The European Union and its Future Languages.
Questions for Language Policies and Translation Theories

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Abstract: Future enlargement of the European Union is destined to accentuate the problems of its translation services. Some lessons for likely scenarios can be gleaned from the addition of Finnish to the list of official languages in 1995, especially with respect to juridical syntax, new terminology, the status of a relatively 'opaque' language, and the social factors influencing acceptance of change. These issues are linked to the special theoretical problems ensuing from translational equivalence as an EU 'legal fiction' and the subsequent non-directionality of translated texts. Official equality also hides extreme imbalances in language use, perhaps promising more than limited budgets may be able to deliver. It is suggested that, in preparation for such problems, restricted training programmes should be developed, the non-bureaucratic translation market should not be abandoned, and a series of critical questions should be asked of EU experts.

Key words: language policy, translation, European Union, equivalence.

On 1 January 1995 the European Union (EU) grew from 12 to 15 members, and from 9 to 11 languages. The increment meant a slightly greater northern weighting, which could be of some significance. More important, though, would seem the possible lessons that accession might hold for future EU entries, notably for Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Estonia, Cyprus, and the rest is anyone's guess (this week's list is Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia). Such further expansions imply not only a numerical escalation of language combinations—by more or less geometric progression—, but also qualitative changes of a less mechanical kind. This is primarily because many of the future new languages, be they Slavic or Finno-Ugric, are relatively opaque with respect to the Romance and Germanic language families at the base of the Union. What was once termed the 'Greek problem' (at least in that it was the odd-language-out) is likely to become rather more general (we may have 'odd-families-out'). Further, as relative late-comers to a rather larger union, the national voices of new members will carry less weight than was the case for earlier members (mathematically: the bigger the club, the less decisive capacity each member has). For these and a number of ensuing reasons, any orientation as to what will happen in the near future could benefit greatly from taking a close look at pertinent sectors of the recent past. In this case, the most intriguing analogies are perhaps with the accession of a national language that is at once relative opaque and relatively new to the club, namely Finnish. And that is precisely what I propose to look at here, focusing on the European Commission's (written) Translation Service, leaving most of the problems of interpreting to the shades of mystery. I will eventually formulate a few broad questions about how future expansion is likely to affect language policies and translation theories.

To start, though, a general working hypothesis: The relative opacity of a new language means, first, that there is a correspondingly greater need to trust or perhaps control the mediators working with that language, and second, that many of the presuppositions and procedures founded on cognate or long-term rival languages need not apply. That is, one might expect special degrees of mistrust and non-conformity to ensue... perhaps even from people as calm, as confident and as upright as the Finns. And this may in turn reflect on several more fundamental issues such as language change, translational equivalence, and professional interculturality.

But first we must tell the story.

A Finnish Transition

The addition of Finnish to the European ruck in 1995 would seem to have been rather elaborately prepared. According to Yves Gambier (1998: 296-297), from 1990 the Finnish Ministry of Justice employed seven specialists to revise translations carried out mostly by other ministries. These translations were normally from English sources, which was the official language of the European Free Trade Association (of which Finland had been an associate member since 1961). By 1992-93, however, EU membership was seen as a serious option and the ministry decided to switch to French as the main source language for their translational preparations, at least to the extent that competent professionals were available. This switch was apparently because the English source texts, which had often been translated from French anyway, presented problems of 'reliability and interpretation' (Gambier 1998: 296). A translation section was created in the Ministry of Justice, which by 1995—when time was running short—had some 70 professional translators working on EU texts (some 40 salaried staff plus 30 external freelancers), translating into the night and on weekends. All the prevailing directives and regulations (*acquis communautaire*) had to be translated, involving numerous documents in the fields of law, agriculture and customs. In the six years to 1996, it is reckoned that this group rendered some 150,000 pages, more than half of which concerned agriculture.

