being a translator in the NLS that are different from working in the private sector or as a freelancer, and perhaps even different from working in any other public environment. The most significant difference is that NLS translators work for a national government department – DAC. National government

Article by Karen van Rooyen. Karen has been working for the NLS as an Afrikaans-English translator and English editor for the past 15 years. She writes in her personal capacity.

departments are responsible for developing and implementing government policy on the area or areas of their mandate. Language is part of DAC's mandate, and the NLS is the unit responsible for developing and implementing national language policy. The NLS developed the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF) and it was approved by Cabinet in 2003.

From a translation perspective, the key provisions of the NLPF are those given in the box below. However, there is currently no mechanism, legislative or otherwise, to enforce this policy. The NLS therefore provides a translation and editing service in all the official languages for all national government departments, but it has no authority to enforce the NLPF's provisions on publishing documents in the official languages. Many documents are still published only in English, and the NLS may translate documents into the other official languages only when requested to do so by its clients, and then only into the language(s) specified by the clients. The NLS can at best advise clients on translating their documents and, in the absence of an enforcement mechanism, the reason clients advance for not publishing in the other languages is all too familiar: money.

A second aspect that sets translation work for the NLS apart from that of most other translators is its broad client base. Not all clients listed above make use of the NLS's services, but potentially the NLS's clients range from the Presidency to the Electoral Commission, the CCMA to the National Arts Council, and the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. On any given day, NLS translators could therefore be working on documents as diverse as correspondence, official forms, brochures, procedural manuals, cooperation agreements and Acts of Parliament.

*"2.4.6.4 Where the effective and stable operation of government at any level requires comprehensive communication of information, it must be published in all **11 official languages** and, in the provinces, in all the official languages prescribed in the province.*

*2.4.6.5 In cases where government documents will not be made available in all 11 official languages, **national** government departments must publish documents **simultaneously in at least six languages**. The selection of languages will be made as follows:*

- At least one from the Nguni group (isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and siSwati)
- At least one from the Sotho group (Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana)
- Tshivenda
- English, and
- Xitsonga
- Afrikaans

2.4.6.6 A principle of rotation must be applied when selecting languages for publishing government documents in the Nguni and Sotho groups."

[Department of Arts and Culture (National Language Service), 2003, National Language Policy Framework, Pretoria]

Working for a government department of course brings bureaucracy in its various manifestations into a translator's daily work. The NLS's translators are public servants first, then DAC employees, then NLS staff members, and then only translators. When it comes to determining work priorities, therefore, government's strategic priorities are obviously the primary consideration, and from there everything trickles down to the level of what you are actually employed to do. All too often, 'trickle' is the operative word: time and money to meet deadlines and deliver a translation service are reduced to a trickle. For a translator, being involved in what the rest of DAC or the NLS is doing can be a blessing and a curse. When you are working on a long, complicated document, it can be a blessing to leave your desk to attend a meeting or presentation. We all know the advantages of taking a break from your work and focusing on something else. On the other hand, when you have a deadline to meet, or have just 'got into the groove' of translating a text, having to stop what you're doing to attend to something else is a bit of a challenge. A meeting may be perfectly relevant to the broader aspects of your work, and the theme of a workshop may be interesting and stimulating, but the timing may just be very bad. You lose your concentration, a concept you were just coming to grips with slips your mind, and your daily planning goes out the window. At times like these, the idea of sitting all alone in your office, with nothing but piles of work to keep you busy, can seem rather attractive.

So, a translator in the NLS is like a translator anywhere else: there are good and bad days, good and bad things about the job, and good and bad things that have nothing to do with the job but still have to be done. Perhaps it's not a bad idea to end with a note on something good about being a translator for the NLS:

Working in an office with language professionals representing all the official languages has a special 'fringe benefit': access and exposure to the cultures of these languages. As a translator, it's obviously important to know the culture of your source language because it helps you to produce translations that are also culturally equivalent. However, interacting daily with people from other cultures who are your peers not only professionally but also personally and socially is a significant benefit for us as individuals and as South Africans living in a multicultural society. 🌍

Termineer terminoloë?

Baie is en word geskryf en gesê oor terminologiewerk – kursusse, artikels, lesings, voordragte, ISO-spesifikasies en al so aan. Hoewel die onderliggende beginsels internasionaal dieselfde is, verskil die praktiese situasie in Suid-Afrika byvoorbeeld van dié in Europa. Hier is oor jare 'n werkwyse gevind wat vir ons gewerk het vir die uitbouing van Afrikaans en intussen verder uitgebrei is om al die amptelike tale te betrek. Sonder die verdere doelbewuste en volgehoue ontwikkeling van die nodige terminologie kan onderrig op skool en universiteit deur medium van ons verskillende amptelike tale nie plaasvind nie en kan die gebruik van hierdie tale ook nie in die verskillende sferes soos die regte, finansies, wetenskap, tegnologie en vele ander begin of voortgesit word nie.

Die benaming 'language for special purposes' of LSP is eintlik meer veelseggend as 'terminologie'. 'n Regsdokument of fisika-artikel kan vir die oningewyde totaal onverstaanbaar wees, al is dit in sy moedertaal. In teenstelling met wat mens sou dink, is terminologiewerk op 'n hoë register baie makliker as op 'n laer register. Die terme is meer eenduidig en met 'n kleiner gebruikersgemeenskap is konsensus makliker om te bereik. Projekte op 'n meer algemene vlak soos die huidige meertalige projekte is 'n nuwe uitdaging. Nie alleen is die ontwikkeling, aanvaarding en bekendstelling van terminologie op gebiede waar sekere tale nooit voorheen gebruik is nie 'n voorvereiste vir die implementering van die beleid van veeltaligheid nie, maar taal is ook 'n baie emosionele saak.

Wat doen iemand wat as terminoloog werk nou eintlik? Op 'n keer is 'n kollega selfs deur 'n dokter se ontvangsdame gevra wat 'n terminoloog dan termineer! Wel, die terminoloog is beslis nie iemand wat sit en terme skep nie – in elk geval nie op sy eie nie. Dis ook nie iemand wat bloot 'terme intik' nie. Die terminoloog is deel van 'n span waar elkeen sy eie kennis bydra en fasiliteer die uiteindelijke samestelling van 'n tweetalige of meertalige terminologieversameling volgens 'n bepaalde metodologie. Terminologiewerk gaan ook nie net oor taal nie, maar oor ordening van kennis en die herwinning daarvan. Verder moet die werk sentraal gekoördineer word, want dieselfde terme moet immers landwyd vir dieselfde konsepte ge-

bruik word, anders kan behoorlike kommunikasie nie plaasvind nie en dien die hele proses geen doel nie.

Natuurlik het ek ook nie eintlik geweet presies wat op my wag toe ek as terminoloog by die destydse Nasionale Terminologiediens begin werk het nie. Verrassend genoeg vind ek gou uit dat die werk in beginsel nie veel verskil van my werk as bibliotekaris in 'n spesiale biblioteek waar ek katalogisering en klassifikasie gedoen het nie. Boonop maak ek kennis met 'n magdom en wye verskeidenheid van vakwoordeboeke wat ek nooit gedroom het kan bestaan nie. Selfs in Afrikaans word van afvalbestuur tot haarkappery en weerkunde gedek.

Klassifikasie? Ja, klassifikasie van biblioteekmateriaal vereis dat jy noukeurig vasstel waaroor dit handel en dan volgens sekere beginsels in 'n spesifieke stelsel indeel. Dieselfde manier van dink is baie belangrik in die afbakening van 'n terminologieprojek vir 'n sekere teikengroep of die identifisering van terme binne 'n spesifieke vakgebied. Sou jy 'n termnavraag kry, moet jy weet presies wie jy waar moet nader vir inligting of waar om te soek. Soos met inligtingswerk is dit ook baie belangrik om 'n wye algemene kennis en belangstelling te hê.

Katalogisering? Katalogisering van biblioteekmateriaal behels weer die noukeurige dokumentering van inligting volgens vasgestelde reëls. Wanneer word dit onder die naam van die skrywer geplaas en wanneer onder die titel? Presies hoe word die van en voorletters gehanteer? Watter verwysings is nodig om die dokument te kan vind? So is daar spesifieke wyses waarop terminligting presies gedokumenteer word en die terminoloog moet eie inisiatief gebruik om soveel moontlik tersaaklike inligting op te teken en voorsiening te maak dat dit gevind kan word.

Hoewel die proses vir die huidige meertalige projekte noodwendig ietwat anders verloop as met die vorige tweetalige projekte, vereis projekgeoriënteerde terminologiewerk steeds die vermoë om terme in die brontaal te identifiseer volgens domein en teikengroep, die terme na te vors ten opsigte van betekenis en ook taalkundig, en die regte metodiek te volg ten opsigte van dokumentering. Die ideaal is dat die terminoloog dit in samewerking met 'n brontaalkomitee van kundiges op die spesifieke gebied doen. Die doel-

Artikel deur
Christine Marais.
Christine werk tans in die Mensetaal-tegnologieë-eenheid van die Nasionale Taaldiens, maar het 12 jaar lank as terminoloog gewerk. Sy is SAVI-geakkrediteer vir Engels/Afrikaanse terminologiewerk.

“Sonder die verdere doelbewuste en volgehoue ontwikkeling van die nodige terminologie kan onderrig op skool en universiteit deur medium van ons verskillende amptelike tale nie plaasvind nie en kan die gebruik van hierdie tale ook nie in die verskillende sfere soos die regte, finansies, wetenskap [en] tegnologie begin of voortgesit word nie.”

taalfase vir elk van die verskillende tale word afsonderlik deur die terminoloog vir elke spesifieke taal gekoördineer. Vakspecialiste uit die kennisveld wat moedertaalsprekers van die doeltaal is, vorm die kern van die redaksiekomitee. Geen projek kan enige geloofwaardigheid hê sonder die aktiewe betrokkenheid van hierdie kenners, wat verkieslik 'n wye spektrum verteenwoordig nie.

Die term ‘vakspecialis’ verwys bloot na 'n kundige wat in die veld werk – as dit 'n projek oor polisieterme is, sal polisieleders die ‘specialiste’ wees. Hulle is op hoogte van reeds bestaande vertaalekwivalente en kan ekwivalente vir nuwe terme voorstel wat aanvaarbaar sal wees vir die hele vakgemeenskap. Anders as met vorige projekte waar die terminoloog hierdie rol vervul het, vorm taalkundiges ook deel van die komitee vir huidige projekte en gee leiding oor taalkwessies, soos skryfwyse en termvormingsbeginsels. Die terminoloog help met navorsing, wys botsende ekwivalente uit, sien toe dat ekwivalente byvoorbeeld eenvormig in samestellings gebruik word deur die hele versameling, die skryfwyse eenvormig is, ensovoorts. Die ideaal is dat die terminoloog ook die notule van die komiteevergaderings hou, aangesien hy verantwoordelik is daarvoor om alle nodige inligting uit die besprekings op die databasis aan te bring. Die finale produk moet deur die Nasionale Taalliggame geverifieer word in die geval van die Afrikatale. Die afhandeling van die hele projek vanaf die

beplanningsfase tot die finale produk kan 'n uitgerekte proses wees en die terminoloog moet bereid wees om oor 'n lang tyd aan dieselfde projek te werk.

Die aanwending van tegnologie, soos die MultiTerm-program, het die werk baie vergemaklik en bespoedig. Voorheen moes die terminoloog elke sinoniem verwys, op die regte alfabetiese plek plaas, sekere velde in verskillende soorte hakies sit sodat dit in die regte formaat gedruk kan word en kon die omgeskakelde lys eers aan die einde van 'n lang proses verkry word. Met MultiTerm word slegs een rekord per konsep volledig ingevul met die term en sy sinonieme, enige addisionele inligting soos byvoorbeeld die definisie, ekwivalente en ekwivalentsinonieme, ens. Die terme kan op enige stadium in omgeskakelde formaat gesoek of gedruk word.