The problem of standardizing Finnish terminology for the EU was dealt with from the end of 1992, when two legal experts were employed as full-time terminologists, although many decisions were still necessarily made by front-line translators. Electronic data bases were compiled from 1993, mainly for French, English and Finnish, with standardized equivalents in other languages (German and sometimes Danish) being consulted as well.

With the Finnish accession in 1995, responsibility for the translation activities was moved to the European Commission, whose Translation Service set up a bureau in Helsinki (to revise the *acquis communautaire* that had been translated) and established Finnish sections in its central offices. Many of the translators who had worked for the Finnish Ministry of Justice thus found a new employer.

In all, this transition sounds remarkably ordered and neat. Yet several problems lurked beneath the surface.

European Syntax for All?

One of the standing norms of EU legal translations is that all language versions should correspond paragraph for paragraph, perhaps sentence for sentence, as far as possible. This is so that directives and regulations can be modified and updated easily, just by locating the appropriate text within the numbered section. It is also because some documents are translated as they are drafted, such that modifications may have to be introduced into various language versions. Although this practice has considerable ideological virtues—we shall consider its theoretical implications in a minute—, it can have certain negative effects on the level of final readability. It rides roughshod over the patent fact that different languages have different norms for macrotextual structures. We have perhaps all seen the typically long preambles where legal precedents are framed with stretched cohesion markers like 'Having regard to...', 'Whereas...', and so on, creating one long sentence that, for most non-Francophone cultures, finds no counterpart beyond EU texts. The resulting documents were made to be rewritten by specialists, not to be read and understood by non-specialists.

Such EU syntactic complexity runs strangely counter to a general tendency toward greater accessibility, evident over the past few decades not only in English-language legal discourse (especially in the United States) but also in languages like Finnish. Gambier (1998: 299) notes that, since the 1970s, specific measures have been made to make Finnish legal texts more accessible to the general public. This involves avoiding such things as long convoluted sentences, excessive nominalizations, connected subordinate clauses, ambiguities, and general jargon. These are precisely the syntactic devices that may be returning through EU translation norms: 'From the Finnish perspective', says Gambier (1998: 300), 'the composition and style of Finnish EU texts has meant a historical regression.'

The Choices of Terminology

The fundamental problems with syntax are echoed in the difficulties of developing EU terminology in a 'new' language like Finnish. Here again we have little to add to Gambier's account (1998: 300-301), which offers a usefully reductive analysis of three available strategies:
1. Borrowings from the source language(s), which in this case appears to involve Romance terms common to both French and English. We thus find, in Finnish, quite recognizable items like 'Euroopan unioni', integraatio', 'koheesio' or 'harmonisaatio', as well as new concepts such as 'direktiivi', which was preferred over possible equivalents such as 'eurolaki' (a swiftly abandoned neologism meaning 'eurolaw').
2. Semantic transformation, where a wholly Finnish term like 'yhdenmukaistaminen', meaning 'harmonization', now acquired a more specific meaning with reference to the need to harmonize the various national bodies of law.
3. Between these two extremes, there is a multihued overlap zone where foreign structures and concepts are filled with Finnish morphemes. Thus, alongside the neologism 'kohesio', a less-specialized readership might find the wholly Finnish 'yhteenkuuluvuus', although the technicism returns for concepts like 'koheesiorahasto' (cohesion funds). The term 'acquis communautaire'—used as such in English—has generated 'yhteisön saannöstö', although in informative material it is

sometimes followed by the French term in brackets. At phrase level, the expression 'fait à Bruxelles' has given 'tehty Brysselissä', which is just as strange as the English 'done at Brussels'.

Gambier claims that, thanks to Finnish linguistic purism, the second of these strategies—the semantic bending of established Finnish terms—has remained dominant, with the plainly foreign-derived neologisms being kept to a minimum. Yet, as in the case of syntax, the choice also concerns how willing Finnish culture has been to accept a new set of institutions, or indeed how frightened the terminologists have been that citizens will reject those institutions. Koskinen (forthcoming) notes that in some cases the EU translations carry domestication too far, rendering the English term 'report' as the Finnish 'kertomus' even though the neologism 'raportti' has become firmly established in the language (and can indeed be found in EU Finnish). Comic translationese may thus result from excessive reliance on *either* the foreign *or* the domestic. And in both cases, the resulting effect depends very much on where the national culture stands with respect to EU political institutions.

What is at stake in terminology is not particularly accessibility or readability. It is the prestige values attached to the new and the foreign.

Debates and Effects of Language Policy

One of the peculiarities of EU syntax and terminology is that the use of obfuscating language would appear to run counter not only to some national practices, but also to programmes formulated within the EU itself. Initiatives like the externally oriented 'Citizens First' programme and, in 1999, the more internal 'Fight the Fog' scheme indicate institutional awareness that many messages are simply not getting through, amid various degrees of public indifference to EU affairs. Further, Declaration No 39 annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty indicates concern about the accessibility of EU drafting, and the legal services of the three main institutions have adopted new rules for clearer legislation. Yet there are also theoretical issues at stake here. For example, there is real room for a functional text typology (incorporating domain, purpose and readership), since rigidly cross-referenced syntax has practical virtues in the legal domain but loses that justification in other text genres. Or again, the neologisms and acronyms absorbed rapidly by finance specialists tend to create negative reactions when carried into the general press. I have heard rumours—unfortunately no more than rumours—of official attempts to adjust translation strategies in accordance with a formalized typology of this kind, which could be of potential benefit to practitioners and theorists both within and without the EU.

There is a further peculiarity involved here. The few accounts that we have of the Finnish accession—Gambier and Koskinen—make extensive reference to debates that have taken place in the Finnish press concerning the EU and the resulting 'attacks' on the Finnish language. Such discussion might appear a normal and healthy state of affairs. And yet, writing as I do from the perspective of a resident in Spain—and as a long-suffering translator of EU reports on how farm subsidies are perceived and used in Spain—, the very public nature of the Finnish debates looks rather anomalous. No Spaniard-in-the-street would really expect to be able to pick up and understand a piece of legislation, be it EU or otherwise. Only highly professional farmers might insist that they understand and fill in all the application forms for EU subsidies. For the vast majority of people in Spain, such language is solely for lawyers and the ubiquitous *gestores*—

professional readers of official texts cum accountants—who generally take care of other people's relations with public administrations. In such a context, no one is particularly concerned about the opacity of EU discourse. After all, such texts have enjoyed esoteric status for centuries, so there is no special cause for an outcry now. All the EU neologisms thus flowed into the Spanish language *en bloc* during the 1980s, aided by strong Romance affinities with French, and there was scarcely a whimper from any of the sectors affected.

Why this difference in attitude? If we were to predict where and when resistance to EU language-change was likely to crop up in the future, at least three external variables would seem of interest:

1. It has been suggested (by Koskinen, among others) that languages like English and Spanish, which embrace many competing varieties across the globe, constantly present their speakers with new usages and text norms, whereas the speakers of lesser-used languages like Finnish are not so well equipped to absorb such challenges. Thus, runs the hypothesis, the smaller the language, the more likely it is to resist changes to its endemic norms. As appealing as it might appear, this principle seems not to account for all the factors involved in a language like French—a widely-spoken yet instinctively protective language (cf. Goffin 1994)—, nor even English—whose status as a *lingua franca* does not prevent EU institutions from sounding so foreign that strangely few British institutions even bother to complain about the fact.

2. A more general principle proposed by Gideon Toury (1995: 278) is that 'tolerance of interference' (e.g. EU syntax and jargon) will tend to increase in accordance with the prestige accorded to the source culture (in this case the EU institutions). Thus, suggests the theory, Spanish culture has accepted quite massive changes to its bureaucratic language because it would be enthusiastic about European unification (which is generally the case), whereas Finnish culture would harbour rather deeper doubts about the relative prestige of Brussels (which is not for me to judge).