Die beantwoording van terminologienavrae is 'n baie uitdagende en interessante aspek van die terminoloog se werk, hoewel dit beduidend afgeneem het met die toenemende gebruik van slegs Engels en die verminderde personeel dit in elk geval nie op groot skaal meer kan hanteer nie. Dit gaan gewoonlik oor die vertaalekwivalent of die betekenis van 'n term. In so 'n geval moet die terminoloog verskillende woordeboeke of ander bronne soos die Internet raadpleeg. Hy het gewoonlik ook 'n lys van kontakte (vakspecialiste) wat hy kan skakel of e-pos. Dit
[Vervolg op bladsy 15]

Summary

The terminologist is an important link in the implementation of multilingualism in South Africa, because without deliberate efforts to develop terminology for all the official languages in different spheres it is never going to succeed.

A terminologist does not create terms, but as an important member of a team he or she facilitates terminology development and dissemination. Subject specialists play a crucial role in the target language phase, as do language specialists in that specific language.

Categorising information and meticulously documenting terminology according to specific rules are important aspects of terminology work. The development of technology has eliminated tedious tasks like alphabetising, adding synonym entries and formatting, making the work of the terminologist much easier and speeding up the process.

Besides being involved in terminology projects, the terminologist also deals with terminology queries, which are very interesting and often challenging. Sources like dictionaries and the Internet are consulted and subject specialists are approached for help if necessary.

Ideally terminologists should specialise in a specific domain. This will give them the opportunity to become experts on terminology in that field by consciously broadening their knowledge and building networks of contacts.

In conclusion: The terminologist is a threatened species who likes to find information, is extremely meticulous and gets highly upset when incorrect terminology is used.

Language practice in a provincial legislature

This article is intended to shed some light about language practice within a parliamentary environment, specifically the North West Provincial Legislature, hereafter referred to as Hansard. It also gives an idea of the nature of the work, staff composition, services rendered and to whom, the challenges encountered in this pursuit, the enjoyable aspects of the work and finally the overall state of language practice in this institution.

Hansard is a name for the official verbatim report of parliamentary debates ('report' in this context meaning a word-for-word transcript, not a summary.) Luke Hansard (1752-1828) was the first person to compile such a report for the British parliament. The name is now widely used around the world, particularly by Commonwealth parliaments. In South Africa we have nine provincial legislatures, each with its own Language Service Section that caters for the language needs and composition of the province. Furthermore there is a legal requirement that binds provincial legislatures to supplying annual verbatim reports of parliamentary debates in the form of a Hansard booklet.

Language practice within the North West Provincial Legislature

In the North West Provincial Legislature, the Hansard Unit is part of the Parliamentary Operations Subdirectorate. It was established as a full-time subdirectorate in 2004. Previously, Hansard services such as transcribing, editing, proofreading and interpreting were outsourced to service-providers. Currently the Hansard Unit is staffed by one editor/supervisor, three principal language practitioners representing the three provincial languages (Setswana, isiXhosa and Afrikaans) and our transcribing typists, who do not represent any specific language. The main functions of this unit are to interpret, transcribe, edit and translate speeches by members of the provincial legislature. However, owing to a lack of capacity, translation of members' speeches is done only as and when required.

Currently Hansard is produced in English, with certain sections in other provincial languages. Hansard deviates from members'

words only to correct mistakes, remove some repetition and make the original spoken language readable. It also has to compensate for the fact that the reader cannot hear and see the debate. While Hansard 'tidies up' the debate a little, it has a duty to reflect faithfully the content, idiom and spirit of members' speeches.

In the North West Provincial Legislature, speeches are compiled into 'takes' of approximately 45 minutes or more, which are recorded, transcribed by transcribing typists and then sent to members within 48 hours as raw material for checking. Members are not allowed to alter recorded content; they can only listen to the recorded tape and verify whether it is verbatim or not. The speeches are then sent to the principal language practitioners and the Hansard editor for editing, proofreading and quality control before being sent to a service-provider for publication as a booklet. The recorded African-language versions are kept for record purposes and are made available on request for self-evaluation and verification of content in the event of the recorded target version or the version to be compiled as Hansard not being audible or clear or breaking up.

The service-provider will then produce a sample booklet with a prescribed cover and a members' list. This sample booklet is returned to the Unit for verification and possible amendments should there be typographical errors. The Hansard editor will then send a request for the creation of an index of a verified sample document. The index thus created together with a verified sample document and members' list is then sent to the service-provider for final publication of the Hansard booklet.

NWPL workflow model

Overleaf is an illustration of the workflow model of the Hansard Unit in the North West Provincial Legislature. This model was created by SITA (State Information Technology Agency) in collaboration with the Hansard staff members. The objective of the model is to enhance the speedy, efficient and high-quality production of Hansard documentation.

"The main functions of this unit are to interpret, transcribe, edit and translate speeches by members of the provincial legislature"

Article by Mashite Jacob Mogale. Mashite is a principal language practitioner (Setswana) with the North West Provincial Legislature and writes in his personal capacity.

Challenges and enjoyable aspects of language practice within the NWPL

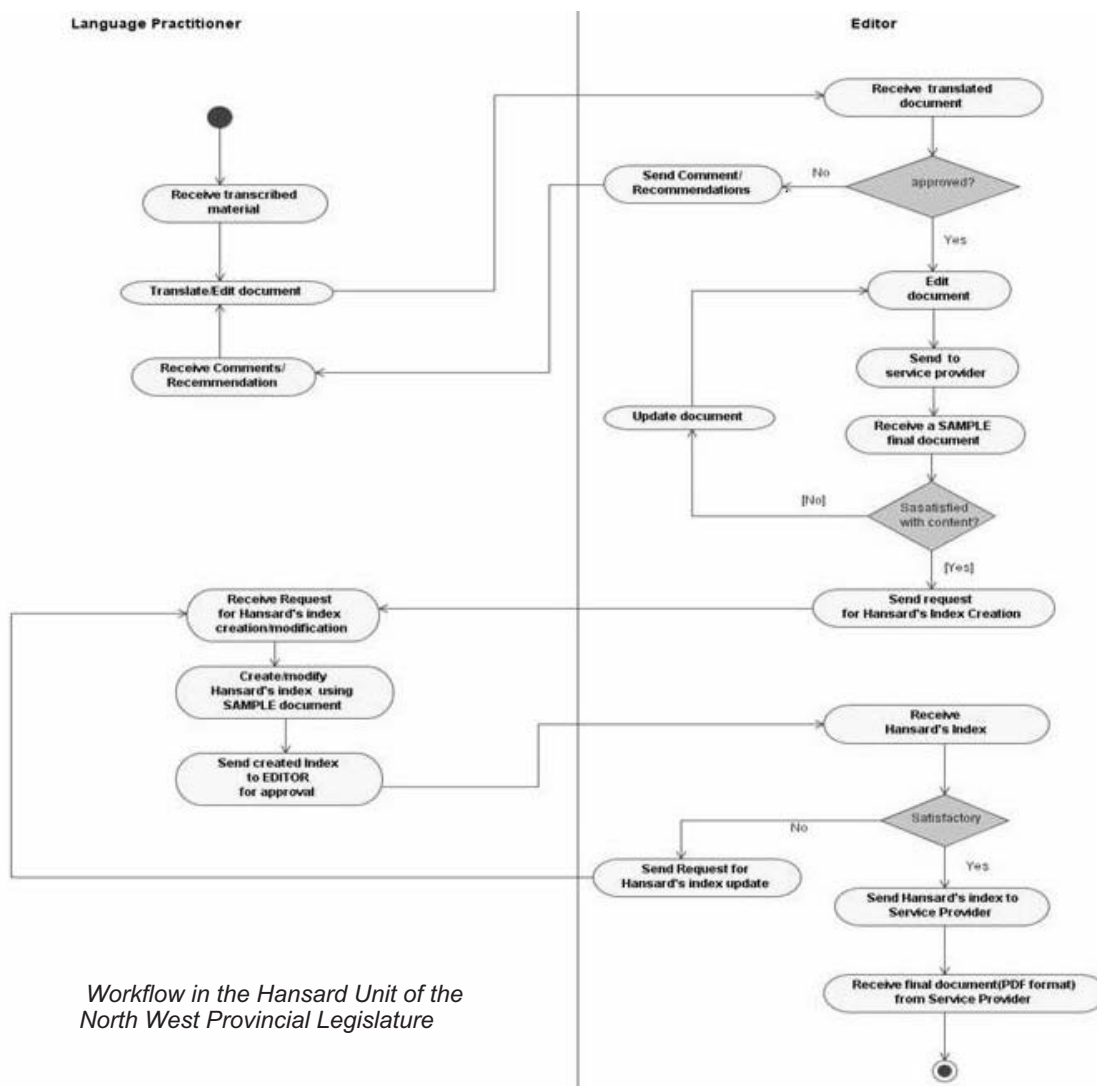
Language practice as an intellectual activity has its own challenges and the North West Legislature is not exempt from these. Furthermore, with South Africa being a multicultural and multilingual society, everyone is allowed to express themselves in their language of choice. This often poses serious challenges for language practitioners in a parliamentary environment. These challenges manifest themselves in the form of code switching and code mixing; code switching means switching to different languages in a single conversation, while code mixing means using different linguistic elements in a single conversation. This tendency puts pressure on the language practitioner/interpreter because the interpreter cannot anticipate what changes a speaker may make.

The other challenge is lack of capacity or understaffing. This issue appears to be a norm in most government institutions and is aggravated by the absence of a Language Act to enforce compliance and eventual employ-

ment of more language practitioners in African languages. The North West Provincial Legislature is unquestionably regarded as the embodiment of the democratic values of the new South Africa, and as such is held in very high esteem. Hansard is the official record of Parliament's activities and to publish Hansard in one or more of the previously oppressed languages of South Africa would greatly enhance the status of the country's indigenous languages and thus create employment for language practitioners.

Terminology development and management are also teething problems. A prerequisite for publishing Hansard in national languages other than English is the development of terminology for describing parliamentary procedures and institutions in those languages. This situation is the result of the indigenous languages up to 1994 not really being used in the context of a Westminster-style parliament. Language development of this nature involves consultation with language practitioners in provincial legislatures, state departments and the media, with national and prov-

"A prerequisite for publishing Hansard in national languages other than English is the development of terminology for describing parliamentary procedures and institutions in those languages"



Workflow in the Hansard Unit of the North West Provincial Legislature

incial language boards and with linguistics experts at tertiary institutions. Since such development allows for expanded usage of the indigenous languages, it will ultimately elevate their status.

The last challenge identified in the North West Provincial Legislature – and other legislatures – is a lack of common editorial standards. This could be addressed through the establishment of a forum of Hansard language practitioners, which would ensure linguistic, terminological and orthographic consistency when speeches are transcribed and translated and the Hansard text is edited. Such policy should be formulated through consultation and framed in in-house publications such as uniformity guides, lists of bodies and abbreviations and glossaries for the various languages employed by Hansard.

Finally, the language practitioners within a legislative environment have the advantage of being exposed to a variety of government information, giving them a broad knowledge base ranging from technical to general. This helps them to handle the variety of texts to which they are exposed. Furthermore, collaboration with stakeholders such as SATI, PanSALB, the Department of Arts and Culture and tertiary institutions together with ongoing training in language practice are among the very positive aspects of working for the North West Provincial Legislature. 🌱

Termineer terminoloë?