3. Yet there is also a significant divide here between the north and south of Europe, and more especially along the lines of partition brought about by the sixteenth-century Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Protestant Europe has long sought to bring the word of authority close to the language of the people; it has long encouraged the individual to reason with the law alone. Catholic Europe, on the other hand, has traditionally understood sacred texts through a mediating institution; it is relatively unperturbed by the idea that priest-like experts might exist for the interpretation and application of complex language. The analogy is perhaps forced. But it does point to the depth of the traditions involved.

If we were to predict how Europe's future EU language-users are likely to react to convoluted syntax and arcane terminology, we might thus want to consider variables of size, prestige and tradition, as well as associated factors like the extent of human resources the culture is prepared to invest in language policy (which would in turn be a measure of relative prestige). As it stands, we have too few negative cases to discount the pertinence of any one of these factors. We must assume that they work in some kind of combination, probably distributing degrees of resistance or tolerance across the various social groups concerned.

The important point, though, is that these factors make it highly precarious to assume that, in Europe or elsewhere, there is just one correct way to translate. No one translation policy, especially if formulated at the centre, can expect to produce equal effects throughout the union.

Indeed, if the EU were so culturally homogeneous that equal effects did result, there would be little ideological justification for extensive translation practices in the first place.

Divine Equivalence or Parallel Texts?

No matter how much contemporary translation theories have progressively distanced themselves from the concept of equivalence (cf. Pym 1995a), the 'equal value' of all translations is a legal fiction necessary for multilingual EU legislation to work. This is simply because all language versions are equally binding on EU citizens, so they are all functionally equivalent to each other. This is also because, strictly speaking, in the field of legislation there are no translations as such, since there are no real originals. Some explanation may be called for here.

There can be no doubt that when a translator is working as a translator, there is a source text as input and a target text as output. Similarly, there can be little doubt that the source texts used in the European Commission's (written) Translation Service are distributed highly asymmetrically among the eleven official languages: figures for 1997 indicate 45.3% of the input in English and 40.4% in French, which does not leave much for the rest (European Commission 1999: 11). This means there is some very significant directionality involved. However, the legal principle of equivalent function effectively annuls this pragmatic directionality, since value can no longer be distributed on the basis of any anteriority.

There is also a more developed pragmatic dimension here. EU legislation is produced as a series of drafts and revisions, with subsequent modifications theoretically being introduced into any one language-version and then being taken to the rest. Further, translators may consult several prior language versions rather than just the one source text, and there is reworking and potential consultation between text originators, translators, revisers and legal experts. All this means that pragmatic directionality—the direction in which any one translation act moves—becomes multiplied so many times as to be an unsound guide to value. Once the legislation is completed, there is no one source text, no one target text, and thus, according to some definitions, no manifest phenomenon of translation. Indeed, Pym (1992: 130-131) would say that this is no more than a case of functionally identical parallel texts..., not that the splitting of terminological hairs reveals the most interesting features involved.

If different European attitudes to public hermeneutics can partly be traced back to the Reformation, the status of European texts as exact parallel texts may have an even more divine origin. As Koskinen remarks, the most obvious analogy is with the Septuagint, where 72 separated translators were all so filled with grace that they produced exactly the same Greek translation of the Bible. Godhead at the Commission? There are certainly some massive acts of faith involved. And it is truly remarkable that one does not (yet) hear about linguistic differences being regularly exploited as legal loopholes, as has notoriously been done with key resolutions of the United Nations. Yet what this really means is that the EU translators, perhaps like those seventy-two divinely inspired Bible translators, may be looking more *backward* to their antecedents and *around* at the virtual presence of their colleagues and overseers, than *forward* toward their future readers. That is, the translators are working in terms of their institutional location rather than their personal provenance or target-language allegiance (we shall return to this soon). More, given the complex nature of text production in which there are strictly no originals

and no translations, no one translator (nor 'originator') can ever be individually responsible for a text. This is in accordance with the ideology of 'collective responsibility', a concept that transcends the translator's discursive anonymity in order to reach the heights of a faceless institution prepared to claim infallibility. And yet, hopefully, the resignation of the entire Santer Commission in 1999, in strict application of 'collective responsibility', will have some consequences for text production processes further down the line. Change may yet come on this issue.