[vervolg van bladsy 12]

gebeur soms dat die term waaroor navraag gedoen word bloot verkeerd gespel is in 'n dokument en dan kan die navraer dit nêrens in 'n woordeboek of op die Internet vind nie. Omdat die terminoloog die vakgebied ken, snap hy dit dikwels onmiddellik en is baie bly dat dit 'n maklike een is om op te los. Dan gebeur dit ook dat 'n navraag jou onkunde ontbloot. Op 'n dag doen iemand navraag na die betekenis van 'n Franse of Italiaanse wynterm op 'n etiket en nadat hoog en laag gesoek en rondgebel is, ontdek ek dat die 'term' die wynmaker se van was!

Die ideale situasie is dat 'n terminoloog spesialiseer in 'n sekere vakgebied, soos voorheen moontlik was, aangesien elke vakgebied sy eie kenmerke ten opsigte van terminologie en ekwivalentskepping het. Dit skep die geleentheid vir die ontwikkeling van 'n breë verwysingsraamwerk deur oor die onderwerp te lees, op te let na terminologie wat byvoorbeeld in koerante en tydskrifte gebruik word

en op hoogte te bly van die beste inligtingsbronne, asook die opbou van verhoudinge met gewillige en kundige kontakpersone. Verder leer jy om bedag te wees op kenmerke soos dat die terminologie van 'n spesifieke vakgebied byvoorbeeld in Brittanje en die VSA van mekaar verskil, of dat terme geneig is om te verander soos meer navorsing gedoen word of die situasie verander.

So om af te sluit: Die terminoloog is 'n bedreigde spesie wat graag inligting uitsnuffel, pynlik gesteld is op korrektheid en eenvormigheid, hou van netwerk, selfs jare aan dieselfde projek kan werk en baie gegrief voel as tydskrifte en koerante *kalorieë* in plaas van *kilojoules* gebruik! 🌱

FIT publications

FIT produces various publications that are of interest and relevance to translators and interpreters. Some are available free on the Internet and others need to be subscribed to. Many offer very useful resources in an academic environment.

- The proceedings of the last FIT Congress, held in Finland in August 2005, comprise almost 250 pages reflecting the contents of close on 90 presentations. Order form at: <http://www.fit-ift.org/en/publications.php>.
- *FIT over 50 Years* traces the organisation's first 50 years (1953-2003). Copies are available at USD25 or EUR20 plus handling fees per copy. Order form at: <http://www.fit-ift.org/en/publications.php>.
- FIT's *Translatio. Bibliography - Lexicography - History - Reviews* is produced quarterly and contains a wide variety of information, reviews and summaries. It is available on subscription for around EUR25 per year. Orders or requests for further information can be directed to Dr R Haeseryn at tel/fax +32 9 228 3971 or Heideveldstraat 245, B-9040 Sint-Amandsberg (Gent), Belgium.
- FIT also publishes an international journal on translation, *BABEL*, four times a year. This publication is distributed on behalf of FIT by John Benjamins. Details about subscriptions and other issues is at: www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_seriesview.cgi?series=Babel. Papers to be considered for publication can be submitted in electronic format to babel@fit-ift.org.
- See page 4 for information on FIT's quarterly newsletter *Translatio*. 🌱

Language management in the South African Police Service

The Language Management Unit within the South African Police Service (SAPS), which deals with all language issues in the SAPS, is divided into the following subsections:

- English, Afrikaans and Foreign Languages
- African Languages
- Language Planning and Information Desk
- Management

The unit has 17 members, which include the unit head, a head for each subsection, four English/Afrikaans translator/editors and one translator/editor each for Xitsonga, isiXhosa, Tshivenda, Sepedi and isiZulu.

The work

The daily chores in our office comprise translation, editing, proofreading and checking. These processes take place in all the official South African languages as well as some foreign languages. We deal with seven official languages in-house, while other languages are outsourced. In 2005/6 the unit dealt with 1 466 documents, comprising almost 12 000 pages. Management meetings are held every Monday morning to inform the commander about what is happening in each subsection. Monthly meetings of all members are held and each member is given the opportunity of chairing meetings and writing the minutes.

Services

Our office provides any language-related advice required by both SAPS employees and the public coming to the various SAPS offices. While translation, editing and proofreading are the core functions of this unit, the members also assist with interpreting from time to time, and where such a service is needed for languages that are not available in-house, freelancers are used. Together with the SAPS training division and service-providers like Unisa, the Language Management Section presents conversational African language courses. Our unit also offers Sign Language training (basic and intermediate) to SAPS members and a business writing skills course is presented by members of the Afrikaans, English and Foreign Languages Section. We sometimes receive requests for the transcription of tapes and videos that are

to be used as evidence in court cases. Terminology development is also one of our daily tasks; the specialised terminology used by the police is being researched and will later be sent to PanSALB for standardisation.

Our clients are the 150 000 police officials employed in the SAPS, other public servants, the public at large, our national and provincial offices, other governments departments, and other national and international institutions. We serve the following SAPS units: Communication and Liaison, Financial and Administration Services, and Legal Services.

Thorns and roses

One of the major challenges we face relates to staff numbers. From the figures given above, it is clear that a small number of staff is expected to service a large number of clients, which often puts the language practitioners under considerable pressure.

Another challenge is the fact that we are still a bilingual organisation working towards creating a multilingual environment as required by the constitution and the National Language Policy Framework. The organisation is still developing a language policy to cater for multilingualism.

Something SAPS language practitioners always have to bear in mind is that the documents we translate may have the power either to save or fail a victim or suspect. We therefore do our very best to maintain high standards in all our work, because we know that people's lives are at stake.

The flip side is that working for a large organisation exposes us to new things on a daily basis; the type of documents and information we have to deal with changes all the time and this really challenges the mind.

Among the really unusual aspects of working as a language practitioner in the SAPS is the fact that we have to undergo basic police training – here we acquire policing and street survival skills, we are taught to salute and we go to the shooting range, all of which makes us really professional, disciplined and law-abiding language practitioners, able to step into the breach and fulfil other functions if the need arises! 🚔

Article by Brenda Bokaba. Brenda is the Subsection Head: African Languages in the SAPS Language Management Unit.

My life as a technical editor at the SABS

The life of an editor at the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) – sounds kind of cushy, glamorous, high-power, even elitist. This statement is definitely not true: technical editing is hard work, it's like writing exams eight hours a day, five days a week. Surely no one in his/her right mind would *choose* to do that? But the strange thing is editors actually do, and what's more they actually love it. I am one of those editors – I find my job as a technical editor at the SABS fascinating, fulfilling, exciting and challenging.

First let me explain briefly where editors fit in at the SABS. There are three main divisions in the SABS, namely Commercial, Regulatory and Standards South Africa (StanSA).

The Commercial Division looks after the testing of products and the inspection of products to ensure that they comply with requirements. It also deals with certification. The term 'certification' is often confused with the term 'accreditation'. Certification is the term used to ensure compliance of a product or a service with a specific standard. Accreditation is the term used to ensure competency. Standardisation is of vital importance. A while ago a major fire broke out in a small town and fire-fighting trucks from a neighbouring town came to assist when the small town's fire brigade ran out of water. To their dismay, the fire-fighters discovered that the fire hoses of the neighbouring fire trucks did not fit onto the fire hydrants in the small town! Another example of standardisation is the weight of bread. The consumer pays for a certain weight but never knows whether the bread actually weighs the same as the weight printed on the packaging. Toilet paper is another product that needs to meet certain requirements relating to strength, softness, rate of absorption and the number of sheets per roll. If toilet paper does not comply with these requirements, the consumer will be short-changed. Also, how does one transport dangerous goods (such as chemical products) safely? How does one transport wild animals safely?

The Regulatory Division is the watchdog for standards that are incorporated into national legislation. A number of standards are incorporated into legislation to protect South Afri-

can consumers and to ensure the safety of the South African community. This division, for example, checks that canned food complies with food safety standards.

The writing and publication of South African National Standards fall under StanSA. The editors used to be in one department and dealt with standards relating to various interesting subjects such as the above-mentioned, and also milk and milk products, bottled water, electricity metering equipment, sampling of cigarettes, chamois leathers, ignitability of upholstered furniture, and paints and varnishes. Currently StanSA consists of the following seven departments:

- Chemical and Mining Standards
- Construction Standards
- Electrotechnical Standards
- Food and Health Standards
- Mechanical Standards
- Systems Standards
- Transportation Standards

I now fall under Transportation Standards and deal with very interesting (and sometimes controversial) subjects such as number plates, vehicles for persons with disabilities, lifts and service lifts, escalators, and restraining devices (seat belts!).

A South African national standard follows a set procedure from inception to publication and is drafted in accordance with StanSA's style guide, ARP 013:2006, *Rules for the structure and drafting of national standards* (based on ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2: *Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*). In the case of a new standard, a technical committee (TC) is established comprising stakeholders from all spheres of the relevant industry. The TC, under the guidance of the project leader (standards writer), compiles the new standard after consensus has been reached. In the case of an existing standard, the project leader and his/her TC decide whether to amend or revise the standard. The new, amended or revised standard is then sent to a technical reviewer, who checks the technical content of the standard, and then to me for editing. I also assist the project leader by proofreading the document and preparing the master copy. Once the standard has been ratified by the Standards

Article by Karen Garbers. Karen has spent 11 of her 19 years as a language practitioner with the SABS. She is SATI-accredited for English-Afrikaans and Afrikaans-English translation.

Approval Committee, it is published as a South African National Standard.

Technical editing at the SABS (like all other types of editing) demands discipline, patience, good human relations and good manners, humility (we *all* make mistakes) and curiosity (it broadens your general knowledge: who would have thought that 'liquid fuel dispensers' are actually 'petrol pumps'?). You develop a 'sixth sense' (which comes in quite handy in all spheres of life). You have to have empathy with your writers and be kind to them. You must not over-edit, i.e. change something simply because you would have put it differently. You can be reasonably sure that, irrespective of your informed linguistic opinion, the writer has put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into producing the document you are now dissecting so blithely.

I consult dictionaries and other reference books, speak to writers and consult co-editors when editing standards. In addition, I use the

Internet and electronic discussion groups. No question is too trivial to ask – that's the only way to learn. I am prepared to keep on learning for as long as I do this job. I always have to keep the ultimate goal in mind: to contribute towards producing an accurate, technically correct, user-friendly document as cost-effectively, efficiently and timeously as possible.

The acid test: I ask myself whether adding a comma or changing *very* to *extremely* will significantly enhance the clarity/quality of the document and result in a thousand more copies being sold. If not, I don't! And of course, everybody who works with language knows the three important words: check, cheque, Czech!

I (like all the other editors in StanSA) render a valuable service, not only to StanSA and to the SABS, but also to the entire South African community. That is the BIG picture and one should never lose sight of it. 🍀

Framing politicians' speeches

I work as a speech-writer in the Department of Communications, where I draft outlines and speeches for the Minister and Deputy Minister. This involves the following:

- Meeting with groups or individuals to discuss the topic to be covered by the speaker. It is important to find an interesting way to start your speech. One of the techniques I use is to look at the history of the province in which the event is taking place, if it is a local speech, or one of the important events we commemorate in South Africa. Alternatively, I make a philosophical or patriotic statement, as in: "This year, we celebrate 13 years of democracy. It is a joyous time for South Africa, because we can now say, with conviction and pride, that we have indeed made significant progress towards the transformation and development of our society."
- Researching current and relevant information on the topic and interacting with the speaker – you must be able to explain very complex information in simple, straightforward and informative ways that will make sense to the average person, not just those who already know the field.
- Writing a speech that is informative, original and authentic and fits the personality of the speaker as well as meeting the needs of the audience. I don't normally

put many ideas into the speech – few ideas are better, so that your audience can hang onto them easily. Another important point is that you must never use big words or long and complicated sentences.

- Revising, editing and modifying the speech as requested. New policy proposals or directives should come across in a strong and positive manner – so you have to have your facts to back you up.
- Monitoring strict deadlines, which is critical for this position.

Among the important requirements for a speech-writer, especially for a government department, is the ability to understand and interpret government's national agenda for development and to assimilate the mandate for delivery of a department quickly.

There are advantages and disadvantages to being a speech-writer. The advantages are that you work directly with individuals in positions of authority in order to provide information and you are the first to 'know things' that are about to happen. But speechwriting can also be very frustrating, especially if you do not get the necessary input from top management. Sometimes the person you are writing for may not have time to see you at all because of other more important issues they have to deal with. It's a big challenge, but very enjoyable as well! 🍀

Article by Lulu Mfazwe-Mojapelo. Lulu works in the Media & Communications Unit of the Department of Communications. She is SATI-accredited for English-isiXhosa translation.

Ukusebenza Njengomthintanisi Ephikweni Lezamalimi Kwa-Absa

Nawukhuluma ngebhanga nezamalimi inengi labantu liyarareka, lingazi bona izintwezi zombili zihlangana kuphi ngombana ziqaleka ziyipumalanga netjingalanga nje. IBhanga ye-Absa inePhiko lemiSebenzi yezamaLimi elitjheja ukusetjenziswa kwamalimi ebhanga yoke, ngomnqopho wokukghonakalisa ukuthintana okunetlha phakathi kwabo boke abadlalindima-okumakhastama, umphakathi mazombe, urhulumende, abasisi-zimali, amaphasi wangaphandle kanye nabasebenzi bebhanga ngokwabo.

Imisebenzi eyenziwako ephikweni lezamalimi kuba ngelandelako:

- kutjhugulula, kanengi kususelwa elimini lesiNgisi
- kutjhugulula imitlolo isiwa elimini lesiNgisi
- kuyelelisa ngelimi
- kuveza umbono ngokusetjenziswa kwe-
limi nesiko lakhona
- kusiza ekuthiyeni amabizo wamajima

amanengi i-Absa ezibandakanya kiwo, wokuthuthukiswa komphakathi we-Sewula Afrika

- ukuhlela noku-editha imitlolo, kanye nokunengi okhunye.

Imisebenzi le eyenziwako ingavezwa emirhatjhwani, kumaphephandaba, encwajaneni zokukhangisa, ngemibhino, eencwadini zokuthintana namaklayenti, njll. IBhanga ye-Absa ilwa ngamandla ukuba woke amalimi wangokomthetho eSewula Afrika asetjenziswe lapho kutlhogeka khona. Kuze kube gadesi, inengi labantu liwubethela izandla tle umsebenzi owenziwa yiBhanga ye-Absa ekuthuthukisweni, kwamalimi wangokomthetho weSewula Afrika khulukhulu lawo egade adinywe amathuba esikhathini sanga-phambili.

Umsebenzi wezamalimi owenziwako e-Absa uvela kumaphiko wangaphakathi webhanga okungaba ngabezokumaketha, zamabhizinisi amancani, abanikelana ngemali-mboleko

Summary

The role of Absa in language development is gradually gaining respect from all levels of society in South Africa. Although Absa is mainly a financial institution, language is crucial in communication among the employees and with shareholders, the regulator, the public and the international community. The use of eight languages on all Absa ATMs is an example of the strong culture of multilingualism Absa is cultivating, thus fulfilling the needs of its culturally diverse customers.

Language consultants at Absa do translation and editing and provide advice on matters of language. A wide variety of text types are handled, e.g. product information, media scripts, information to the public, customer letters, organisational constitutions, etc. The type of text prescribes the method of its handling, for example an advertising script is normally commissioned to outside companies for conceptualisation before the work is given to the Language Division for assistance. Other tasks, such as translating a letter from a customer, for example, do not follow a complicated procedure at all. There are usually very tight deadlines related to all work. In cases where language specialists are not readily available to attend to the work in a specific language, competent freelancers are commissioned.

The biggest challenge in the African languages is terminology. Financial terms still need to be coined or standardised. Examples are *investment account*, *savings account*, *private banker*, *private property*, *property*, *retail banking*, *personal loan*, etc. This challenge is overcome by discussion and information-sharing. At times one is called on to assist, say, in naming a particular social investment project. In such instances one has to come up with a name that is simple to pronounce and meaningful in the requested language. This, by any measure, is not easy for a translator – but nonetheless has to be done, and done appropriately.

Article by Aaron Mnguni. Aaron is a language practitioner with the Absa Group. He is SATI-accredited for English-isiNdebele translation.

"The biggest challenge in the African languages is terminology ... This challenge is overcome by discussion and information-sharing."

kumphakathi, njll. Lokhu kutjho bona kanengi amaklayenti wephikweli ngewangaphakathi. Indlela umsebenzi olungiswa ngawo ngaphambi kobana ulethwe bona uzokutjhugululwa ayifani ngaso soke isikhathi. Isibonelo, nangabe kufike incwadi etlolwe ngesiNdebele evela eklayentini, nayifanele bona itjhugululelwe esiNgisini kuba yinto elula leyo. Kodwana nangabe kwenziwa isikhangiso, akhe sithi sokubhanga ngeselula, lapho kuba nomsebenzi nekam-biso ehlukile elandelwako. Kuthonywa ngokobana kukhethwe ikampani yangaphandle ezakunikelwa lomsebenzi wokutlhama umtlole wesiNgisi wokukhangisa lowo. Nasele umtlole wesiNgisi wenziwe, uyatjhejwa ePhikweni lezamaLimi bona utloleke kuhle begodu uzwakala kamnandi na. Ukusuka lapho ungathunyelwa bona uyokutjhugululwa (translated), ngokwesidingo semiphakathi ekhangiselwako leyo, isibonelo eMpumalanga, kungasetjenziswa iSiswati nesiNdebele, njll.

Into yokuthoma eyenzekako nakulethwa umsebenzi, kuba kuthintana nomuntu othumela umsebenzi lowo. Ukukhulumisana lokhu kanengi kwenziwa ngeposo ye-elektroniki (e-mail). Kungakhulumiswana ngesikhathi sokubuyiswa komsebenzi, ithe-minoloji nanyana okhanye nje okuphathelelene nomsebenzi. Ukusuka lapho kuza-kufanele kuqalwe umuntu ozakwenza kuhle umsebenzi lowo, erhelweni lamabizo wabantu asetjenziswa yibhanga. Lokhu kuqakathekile njengombana nanyana kwenziwa imizamo yokuthuthukisa amalimi, i-Absa ayikafiki lapho ikwazi khona ukuba nomuntu ngamunye elimini elinye nelinye lango-komthetho. Kungesibangeso-ke kunerhelo labantu abathenjwe abakwazi ukwenza umsebenzi osezingeni eliphezulu elifunekako begodu ngesikhathi esibekiweko. Kuqakathekile ukutjheja bona imisebenzi etjhugululwako kwa-Absa ihlala ingerhabekile njalo nje. Okutjho bona osebenza kileliPhiko kufanele kube mumuntu ohlala ajame ngamazwani, okwaziko nokuhlela imisebenzi yakhe kuhle.

Kuba neenkulumiswano nomuntu oza-kwenza umsebenzi, lapho kuvezwa khona zoke iindingo ze-Absa nokobana lowo oza-kwenza umsebenzi usebujameni bokwenza njalo na. Nakuvunyelwanwa, umsebenzi ufakwa inomboro bese uthunyelwa kilowo ozawenza. Ukusuka lapho kulindwa isikhathi esibekiweko sokobana umsebenzi ubuyiswe. Njengombana bese kutjhiwo ngehla, kanengi isikhathi umuntu anikelwa sona sokwenza umsebenzi sincani khulu, kungesibangeso-ke kusetjenziswa abantu abafunde ngo-

kwaneleko begodu nabanezandla ezilula emsebenzini.

Nasele umsebenzi uphethiwe uthunyelwa kwa-Absa godu ukhambisana ne-invoyisi yakhona, nangabe bewenziwa mumuntu wangaphandle. Ukusuka lapho-ke umsebenzi uya-edithwa, ukwenza isiqiniseko sokobana usezingeni elifaneleko. Kanengi kubiza bona kube nokubonisana nabatjhugululi ngamabanga wetheminoloji kanye nokwenza bona abantu abatlolelwako labo bayakghona ukuzwa begodu bazwisise lokhu i-Absa ekutjhoko kibo. Ukutjhugululela emalimini wesiNtu ekorweni yezeemali akusiyo into elula nje. Umuntu angazithola azikinatela, azibetha yena ngokwakhe ngethorofidi ngesikhathi alinga ukutjhugulula amagama afana nalawa alandelako: *investment account, savings account, private banker, private property, property, retail banking, personal loan*, njll.

Ukutjhugululela emalimini wesiNtu kumsebenzi engiwuthanda tle ngombana ligadango eliqakathekileko lokusiza imiphakathi yekhetu eyakhutjazwa lihlelo langaphambili lakarhulumende. Ukuphadlha amathemu abudisi khulu wezeemali enziwe lula bona azwisiseke, kuyinto engapha imiphakathi yekhetu amandla kwezomnotho. Nanyana kuyinto engasilula nje, kodwana ibhudango lami kukuthi ngelinye ilanga amabhanga abambisane norhulumende ekwakheni iinhlatululimagama zekoro yebhanga. Akwande! 🙏

Southern African Bibliography of Translation, Interpreting, Lexicography and Terminology

Compiled by Dr Alet Kruger for SATI (revised September 2005)

The latest version of this bibliography contains details of more than 1 000 research articles, chapters in books, books, dissertations and theses published in South Africa on translation, interpreting, lexicography and terminology. The information is now also fed through to the International Bibliography of Translation produced by St Jerome Publishing.

Copies of the bibliography are available at R75 each. The proceeds of all sales go to SATI's Development Fund.

To order, contact Marion Boers at 011 803 2681 or publications@translators.org.za.

Ups and downs of owning a language agency

In 2003 Hannietjie Sapire and I decided each to chip in whatever resources we had and start a language services business. Hannietjie, a part-time Wits lecturer, had a translation agency in the making. I had been focusing on business language training, but needed to add some clout to my operation in order to impress my preferred type of client – the corporates. When Hannietjie contacted me to do a sworn translation, we got talking. It didn't take us long to realise that we could both benefit from harnessing our respective talents. This is how the Business Language Centre, initially called the Business Writing Company and finally Bangula Language Centre, a close corporation with Hannietjie and I as the only two members, was born.

For those who may wonder what Bangula means, in a rather circuitous way it was the result of our second choice of name, the Business Language Centre. We managed to register a website for the abbreviation of this name, www.blc.co.za, before registering the name itself. What a disappointment, then, to learn that it bore too close a resemblance to the name of another entity, one we'd never even heard of before! Seeing that a large part of our business revolved around black South African languages though, we decided to scour these languages for a suitable word that started with the letter 'b' and that fitted with the rest of our preferred name – Language Services. Thus we happened upon 'Bangula'. This name seemed to convey well a characteristic we hoped to instill in our *modus operandi*, namely 'to extract a thorn', or to help out anyone with (language) troubles!

Initial outlay

As both Hannietjie and I were quite comfortable working from our respective home offices, the only capital input needed to get our business going was a few thousand rand. Some of this went for registration costs, both of the cc and of the Website. Then we had to have our logo and Website professionally designed – crucial if you want the corporates even to consider you momentarily, never mind invite you to enter their portals (literally and electronically!). Other costs included having business cards and brochures designed and printed, although with the

increased use of the Internet we have since found that brochures are no longer necessary. Business cards remain necessary, though. Shortly after starting out, Bangula landed a lucrative long-running contract with a large IT corporate, providing business writing training. This enabled us to buy ourselves some rather sexy laptops, which we needed for the training, and then we were set!