Imperial Tongues?

Despite the institutional ideologies and necessary legal fictions, the construction of the European Union is a very real deployment of supra-national power, on a level that has few precedents. To place it in a very broad historical context, we should probably consider the EU as an empire, perhaps on a par with entities like the Persian, Roman, Austro-Hungarian, British or Soviet empires, which remained largely multicultural and multilingual even despite the imposition of strong lingua francas. Or we might compare it with the properly European tradition of the Holy Germanic Empire, a supranational structure subject to the whims of the stronger princes, functioning only as long as its head was a weak symbolic figure (give or take a few exceptions like Fredericus II Hohenstaufen and Jacques Delors). Empires can be relatively active or relatively passive, yet they traditionally maintain the multiculturalism historically suppressed by the western nation-state.

Considered in this perspective, what becomes very clear is that the EU, no matter what its public ideologies, has developed two huge lingua francas—English and French are indeed the main input languages—, and has done so within a commercial Europe that has effectively adopted just one, English. Just as the Middle Ages translated in terms of a hierarchy of languages based on relative proximity to God's word (Hebrew, Greek, sometimes Arabic, then Latin, and the vernaculars), we now work in terms of a pragmatic hierarchy that dare not speak its name: English, French, then, increasingly, German. Where would the list go after that? Input and output statistics from the Commission's Translation Service (1999: 11) show the remaining official languages on about a par, albeit with Spanish and Italian slightly ahead. Figures on the languages offered to translation students world-wide (Caminade & Pym 1995: 10) follow more or less the same hierarchy, with the next in line actually being non-EU languages such as Russian, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic... and western Europe does indeed have to communicate with the rest of the world (we shall return to this point later, too). Yet, strictly within the EU, the next rung on a more qualitative hierarchy would certainly be for the remaining official languages, selected and manipulated as an image of pluralism. After that, if we look hard, we find Irish and Luxembourgish (which, as national languages, theoretically have the right to be official EU tongues—Irish remains a treaty language). And if we look very hard we uncover Catalan, Welsh, Basque, Galician, Breton, Friulian... and any extension of the list becomes a dangerous exercise in political correctness. Further, there are grounds for considering non-indigenous languages like Turkish, Gujerati, Farsi or Arabic, spoken by immigrants to the EU who sometimes have access to none of the wider languages (and thus have more real need of translations). If we had enough fingers and toes to count on, the wider Europe might contain some 45 languages and major varieties (much

depends on what one wants to call a 'language' or a 'major variety'). Most of them are not official EU languages; they occupy the hidden lower rungs of the imperial language hierarchy.

I offer this view of contemporary imbalances in official language usage not especially to complain about the patent lack of equality (there is no sociolinguistic evidence to predict the long-term parallel survival of languages with equal social functions), nor even to suggest that the standing hierarchy will necessarily crush the poor little languages at the bottom of the heap (there is much sociolinguistic evidence that diglossia can be a long-term stable situation, with L languages emerging victorious). I merely wish to point to some of the political realities of the EU as a fundamentally weak empire, and to undermine the facile EU discourse on linguistic plurality as a European heritage. EU plurality only extends to highly privileged languages—the major national languages, in accordance with the Romantic fallacy that each nation has just one language—, and even then it does so in a very unequal way. Florian Coulmas saw the problem perceptively enough, back in the pre-Maastricht days: 'the European Community has been used by member states to defend their languages' privileged position rather than being given the chance to produce a language policy of its own' (1991: 8). That is, perhaps as in the Holy Germanic Empire, its use of languages has been an expression of the wealthier nationalisms rather than a substantial transcendence of the nation-state.

How Much?

The obvious reply here, on the part of EU policymakers, could be that 'you can't do everything'. Eleven languages is probably already more than enough; it is unreasonable to expect subsidies for huge translation flows into or from Europe's numerous lesser-used languages. And this is surely quite right: Coulmas (1991: 23) estimated that the language policy of the EC of 12 accounted for some 40% of the administrative budget (which means it was about 2% of the total budget), and there seem to be few reasons to downsize the estimate now (cf. Heynold 1994: 13). The reply is legitimate: no one can do everything. Yet that reply has several unnerving implications. For example, how will it be used when addressing the new Slavic and Finno-Ugric languages? Or again, if cost is indeed the constraint, why not just have one lingua franca for working purposes and then translate actual directives and regulations into all the 45 or so European languages? That is, why operate in terms of the illusion of equality rather than accept the wider imbalances of actual demand? Surely the latter option, regionalist rather than nationalist, would be more truly pluralist and democratic?

The question of price is by no means banal. And it need not be reduced to the terms of brute commerce.

Some time ago I argued, in a paper on 'Translation as a Transaction Cost' (1995b) and elsewhere (1997), that the resources invested in translation should not exceed that mutual benefit to result from the communication situation concerned. Just as two people tend not to waste time and energy talking to each other if there is no good to come of it for both of them (and pleasant gossip can give worthwhile results!), so we should not translate unless it is going to help the cause of cross-cultural cooperation (which requires both information and gossip). That argument has been unfairly misrepresented as ignoring the symbolic values of translation; it has been seen as an intrusion of brute commerce into the otherwise noble domain of culture. Koskinen even wants to

question the entire schema by positing that EU translations have what she terms an 'existential value', a value that they gain merely by existing, without having to be read or to communicate anything, since that very existence manifests (to whom?) the rights of the language involved. This is because many EU translations (how many?) do indeed remain unread. But does that mean symbolic values are then beyond price? Do notions like the defence of minor languages entirely escape the logic of cooperation? I think not. I suggest we should indeed recognize something like this 'existential value'—yes, many translations are being produced for which there is no demanding readership—and then calculate its cost. And if the cost can be reduced—rough machine translation is fine if there are no readers to complain—, then that should be done. And if the cost *cannot* be reduced, then we should seriously evaluate what we have bought for our money.

The logic of cooperation means that the *value* of symbolic language use can, in some circumstances, be reduced; it is not absolute. This could become important. If, for example, a new member state needs the EU much more than the EU needs that state, then complete symbolic use of the state's language(s) may not become a *sine qua non* of accession. Remember that new EU members will necessarily have less individual weight in a bigger club. They might thus be invited to choose, for instance, between certain financial subsidies and a certain language status. The question 'how much?' will then require some very hard answers. And one of the solutions may be a restructuring of the effective hierarchy of languages, abandoning the illusions of equality and introducing a few more rungs on the ladder.

In short, future accessions to the EU might require something more than fictive equality. By extension, the massive learning of lingua francas might be more appropriate than the training of new armies of translators.

Training for EU Translation

This brings us back to the example of Finnish. As in most cases, the recruitment of language professionals for the 1995 accession was more of a problem for interpreting than for written translation. According to Gambier (1996: 302-202), at the moment of the Finnish entry some 30 interpreters had to be found for the European Parliament, plus 20 for the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (better known by its French acronym SCIC). These interpreters were not to be found. So rapid training was undertaken, with predictably bad results. This was actually much the same story as the Spanish accession, when it was found that most graduates of 'Translation and Interpreting' did not have the necessary competence in conference interpreting.

Lesson one: Some mid-term planning is necessary.

The case of written translation is perhaps more interesting. Since Finland had at least four well-established translation schools at the time of accession, the required translators were indeed available. But that did not mean they had been prepared for the kind of work they were now called upon to carry out. Koskinen indicates that many of these graduates had received functionalist training (in rough accordance with *Handlungstheorie* and *Skopostheorie*), which meant they were used to adjusting textual structures to the demands of specific purposes and restricted readerships. Suddenly, transported to the realm of EU equivalence or deceptively parallel texts, they had to forget about all the enlightened theory; they had to translate in

accordance with precisely the kind of equivalence paradigm that some of their teachers had laboriously made them unlearn.