During the first two years of Bangula's life, it grew rapidly from a quiet, content little baby into a big moody teenager, demanding ever more time and care. One of our biggest challenges was the accounting function. For the first six months, the papers simply piled up, and neither member had the time – or, quite frankly, the expertise – to do much about it. Eventually, we realised that we would have to appoint someone to make out the increasing number of quotes required by potential clients, receive quote confirmations, contact suppliers to see who is available, send out the work, check that it's being done and phone to remind suppliers to send back the completed job, review the job to see that it has been done satisfactorily, send it on to the client, invoice the client, receive and enter the supplier's invoice, chase payment, pay the supplier ... And then there are things like bank reconciliations, PAYE and UIF, VAT returns (compulsory for businesses with a turnover in excess of R300 000 per annum), obtaining tax clearance certificates and completing vendor information forms for government organisations ... the list goes on.

Another challenge was, and sometimes still is, to find suitably qualified translators, editors and interpreters. Competition for contracts is fierce, often forcing us to slash 'going rate' prices, yet good suppliers are expensive. This means that, despite taking a small profit margin, we are sometimes reduced to searching far and wide to find suppliers who are prepared to come in on a job. Often, too, our preferred suppliers are tied up with other jobs, and then it's back to the telephone to do more scouting! In some instances, we've decided it's simply not worth our while, such as trying to find a translator for an exotic dialect two days from the nearest village in the remote Indian mountains ... So, a lot of time goes into sourcing good, reliable suppliers.

Article by Linda Botha. Linda is co-owner of Bangula Language Centre.

“Always chasing deadlines means often working at night and over week-ends trying to get jobs out to translators, and back again, on time. And missing a deadline is not simply inconvenient. Often, a lot of money is involved ...”

But perhaps the most taxing part of running a language service is ... have you guessed it? ... the deadlines. Always chasing deadlines means often working at night and over week-ends trying to get jobs out to translators, and back again, on time. And missing a deadline is not simply inconvenient. Often, a lot of money is involved, such as when printers have been booked for a certain date. It can sometimes be rather devastating to one's reputation, and finances, if a job is not delivered on the due date. Then, too, a business such as ours relies quite heavily on its long-standing clients, and one cannot afford to lose one because of a job being late.

That said, however, any business also has to be able to weather the inevitable 'bummers', when things go wrong and there's not much one can do to set them right. Bangula has had its fair share of these through the years, for example clients being liquidated before paying us (if you don't know them, get a deposit), a translator not being quite the paragon promised by his or her CV (always check them out carefully beforehand), supplier invoices going missing and then catching us unawares some time down the road (jack up your system!), and even the odd internal hiccup, usually related to deadlines, causing much distress and dismay all round.

Solutions and getting down to work

Many of the above problems can be obviated by investing in a good accounting system, such as Quickbooks. We use Quickbooks not only for our accounting function, but also to warn us of due jobs and a variety of tasks to be done. We have found though that it's worth our while to delegate some of the more cumbersome little routines to our (excellent) auditor. These include bank reconciliations and anything even remotely related to tax matters. We have found it to be of the utmost importance to work with a good, reliable auditor whom we can trust to look out for us, and with whom we can pursue a long-term relationship. A good auditor will not only do your books. He or she will also be able to advise you on various business issues and see to it that your finances are run in your own best interests.

Having pointed out (some of) the pitfalls of having your own business, let me hasten to add, though, that not all is trial and tribulation. An average workday at Bangula is usually varied and interesting. Once the inevitable batch of awaiting e-mails has been dealt with and the necessary telephone calls made, we can get our teeth into delivering the actual work. This can range from editing to

translating to copywriting to conceptualising a whole new product for clients, and more. Our work often includes attending meetings, which means that, despite the freedom of the Internet, we cannot really run our business too far from the Gauteng area. We do have a few clients abroad though. When it comes to training, of course, distance becomes an even greater factor, both for the required meetings in preparation for the course and for the training itself. From as close as Pretoria, I have to leave at five in the morning to make sure course attendees don't beat me to the classroom in Sandton!

We decided at the outset, rather than finding a niche, such as African languages, to spread our wings far and wide and pull in expertise as required – a strategy that has worked well for us thus far. Bangula Language Centre's services include, apart from training and the obvious translation services, transcription services, editing, proofreading and commercial writing. We even write educational textbooks. We have also been involved in such diverse jobs as designing a range of posters, researching and writing a report on Entrepreneurship Month for the DTI, and conceptualising artwork for publications.

Our turnover – read: our workload – has grown to nearly ten times what it was at inception, and looks set to keep increasing in the new financial year. With this growth has come a lot a pride and joy, but also a lot of added responsibility. Our approach? Care about your service-providers and your clients, and the money will follow automatically. 🌱

Google and translation

A Johannesburg newspaper report towards the end of March 2007 indicated that Google is aiming to make it possible for people to translate documents instantly into the world's main languages, using machine logic rather than linguistic expertise.

Google is working on a translation system that is based not on the traditional approach of programming grammatical rules and dictionaries into PCs, but rather on feeding parallel documents translated by humans into the machines and relying on them to discern patterns for future translations. They say that, while not (yet) perfect, the system is an improvement over previous machine translation. Try it out for yourself at www.google.com/language_tools. 🌱

'n Dag in die lewe van 'n vryskuttaalpraktisyn

'n "Lewe"? Ek het in hierdie 'lewe' geleer telegramgebiede word verhoor, plan-maak werk nie en alles moet gou gedoen word. Tyd en besig het uitgeputte clichés geword. En die helfte word nie eens vertel nie.

Elke dag begin 05:00, tensy ek verslaap. En hoe meer verslaap, hoe langer die werksdag. Sodra die rekenaar aan is, wys die e-dagboek wie verjaar, maar dié oproepe word nie noodwendig gemaak nie. Die koerant word vlugtig gelees. Dit is eerder die reël dat hulle ophoop en ongelees weggegooi word. Ek is baie lief vir yskoue koffie. Die huis bly deur-mekaar, portrette hang skeef, wasgoed word binne opgehang om te verhoed dat wind, weer en wasgoedpennetjies optel kosbare tyd mors met die inhaalslag. Die hople klere sonder knope en some en losgetrekte nate word 'n berg. Lovey kook nie, hy is al 'n chef.

Ek doen 'ligte' redigering van 'n regstesis, terwyl ek wonder hoe ek 'mushy mushrooms' in 'n ander halfvoltooide opdrag gaan vertaal. Die tesis frustreer my vanweë die student se ooglopend lae geletterdheidsvlak, swak taalbeheer, foutiewe, afwesige en oortollige verwysings, feitefoute en onsamehangendheid. Dit is beslis nie in die student se moedertaal geskryf nie. Onregverdige politieke agendas is te blameer, maar dis 'n tesis op sy eie. Etiese en professionele beginsels noop my om die teks só te verbeter dat die promotor dit sal aanvaar. Navorsing, sonder vergoeding gedoen, in my bronne, kollegas s'n en op die internet is tydrowend omdat ek nie die foute kan ignoreer nie. Wie gaan die graad verwerf – ek of hy? Ek wanhoop aan die toekoms van my nasie.

Die foon lui. "Ag, sorry man, hoe djustifaa ek my werk?" "Ek weet nie," seg ek. "Die kliënt het jou gevra om dit te vertaal, dis mos genoeg regverdiging!" Doodse stilte. Ek besef Hendrika (skuilnaam) wil weet hoe sy tikwerk moet justeer! "O, blok die hele lot, en druk control en j." "Hoe blok ek?" Ek ry liewers na haar toe om praktiese opleiding te gee. Dis deel van die mentorplig om jong taalwerkers taal- én rekenaarvaardig te maak – hulle besef nie die program het 'n hulpfunksie nie, of dis vir hulle Grieks.

Terug op kantoor is die boodskaplys lank, Skype flits en ek het nog nie 'n oplossing vir 'mushy mushrooms' nie! Ek begin bel.

Hendrik (skuilnaam), in Hendriena (nie regtig nie), wat drie keer gebel het, kom eerste. Hy is jammer om te pla, hy weet hoe besig ek is, maar hy is desperaat: hoe spelle 'n mens 'psychological'? Kon hy nie maar vir Lovey gevra het nie? Ek spel, hy kry dit nie reg nie, en ek sê ek sal dit e-pos. Daar lê vier dringend gemerkte e-posse wat smee ek moet hom bel. Hy kon nie per e-pos vra hoe dit gespelle word nie, want hy weet nie! Ek wonder of hy 'n behoorlike woordeboek het, maar helaas, nóg dit nóg die speltoetsers sou gehelp het nie. Tog beveel ek goeie woordeboeke aan en verduidelik hoe 'auto correct' werk ... ek is immers 'n mentor. "Ken jy 'n Swahili-vertaler?" lui 'n navraag.

Nóg navrae en werk lê tussen die snert- en woord-'n-dag-e-posse. Laasgenoemde hou my op die hoogte – ek is nie heeltemal volleerd nie, al dink Jan en alleman so. Ek druk dekblaaie, laai aanhangsels af, maak hulle oop om te sien hoe lank en moeilik die werkstukke is en wonder oor 'mushy mushrooms'. Skype. Dis 'n kollega met 'n tam-eletjie, ons bespreek opsies, gelukkig met 'n paar laggoed tussen in, anders word ons gek.

Teen 14:30 dut ek, kop op my arms op my lessenaar. Net twintig minute; my pynende elmboogknoppe maak my wakker. Die kooi durf ek nie opsoek nie, het dit al probeer en nege-uur die aand eers wakker geword. Die geheim van hierdie blitsopkikker is om die telefoon van die mik af te haal, Lovey en Rix-hond met moord te dreig en sitkamer toe te verban.

Nou volg spertydonderhandelinge. Ek gryp die jongste e-posdekblaaie, soek die ander in my inmandjie en herrangskik almal. Ek kyk onder na die hoekie van my rekenaar, want ek weet nie meer wat vandag se datum is nie en ruk die rooibekrapte kalender van die muur af. O gorratjie! Moes 08:00 by die tandarts gewees het! Bel, vra oordadiglik om verskoning, en kry 'n bestelling vir oor twee maande. Ek skryf met 'n rooi merker op geel plakkers: 10 Junie 2007, 08:00: TANDARTS. Moet die jaar byskryf – mens weet nooit! "Lovey, please write it in your diary to remind me!" en hol spieëltafel, badkamer en yskas toe om hulle op te plak. Haal vleis uit – Lovey sal weer moet kook – pak die skottelgoedwasser uit, breek 'n glas, vee en suig die skerwe op, gooi die potplante nat en

"Etiese en professionele beginsels noop my om die teks só te verbeter dat die promotor dit sal aanvaar"

Artikel deur Esme Greenfield. Esme is 'n vryskuttaalpraktisyn, lid van SAVI, SAVI Boland en Prolingua, woon in Vermont naby Hermanus, waar die see en die berge haar omring en inspirasie en rus vir haar siel gee.

“... ek besef my
bronne is al
weer
ontoereikend,
sal moet soek
en aankoop! Ek
het 'n hulp-
verleningstoets
gefaal!”

klap in die sitkamer nog 'n skildery skeef. Lovey sit daar en koerant lees. “Did you say something?” Ek het nie eens twintig minute gelede gesien hy sit nie by sy lessenaar nie. “Never mind, maybe I’ll remember later.”