The problems of training depend very much on each national situation. In a typically incisive aside, Dollerup notes what is at stake in countries with no solid background in translator training: 'Greece and Portugal lost—and are still losing—the linguistic battle which is also ultimately a battle for political power in the EU, in their own classrooms' (1996: 310). When competent and trustworthy translators are hard to find, the symbolic values of new official languages become correspondingly harder to defend. In this respect, the lessons to be learnt are much the same as those to be gleaned from the problem of finding interpreters.

However, the massive production of translators is not an ideal solution either. To cite an exceptional case, Spain at the end of the millennium now has some 27 universities involved in translator training at one level or another, and almost 7,000 students engaged in these studies at any one moment. The resulting overproduction of mediocre graduates (plus some very good ones) effectively fattens the *non-*professional labour market; it fails to satisfy employer demands at the highly specialized end of the market; it thus risks undermining the public trust placed in good professionals. This risk is likely to increase in a market or institutional complex where relatively opaque languages are concerned.

Lesson two: Translator training should be a restricted undertaking.

No matter what the actual situation, the EU institutions tend not to trust endemic national training programmes for translators. This can be seen on several levels. For example, the Translation Service has its own traineeship programme; its recruitment system does not require any external qualification in Translation or Interpreting (in fact, quite legitimately, the preference is often for someone trained in a non-linguistic field of specialization); the staff translators tend to mistrust or look down upon some of the external freelance translators that are also employed.

With respect to interpreting, the more pronounced shortage of properly qualified professionals has probably been behind a change of approach. The SCIC abandoned its in-house training activities (cf. Heynold 1994) in favour of cooperation with a few highly selected academic institutions. In 1998 it provided 'experienced interpreter trainers' to some 27 university programmes; it provided subsidies to some 14 universities so that an 'EU dimension' could be added to existing courses; and seven training institutions are now involved alongside the SCIC in a European Masters in Conference Interpreting.

The SCIC's decision to cooperate with existing training programmes should be viewed positively. After all, if good professionals are hard to find, it is logical to create an elitist *esprit de corps*, to set in place the conditions for the future training of professionals, and to take steps to counter the proliferation of poorly trained sub-professionals. The EU has had to create a professional caste of interpreters, and it needs to ensure appropriate conditions for the controlled reproduction of that caste.

Yet one should not underestimate the effect of selecting just a handful of the 140 or so translator-training institutions in western Europe. This must inevitably create not just an image of elitism—undoubtedly a necessary image—but also the impression that the EU—especially the SCIC—is the source of all knowledge in this field. For various reasons—most notably that fact that there is a shortage of interpreters but not of translators—such illusions are unlikely to dominate the general field of translator training. The rest of Europe has no firm ground for

supposing that EU translation practices—with their bundle of ideological necessities and equivalence theories, potentially revamped as 'best practices'—are any kind of model for all translation practices.

This is largely why I have argued above that, thanks to cultural diversity, there cannot be any one model for such things at the moment. I might equally argue that valid knowledge in the field of translation and interpreting comes from empirical research, from the study of history, from theoretical reflection, from successful performance in the open marketplace, from experimentation in the classroom, in short, from many sources other than long-term survival in a centralized bureaucracy.

Alternatively, I might point to developments at the top end of the commercial translation market, where the very term 'translation' is being challenged by more generalized figures of the 'intercultural management assistant', the 'language service provider', the 'localizer', or more benignly, the 'multi-tasking translator'. In domains such as information technology, marketing and international consulting, translators are regularly being called upon to do more than translate. And they are being paid much more than traditional translators, more even than those translators comfortably ensconced in EU expertise. More technically, what is being challenged in the open market is the eminently biblical belief that the translator should neither add nor take away (cf. Duet. 4: 2; 12:32; Rev. 22: 18-19). New professions are being created where intermediaries can indeed add and take away from source materials, and must indeed bear personal responsibility for the result. If we train translators only in view of EU norms, we risk blinding our students to the wider changes that are taking place.