Terug by die rekenaar laai ek weer e-pos af, sien 'n navraag oor ‘trembling cap’ sonder konteks, en wonder wat ‘mushy mushrooms’ gaan wees. Papperige sampioene? Nee, dit rym nie en klink nie aptytlik nie. ZaLang toe? Nee, eers self 'n oplossing soek. Sal ek ‘trembling cap’ opsoek? Nee, dalk ken iemand anders dadelik die antwoord. Eerder vir die kliënte laat weet wanneer die werkstukke kan klaar wees. Niemand het nog ‘trembling cap’ beantwoord nie. Dis 'n vingerwysing. Soek in my rekenaarbronne, somer op albei rekenars tegelyk, pluk woordeboeke nader, ruk bokslêers met vergeelde lysse van die rak af. Moet onthou om hulle te rekenariseer. Kry niks. Dalk 'n motorterm? Nee. 'n Tipe hoed? Wie dra 'n bewende hoed? Wag, waar is die *Hoedeterme* tog? Op die heel boonste rak. Vlieg op, voel bietjie duiselig want ek het 06:00 beskuit geëet, klim op die tikstoel, amper gly die wiele onder my uit. My aarde: 1970!, nie eens 'n ISBN nie. Rix tjank. Hardloop om hom op en buite toe te help om sy ding te doen. Wat 'n pragtige dag! Wens ek kan op die tuinbank gaan sit en

oor die see tuur. Hoop die kinders kry sy loopring gemaak. Ek kan hom nie laat uitsit nie, sy kop makeer niks, dis net sy bene wat ingee. Gaan hulle my ook die genadeskoot gee as myne ingee? Ja, sowaar, *Hoedeterme* sê dis 'n trilpuntmus, maar *HAT* het dit nie, en *WAT* is nog nie by T nie, daar is wel ander snaakse goed as ek ‘tril’ opsoek! Al weer kennisverbreding. Die etimologiewoordeboeke werp nie lig nie. Trilpuntmus moet maar 'n raaisel bly. Die navraer sal seker weet of dit die regte term is. Ek sal eendag wanneer ek tyd (?) het, probeer uitvind wie dit dra; seker die pous wanneer hy snork-slaap.

Nee, ek wil NOU weet! Haal *Merriam-Webster* van die rak af en dink ek moet weer 'n inspuiting in my gholfelmbog kry. (Nee, ek speel nie gholf nie.) Die pyn raak erger en die woordeboeke swaarder. *Oxford*, *Longman*, *Reader’s Digest Reverse Dictionary*, *A Dictionary of English Costume*, *History of Costume*, *Medieval Theatre Costume* en *What People Wore* het dit ook nie. Die raai-raai-internet sê Timothy se bynaam was “Salophaciolus or Trembling Cap”. A, die *Oxford Dictionary of the Bible*, *A Concise Dictionary of Theological and Related Terms* of die dominee! Hulle weet ook nie. Nee wat, moet ophou tyd mors, maar ek besef my

[Vervolg op bladsy 28]

Summary

A day in the life of a language practitioner is often a 05:00-05:00 battle against time. Husband, family, friends, foes and pets are neglected. Personal plans always take a back seat. The terms *no* and *house-proud* are no longer part of your vocabulary. Reading for relaxation is a long-forgotten indulgence. Iced coffee becomes a favourite. People look upon you with pity because you look so haggard and woebegone. *Time* and *busy* are tired clichés. But you are a master time-juggler. You know telegram-style prayers are always answered, especially when you ask for your computers to stay up and running and uninterrupted power supply.

Editing and translating are never easy owing to time and resource constraints. Resources are either limited or outdated, requiring more money to be invested in sagging bookshelves and bandwidth. Research is time-consuming, but vital – for you, your fellow practitioners and your clients. Research makes you realise your lack of knowledge and serves as inspiration to become better informed. You undertake this research without expecting compensation. The quality of the work you receive often leaves you in despair about the future of your nation. You have a moral and ethical duty to educate ... diplomatically ... therefore you edit the source text and return it to the client, free of charge. You are expected to be an expert in all fields, and you endeavour to live up to this. Mentoring includes computer lessons, recommending dictionaries and/or useful textbooks and drying the tears of desperate, tired and near-to-capitulating old and young practitioners. You encounter terms that vigorously exercise your imagination in your efforts to find dynamic equivalents in the target language. You find solutions in odd sources. When you cannot find solutions, your disappointment is acute, yet you never give up hope because you know there is an elusive source out there. You are always thankful that you have fellow practitioners who unselfishly assist and guide you.

When you are tempted to change your career, you realise there is no career as stimulating or rewarding as that of a language practitioner, and you bravely face a new day with its new challenges.

Interpreting for the Deaf – a variety of challenges

I work for SASLINC, an agency that provides South African Sign Language (SASL) and DeafBlind tactile interpreters. The tasks we deal with on a daily basis encompass the following:

- Supplying and coordinating SASL interpreters for a variety of events, which may involve conference interpreting, workshops, telephone interpreting, educational interpreting, medical interpreting, legal interpreting, sight interpreting, whispered interpreting that is specialised for DeafBlind clients, or other forms of DeafBlind interpreting
- Training of both SASL and tactile interpreters (depending on funding availability)
- Consultation services and advice to organisations and corporates on optimum use of their SASL interpreters
- Mentoring programmes for upcoming SASL interpreters
- Awareness-raising

Our primary clients are the Deaf and DeafBlind – SASL interpreters would not exist without the Deaf community. Our secondary clients are government, large, medium and small businesses, and individuals. Government departments tend to be the major employers of freelance SASL interpreters.

Challenges

Many of the challenges faced by SASL interpreters are the same as those faced by other simultaneous interpreters. They include the following:

- Recognition of SASL: South African Sign Language is still not an official language in our country, although it is recognised and mentioned in our constitution. This hinders the proper respect and recognition being given to sign language interpreting as a profession. This extends to the belief or myth that everyone who knows SASL can interpret, which of course – as is the case with any other language – couldn't be further from the truth. Sadly the 'imposters' who foster this myth tend to be used for government functions because they undercut and are more than willing to work solo for hours under horrendous conditions.

- Paying clients generally fail to understand the need to employ two interpreters per session. They will go to an extent of saying "We won't need two interpreters because there is only one Deaf person." I politely respond by saying it wouldn't matter if they had only half a Deaf person, they would still have to employ two interpreters because we are not willing to compromise the quality. One of my colleagues in response to this likes to ask if the speeches will be cut into half as well. For quality interpreting in assignments lasting more than 2–3 hours, at least two interpreters must work together in shifts.
- One of my main challenges is the fact that often Deaf people themselves do not know the rights of the SASL interpreters.

Although the points below are not strictly challenges, they are aspects of the job that outsiders are often not aware of:

- Sign language interpreting is more personal than other types of interpreting, in most instances forcing both the interpreter and Deaf person/people to 'invade' each other's space. For this reason it is important for Deaf people, and particularly DeafBlind people, to use an interpreter they are comfortable with.
- In preparation for an interpreting assignment, in addition to reading the conference material and speeches it is imperative for an interpreter to check their Deaf clients' preferred dialects and level of comprehension. Interpreters also have to possess an excellent knowledge of both cultures to be interpreted and to be aware of current trends and latest developments.
- In a live audience it is crucial to pick up on interactive 'feedback' from the Deaf people as one is interpreting. You may for example note clues such as frowns that indicate that an inappropriate sign was used, or your message is incongruous, or you should change your style as they are at a loss. At other times a certain grin or smile and the way they are sitting will indicate that they are comfortable with all the characteristics of your paralinguistic, e.g. how big or small your signs are, the pace, the volume of your non-manuals and when you hesitate.

"Sign language interpreting is more personal than other types of interpreting, in most instances forcing both the interpreter and Deaf person/people to 'invade' each other's space"

Article by Asanda Katshwa. Asanda is a director of SASLINC. She is SATI-accredited for SASL-English-SASL simultaneous interpreting.

"The best experience for me personally is when communication is so smooth that both sides forget I am even there"

- Sadly at times the use of platform interpreters is simply a publicity stunt.
- Sometimes the event organisers expect the SASL interpreter to bring along the Deaf people. This is an excruciating situation, because you are interpreting to a house full of hearing people who are fascinated with the movement of your hands but have no clue what you are signing! However, the worst is that it means there are two interpreters less where they are most needed – in the community.

Unusual tasks

Among the unusual experiences I have had as an SASL interpreter are the following:

- A workshop was about to start when the facilitators realised that the Deaf participants were scheduled only to arrive in the late afternoon of that day. So I was asked to participate in the debates, since they would be discussing the use of interpreters anyway. Of course I politely declined and recited the SATI Code of Ethics.
- My colleague was asked to make tea for the facilitator during an interpreting interval, since he was 'not doing anything' anyway.
- I was once reprimanded by a doctor for letting the Deaf person forget to come in time for her appointment (it was the first time I had met the Deaf person and I could not believe the doctor thought I should be responsible for a mother with children my age!).
- Or the Doctor will say: "Make sure she takes her medication at the set time."
- Interpreters are mostly placed in front of the audience (platform interpreting) and one day in a biology class I was conveniently used as a model while I was trying to interpret.
- I believe this is disliked by most SASL interpreters: When a facilitator makes a joke and says "Let's see how the interpreter will sign this" and then asks you, "Was that the sign for such-and-such a word? Let's see you do it again!"
- For purposes of writing up policies we (SASL interpreters) are referred to as "assistive devices" for Deaf people.

We are also often faced with unusual questions:

- "You must be very tired. Do you go to the gym specially to maintain the stamina for your job?"
- "I didn't know Deaf people could understand jokes!"
- "I didn't know Deaf people can laugh!"

- "Did you go school with them?" (Deaf people)
- "Are you their teacher?"
- "When can we get the report or evaluation of the conference?"
- "Where are the Deaf people – why did you not bring them?"

Of course we use these 'opportunities' to educate the public.

Enjoyable aspects of my work

The continuous feedback is fulfilling; it keeps me on my toes and it is gratifying because you know right there and then if you are on or off-track. It gives you an opportunity to rectify the mistakes immediately.

The best experience for me personally is when communication is so smooth that both sides forget I am even there – then I know for sure I have done a good job.

Despite all the challenges, I enjoy my work tremendously. Life as a Sign Language interpreter is incredibly challenging, yet extremely fulfilling.

Wishlist

My wishlist for Sign Language interpreting in South Africa would include the following:

- Funding for comprehensive interpreter training: Currently we don't have an institution of higher learning that is solely dedicated to SASL interpreter training.
- Intense training of DeafBlind tactile interpreters: There are at least six modes of DeafBlind tactile interpreting. Not all current SASL interpreters can make it as DB tactile interpreters, nor do they aspire to become one.
- Regular workshops specifically for SASL interpreters, to provide continuous learning and to keep up with the current trends and update of signs
- Training Deaf people on the use of SASL interpreters
- Training more Deaf people to become relay interpreters* 🙋

* Relay interpreters: Deaf people who are bi/multilingual, i.e. may be fluent in SASL and are also able to read and write one or two spoken languages fluently (only in a written form; they may not be spoken), e.g. English and isiZulu. In South Africa relay interpreters are used mainly when the Deaf persons who are being interpreted for are illiterate and have a very limited knowledge of signs or use dialects that are unfamiliar to the interpreter. Internationally relay interpreters are used when International Signs are used, where they add body language and explicit non-manuals. In essence, a relay interpreter relays what the interpreter says to the Deaf client and then relays what the Deaf client says to the interpreter.

Coporate work demands flexibility and flair

I work for one of the largest insurance companies in South Africa dealing with pension and provident funds (employee benefits). Part of my job is translating, interpreting and making presentations to our clients. I am an English-to-isiZulu translator based in KwaZulu-Natal.

By clients I mean individual members and/or their companies. A client can also be the advisers and brokers who look after companies' pension or provident funds. No one day or one request is ever the same in my line of work.

Translating

I translate fund rules and member communications for our members. I translate letters to individual clients on request from an adviser or a broker. I translate benefit structures for members, especially when new business is taken on.

Our members are generally not well educated, which means that when you translate you have to be as simple as possible without losing the meaning of your original text.

I also help a colleague who translates the same sort of material as me with her proof-reading and editing of her work. This is very different from starting your own work from scratch. It is far more difficult to see mistakes in work already translated by someone else. We tend to fight and argue over certain words and terminology, but this is always a good fight because we teach each other in the process.

I have also had the odd occasion where our head office will ask me for input into a document or a brochure that has been translated by someone else. Since we in KZN are mother-tongue users and mostly it is our clients here who will be using the isiZulu brochures, they feel that our input is invaluable. Well, the translations we are faced with have sometimes turned out to be very funny or even downright scary. As we all know, translating does not happen just at word level; the culture, beliefs and nuances of that language all come into play. I have found myself re-writing the whole article at times. This happens mostly because the translators don't use

the isiZulu language on a daily basis. They may be Zulu by birth, but are not pure isiZulu speakers because they use other languages in their daily life. They may be familiar with the isiZulu spoken in the Western Cape or Gauteng region, but this language usage is completely different from that used in KZN. Even more important is the fact that these brochures are very important tools of communication with our clients. They usually explain a benefit or service that we offer to our clients and the company would face real problems if clients were unable to understand a brochure or be given the wrong idea.

Interpreting

The interpreting I do is usually for a broker when they are making presentations to their clients. In such cases the broker has formulated their own presentation and simply wants me to tell the client what they have said. This is sometimes tricky, especially when the broker has prepared a slide presentation; it takes special skill to interpret and at the same time follow what is on the screen. The fact that this is my forte helps a lot. I know my subject very well and that helps the presentation go much more smoothly.

Other business units, like our Health Care (Medical Aid) Division, may sometimes also ask me to interpret. In these cases I will accompany the service consultants to their members. I am not a health care expert, so my knowledge of our business in this area is limited.

Presentations

At other times I make presentations directly to clients in isiZulu. Although I may do this on behalf of a consultant, in this case they leave it to me to run the whole presentation.

Like any specialist field, pension/provident fund business has its own jargon and words that we don't have in isiZulu. This can be a headache! When you are translating on paper, you at least have time to think of words and find meanings. When making a presentation, you may find yourself in front of members who don't know the meaning of a term you have just used, which may be easy to understand in English but sounds like

Article by Lungile Zungu. Lungile has 18 years' working experience, over 14 of them in the financial services sector. She is currently studying towards a BA Communication Science and has included Linguistics in her curriculum because of her love for languages.

"When I see the change of expression on the faces of my clients from blank stares or confusion ... to ... 'Now I get it!' ... [this makes] my job here worthwhile!"

Greek even to you when you say it in isiZulu. Some terms are specific and you cannot just substitute them with another word in case you give members incorrect information. You have to be sharp and be able to think on your feet. This is even more true during question-time, as you cannot anticipate what questions you will be asked. Terms like *surplus apportionment schemes* were very difficult to put across to members in the beginning. Names like *Financial Services Board* and *trustees* or the difference between a *beneficiary* and a *dependant* all create difficulties; often you have to explain what it is and its function before you even try to translate the name or term.

There will always be a broker or an advisor at presentations like these. Sometimes the clients ask questions that only he/she can answer. In this instance my task will be to

translate the questions and answers, from isiZulu to English and then back from English to isiZulu.

Conclusion

I love languages and regret that I am fluent only in English and isiZulu. I love interacting with people and I also love educating my clients. I enjoy the translation and interpreting aspects of my job because they enable me to do all three at once. When I see the change of expression on the faces of my clients from blank stares or confusion at the start of a presentation to the smiles and comments like "Now I get it!" at the end, or when I translate a document and know that it will make a difference to whether or not the client understands what their pension benefits are – these are the things that make my job here worthwhile! ☺

'n Dag in die lewe van 'n vryskut-taalpraktisyn [vervolg van bladsy 24]

bronne is al weer ontoereikend, sal moet soek en aankoop! Ek het 'n hulpverleningstoets gefaal!

E-pos toe met Timothy se trilpuntmus. Gelukkig is al die kliënte tevrede met die inhandigingsdatums. 'Mushy mushrooms' móét nou klaar. Al wat ek kry is 'sawwerig' – klink net so dof soos 'mushy'. Ek vertaal die sampioen-resep klaar en lewer kommentaar oor 'mushy mushrooms'. Taalpraktisyn word diplomaat: "**voorstel:** verander dit na 'creamed mushrooms/geroomde sampioene'". Ek stuur die Afrikaans en 'n geredigeerde Engels (waarvoor ek nie betaal word nie) vir die kliënt en sê sy moet gerus bel as sy vrae het, ek help graag. Hoop sy voel nie seergemaak nie.

Daar lê 'n versoek vir 'n "vinnige, kort vertaling voor môre nege-uur, asseblief? Dié mediavrstelling móét uitgaan." Dare "asseblief". Die datum waarop die oorspronklike outeur dit aan my middelpersoon (taalpraktisyns moet polities sensitief wees) gestuur het, is 'n week tevore. Laai die ahangsel af, dis vier bladsye. Kan nie weier nie, die middelpersoon tjaila vieruur. Ek besef waarom dit aangestuurd is: dis 'n moeilike stuk oor droogtetoestande in Antarktika.

Sesuur – my sjerrie-zombie-uur voor die televisie. Kwart oor ses lui die foon en ek skree vir Lovey om te sê hy het my laas kranse toe sien hardloop. Hy dink nie dis snaaks nie. Ek gee moederlike raad oor tariefstruktuurprobleme. Halfagt is ons klaar geëet, die kombuis is

opgeruim en ek takel Antarktika. Ek wil-wil moedeloos raak omdat ek weet hoe onbevredigend die internet is wanneer 'n mens na Afrikaanse terminologie soek as tuisbronne te kort skiet. Moet met die Akademie baklei. Tienuur loop Rix sy laaste draaitjie en ek sluit die agterdeur. Gelukkig werk ander taalpraktisyns ook laat. Met hulle hulp en genade van Bo, is die droogte teen 03:00 gebreek. Trek weer die tesis nader.

Dis 05:00, ek gaan bad en bid. Ek behoort die 10:00-spertyd van die tesis te haal. Gelukkig het niemand gister gesê iets is onvertaalbaar, oor tariewe gekibbel of geweier om te betaal nie, ek het nie nodig gehad om oor taalverdringing te redekewel nie, my rekenaars het nie gehang of ineengestort nie (moet nog rugsteun doen, defragmenteer en kompakteer!), g'n kragonderbrekings of tyd om verveeld te wees nie ... Ek mymer oor ander se siening van my 'lewe'. Ek is by die huis, en rekenaarvaardig en -geletterd en dus kan ek allerlei take verrig. Kerkadministrasie, plakate, reklame, besigheidskaartjies, teepartytjies, konserte. As ek sê ek is besig, vra hulle wanneer ek dan aftree. Lyk ek regtig só oud, of is dit wat hierdie 'lewe' aan my doen? Waarskynlik, want SIMPATIE staan op hulle gesigte geskryf! My wedervraag is op watter ouderdom hulle afgetree het. "Vyf en sestig." "Nouja, ek is nog ver daarvandaan."

Hierdie 'lewe' verruil vir 'n ander een? "I love my work with a frenetic and perverse love, as an ascetic loves the hair shirt which scratches his belly," seg ek saam met Gustave Flaubert wat van 1821-1880 geleef het. Hy het net 59 gehaal. Miskien moet ek voorgoed om 65 te wees en begin brei en hekel. ☺

A full and varied day working for the state

06:55

I'm at my computer looking through the dozens of e-mails that have accumulated in the week I've been on leave. I always get in early to beat the traffic and get a cheap parking place – something freelancers presumably don't have to worry about. There are 30-odd documents waiting to be edited, from short submissions written by interns, which often have to be virtually rewritten, to medium-sized reports that only need tweaking, to long and complicated policies that I try to put in plain English. All of these have to be entered in the register.

07:30

I've left a few less important-looking e-mails unread after asking for deadlines from some of my 'clients' (as we've been told to call them in the hope that the private sector word will make us public servants slightly more service-oriented). Many of them have given no indication of when they need the work returned. It seems that most people find it hard to believe they're not the only person I do work for, which can be tough in a large department.

07:45

Even tougher, though, is looking up the correct name for some national guidelines in the *Government Gazette* and finding that the guidelines in question have been published without editing – and there are not only two indiscriminately used versions of the name but several other errors. Too many people think their English doesn't need editing – even though it's their fourth language and even though sensible first-language speakers have important documents edited, or at least read through, by someone else.

08:00

Nhlanhla calls to say he has a stomach bug and will not be coming in to work. There are only three of us in the Department of Education's Communication section – me for English, Godfrey Kobo for Sepedi and Nhlanhla Mdlalose for isiZulu. Nhlanhla tells me what he's done and what still needs to be done with the outsourcing of two large documents for translation into all the official languages. Outsourcing documents is a bit of a headache. There is so much red tape to be

tied and untied that it's hard to meet clients' deadlines even when these are reasonable, which they seldom are. And then there's more bureaucratic fun to be had when service-providers have to be paid. I pass this thankless task on to Godfrey, who accepts it as pleasantly as always.

08:10

Aswi, the graphic designer, comes in to say hello and gives me the good news that there are no advertisements for me to edit. Luckily – the content and deadlines for adverts always have the two of us doing cartwheels. It sometimes seems that every advert has to be approved by at least three people and rewritten by six before it can be published, and clients just don't understand that editing and graphic design both take quite a bit more time than making a photocopy, or that newspapers have deadlines. The translators have similar problems, with translations having to be redone each time clients decide to change the original. Their biggest problem, for a while, was the lack of clients (we are a newish section), but business is now picking up.

08:40

There's a request from a senior manager for information on Translate.org.za. I'd invited Dwayne Bailey to speak at an International Mother Language Day workshop after hearing him speak at a SATI AGM, so they know I'll have his contact details at least. Working with the South African Police Service and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality language units to organise the workshop was a new experience for me – and a lot of hard work, but very rewarding. One of the best features of the workshop, I think, was the way we had everyone give a short introduction to their presentations in their own mother tongue – or a language other than English.

09:15

Godfrey comes in to tell me that the follow-up terminology training he's organised for the three units has had to be postponed. Our unit gets together regularly with the SAPS and CTMM African language sections to share expertise and terminology. (If the National Language Service were functioning as it should, this wouldn't be so necessary.) We want to make sure we're doing it properly, so

"It seems that most people find it hard to believe they're not the only person I do work for, which can be tough in a large department"

Article by Beryl Judd. Beryl is an editor at the national Department of Education. Her first job was driving a baker's delivery van in Port Elizabeth, and she has also worked for the Departments of Arts and Culture and Defence. She is SATI-accredited for Afrikaans-English translation and English editing.

we've got Dr Mariëtta Alberts of PanSALB to train those of us who have not yet attended a terminology course. She's given us an assignment excerpting terms from a document on HIV/Aids and defining them. We need to meet to see if we've understood what she's taught us and then to discuss the translation of the terms. This will probably be on Friday – another day away from my editing, which will mean a rather hectic Monday next week.

11:00

I've managed to send out a couple of documents and make my first cup of tea for the day before meeting with a couple of colleagues about our two internal publications. The SAPS and CTMM translators, and ex-colleagues of mine from the National Language Service (some of whom have left the NLS themselves), have helped us make the Department's electronic newsletter probably the most multilingual in-house newsletter in a South African government department.

12:30

Lunch time? What's that? Holidays have to be paid for in this Department.

14:00

I explain to a client that in English it is not disrespectful to use the pronoun 'you' in a submission to the Minister. Funny how people seem to think even grammar should bow to rank. For instance, if you're a deputy director-general your concord 'are' automatically better than that of a mere assistant director.

15:45

This is my official time to leave, but there's

just too much still to be done. Apart from all the editing, we're trying to streamline the outsourcing process a bit by calling for tenders. If you thought filling in a tender form was difficult ...

I'm also trying to get more editors appointed (which involves submissions, meetings, advertisements and so on), and to compile a much-needed style guide for the Department. After almost a year in this position I'm beginning to wonder if there will ever be time to do this.

16:57

An e-mail arrives from the SATI office. Would I write an article on my job with a national government department for *Muratho*? How can I say no to Marion Boers, who has helped me out so many times? Although I warn her that I'm much better at criticising other people's writing than writing myself. Fortunately I have a computer living with me at the moment, so I should be able to do something over the weekend.

17:50

It's getting dark and I'm less keen than usual on the centre of town at night since a colleague was hijacked a fortnight ago. Also, my cats must be starving by now. (I eat constantly, so it's not a problem for me – except that my keyboard's had a couple of close calls, and my beam has broadened rather.) I've not done nearly as much as I needed to, but at least I've made a dent in the pile – and missed the rush-hour traffic again. ☹

Our bursars introduce themselves

Thanks to the generosity of SATI members and the ATKV, SATI was this year able to award a total of R21 000 in bursaries to seven deserving students working in South African languages. Through your contributions to the Development Fund, you are helping to educate the next generation of language workers. Here the students outline where they are headed.



Nomthandazo
Magwaza

I am **Nomthandazo Magwaza** and I work in the office of the Public Protector in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. I am currently studying towards an Honours degree in translation at Unisa, having already obtained a National Diploma in Translation and Interpreting Studies. My home language is isiZulu and the other languages I work with are English and SA Sign Language.

In a multilingual country like South Africa, there is a great need for language workers like

translators and interpreters. These language workers see to it that information reaches everyone in the language that they understand best.

It is evident that information often does not reach people in rural areas because of the medium of communication used. The media and language workers therefore face the challenge of seeing to it that information is available in people's mother tongues. This bursary will help me advance in my chosen

career and polish the skills that I already have. And soon I will be gaining relevant experience in this field.

My name is **Sibulelo Msomi**. I am 23 years old and reside in the province of Kwa-Zulu-Natal. I would like to extend warm gratitude to the South African Translators' Institute for the bursary that they awarded me recently. Being awarded a bursary is an honour and privilege. It has motivated me to work harder than before. As a person who is pursuing his dreams under severe circumstances of financial instability, this bursary will help me to buy textbooks and any other relevant stationery. It will also help me to attend to any other academic needs. I have also been awarded free membership of SATI this year. As a result, I will be exposed to many opportunities in my field of study. My linguistic knowledge will also broaden as a result of regular meetings with the professionals in the field of translation.

My first language is isiZulu. It is a language that I am proud of, because I transmit my culture through it. I can also communicate fluently in English and isiXhosa. I learned isiXhosa as a result of growing up in the Eastern Cape. I am also on the verge of being proficient in Afrikaans.

I am pleased Translation is a field of study, since it is often difficult for people to get information in their native language and I believe that information is better understood and less ambiguous when presented in one's indigenous language.

I chose the field of Translation because of my love of writing. When I realised the further advantages of being in the language field, I felt that I had made the right choice. My course of study (Language Practice) comprises the following subjects: Translation (including Lexicography), Intercultural studies, Computer usage, Afrikaans, Applied First Language, Applied Second Language, and General Language Dynamics.

The combination of these subjects prepares us to work as translators, interpreters, language editors, proofreaders, lexicographers and in other language services. I am most interested in lexicography. I would like to be a practical lexicographer one day and compile dictionaries that will serve the needs of dictionary users. The Department of Arts and Culture recently gave us an opportunity to form cooperatives on completion of our courses of study (specifically in the Department of Language and Translation). These cooper-

atives may specialise, for instance, in the translation of documents or in interpreting and must be registered on the Department of Arts and Culture's database.

I am more than willing to take this opportunity on completion of my diploma. I will leave no stone unturned to come out with flying colours. I hope that, as a result of applying my principles of *patience, perseverance and determination*, I will ultimately realise my objectives.

My naam is **Jolette Roodt** en ek doen tans 'n Nagraadse Diploma in Vertaling by die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Ek het verlede jaar die graad BA (Taal en Kultuur) voltooi met die hoofvakke Engels en Latyn, ook by die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. My huistaal is Afrikaans en ek het Duits en antieke Grieks op eerstejaarsvlak en Frans op tweedejaarsvlak.

Ek het nog altyd baie belang gestel in tale en op ouderdom elf jaar my eerste blootstelling aan 'n Moderne Vreemde Taal gehad toe ek by die buurvrou gaan aanklop het om my 'n bietjie Frans te leer nadat sy vir twee jaar daar gewoon het. Vertaling en tolkwerk is dus twee fantastiese geleenthede om hierdie liefde vir tale uit te leef. Ek geniet ook taalversorging omdat dit my die geleentheid gee om 'n teks meer aangenaam vir die leser te maak. My nagraadse diploma sluit vertaling, tolkwerk en redigering in en daarom het ek gedink dit sal die ideale kursus vir my wees.

Ek was verheug om te hoor dat die SAVI/ATKV-beurs aan my toegeken gaan word. Ek het nog altyd my akademie eerste gestel en is bereid om selfs harder te werk om hierdie beurs werklik te verdien. Die beurs is vir my 'n aansporing om steeds my beste te gee en 'n versekering dat harde werk beloon word, alhoewel ek besef dat ek in die praktyk gaan sukkel met moeilike kliënte en nie noodwendig erkenning gaan kry vir die tyd en moeite wat ek ingesit het nie.

Ek beplan om volgende jaar te begin werk, verkieslik in die Wes-Kaap, as redigeerder of vertaler. Ek sal graag uiteindelik by 'n vrouetyskrif wil werk, waar ek ook my belangstelling in joernalistiek kan ontwikkel.

My name is **Sipho Skosana**. I am originally from a small township on the East Rand, called Duduza. I did my primary schooling in Durban, then I went back to Duduza-Nigel to complete high school, successfully gaining my matric in the year 2000.



Sibulelo Msomi



Jolette Roodt



Siphosiso Skosana

Owing to a lack of financial resources to further my studies, I went to back to Durban to seek employment and study part-time. That original plan never materialized; instead, with the help of others, I managed to raise an amount of R1 500, which was the required fee for academic registration. I met other students who were also struggling to make ends meet and they advised me to apply for a government student loan (Tefsa). I did, and then, in 2001, I enrolled for a National Diploma in Translation and Interpreting. I must admit the first few months were tough, because at high school you were spoon-fed but at tertiary level it is assumed that you are now an adult and you have a clear picture of who you are and what you intend to achieve, and so taking responsibility for your life was the name of the game.

One of the clauses of Tefsa stipulates that if you pass all your subjects with at least 60%, you are entitled to a discount of 40%, and through working hard and prayer I passed all my subjects and finally completed the diploma in 2003.

Towards the end of my final year at the Durban Institute of Technology, I received a call from a friend who asked if I would be interested in joining a company called the Rewards Company, based in Umhlanga, north of Durban. I tried to get more information from him, but he just asked can you speak isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi and English fluently. The answer was obvious ... he said please phone this number.

Fortunately for me, at that time the Rewards Company desperately needed someone with a good command of these languages in the Durban area. I signed a one-year contract, entered a learnership and then moved to a permanent customer service consultant position. In 2007 I was promoted to senior customer service consultant.

In this position I interact telephonically with clients and advise them about our services and programmes. I specialise in African languages and this gives me an opportunity to continuously sharpen my language skills. I use these skills in various ways, for instance when the company conducts interviews my duty is to assess the language proficiency of the applicants.

Wishing to advance my qualification, I found that Unisa offers an Honours degree in Translation and Linguistics, for which I am now registered.

My special gratitude goes to the South African Translators' Institute for making it possible for

me to undertake a postgraduate degree in the field I love! In a few years' time I see myself lecturing in one of the institutions of higher learning, opening doors of success for other potential linguists.

Note: As we were going to print, Mr Skosana informed us that he was no longer a senior customer service consultant, but was now a locum lecturer at the Durban University of Technology.



Marius Swart

My naam is **Marius Swart**. Aan die begin van 2006 het ek aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch begin met die graad MPhil in Vertaling. In dieselfde jaar het ek hierdie beurs ontvang en dit is vir my 'n eer en 'n voorreg om dit weer vanjaar te ontvang. Tale het my nog altyd verstom en vermaak en dit is elke dag 'n plesier om in hierdie rigting te werk. Ek wil graag my dank uitspreek teenoor SAVI en die ATKV vir die bydrae wat hulle maak tot my opleiding. Verlede jaar het die eerste helfte van die kursus 'n redelike groot praktiese komponent behels met praktiese vertaal- en redigeerkursusse in twee tale, sowel as my drie keusevakke (Vertaalteorie, Leksikografie en Literêre Vertaling) uit die ruim verskeidenheid keusevakke wat aangebied word. Ek het ook Praktiese Tolking addisioneel geneem. Vanjaar bestudeer ek vir die tesis-helfte van my kursus die Engelse vertaling van Marlene van Niekerk se *Agaat* onder die bekwame leiding van professor Ilse Feinauer. Ek werk spesifiek rondom die rol en kreatiewe insette van die literêre vertaler.

Ek betuig hiermee my hartlike dank vir die aandeel wat SAVI en die ATKV in 2006 in my akademiese loopbaan gehad het, en vanjaar weer het.

Our other two bursars are **Zama Fakude**, who is studying for a National Diploma in Language Practice at the Durban University of Technology, and **Andrew Lefoka**, who is undertaking a BA Honours in Translation at Unisa. Unfortunately their biographical sketches did not reach us in time before we went to print.

Ms Fakude is in her third year of study for a National Diploma in Language and Translation at the Durban University of Technology. Mr Lefoka is a qualified journalist, but has decided to expand his abilities and is enrolled for the first year of an honours degree in Translation Studies at Unisa.

We wish all our bursars well with their studies.

Mementos of SATI's 50th Anniversary

Share in the memories of SATI's 50th anniversary, celebrated in 2006, by buying some of the commemorative items featuring the special anniversary logo designed for use last 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



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



Glass coffee mugs

290 ml

Price: R35 each

Set of 4: R120



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



Business card holders

Brushed aluminium with logo laser-engraved in black

Price: R35 each or R60 for 2



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



Fridge magnets

Bearing the SATI anniversary logo

R8 each or R30 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

1. What are sworn translators and sworn translation?
2. Legislation relating to sworn translation
3. What this means in practice
4. Your stamp and certification
5. Guidelines and conventions relating to sworn translation
6. Charging for sworn translations
7. Duties of a commissioner of oaths
8. Getting yourself known
9. Sworn/court interpreters and interpreting
10. The SATI exam for purposes of becoming a sworn translator
11. Useful resources for sworn translators

Annexure 1: Text of the Hague Convention relating to apostilles

Annexure 2: Samples of certificates issued to sworn translators

Annexure 3: Samples of stamps used by sworn translators

Annexure 4: Samples of certification statements used by sworn translators

Annexure 5: Samples of covering sheet for multiple sworn translations

Annexure 6: Covering letter for file of translated photocopies of documents for use in a court case

Annexure 7: Copy of regulations appointing sworn translators as commissioners of oaths

Annexure 8: Pro forma documents to be submitted when being sworn in

Annexure 9: Samples of common documentation

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 mid-2007.