If the same EU institutions become actively involved in programmes to train *teachers* of interpreting or translation, they could eventually exercise indirect control over the training of interpreters and translators in the whole of Europe. (For reasons given above, this is far more likely to concern interpreting than written translation, but still:) To counter such idealization of the largest scriptorium in the world—in the interests of real cultural diversity and market developments—the academic and commercial domains should be recognized for their own specific strengths.

There are thus some reasons why academics and EU experts might mistrust each other in this field (as indeed they tend to do). And even better reasons why both parties should cooperate and try to learn from what is happening at the top end of the commercial language-services market.

The Creation of an Interculture?

One of the main differences between the expertise of academics and that of EU translation specialists is that the former is dispersed throughout any number of institutions whereas the latter is geopolitically concentrated in a visible if variable centre. As they are trained by academics then employed by the EU, translators move from one kind of space to the other. And this process of relative concentration may have bizarre and interesting effects.

Staff translators, located in the European institutions, should, in theory, eventually develop a form of professional collective identity to the point where they are seriously distanced from the languages and cultures they theoretically went there to defend. Dollerup notes that a certain degree of linguistic interference is inevitable since these translators 'are under a linguistic barrage in their

work and they live in Francophone society (Brussels, Strasbourg [and Luxembourg])' [and they develop] 'a language for special purposes, namely EU negotiations which is often impenetrable to outsiders' (1996: 306). As this process goes on, we may hope to witness the formation of an 'interculture', understood here as a group with a sense of belonging and a professional function defined in terms of the intersections of territorial cultures. According to neo-functionalist political theory, the supranational cultural group thus created can accrue effective power to the point where it is more than the sum of its parts. This means that the new interculture—in this case the social institution of in-house EU translators—can then set about influencing national languages and national training programmes, at least at the levels with which they are directly in contact. In effect, just as the European Court has gained enough power to rule against its constitutive nation-states— or the monster challenges its makers—, translators can turn against their former masters.

Thus might an imperial identity be created from within. Thus might EU institutions truly transcend the nation-state. The bureaucracies in intercultural space are indeed gaining in effective power, since their decisions become so specialized and so complex that no external group can effectively control them. And translators could well be part of that developing power group, if they want. Further, if they can develop some kind of intercultural identity and ethics, if they can achieve something slightly richer and more inspiring than collective anonymity and paternalistic expertise, that developing interculture may even offer hope for a supranational future.

In case my own position is not clear here, let me confess that I am very much in favour of European unification and I have great hope for the future of EU institutions. Yet the EU I want is not just a mechanism for harmonizing differences. I would also like to belong to an empire than can speak and act as such on the world stage. To that extent, I am very concerned about the relation between communicative efficiency and power, about the ideological capacity of bureaucracies to look outward rather than inward, and about the point at which language policy, in order to communicate with the world beyond Europe, will indeed limit the number of tongues available for that purpose.

In all the EU hype there is an eerie absence of any developed discourse about the problems of communications with the world beyond the EU.

Questions for Experts

As chance would have it (but what is chance?), I am currently negotiating the brief for a book to be written by members of the European Commission's Translation Service, basically in order to tell students and teachers what to expect. As might now be clear, I would like the authors of that future book to be a little critical of their institutional employer. But I know there are limits to how far they can go down that path. They are professionally obliged to speak on behalf of the institution, in accordance with the ethics of shared responsibility. So should we then publish a purely promotional text about EU translation practices? No, what is needed is perhaps a realistic text about some of the problems that future translators are likely to be confronted with. And if the institutional authors cannot make criticisms, they are nevertheless perfectly willing to answer a few. Such is the spirit in which, under guise of conclusion, I attempt to condense the above considerations into a short series of questions for experts:

• Do the strategies and drafting processes used for legal discourse tend to provide a model for all text production? In other words, are the same translation practices used for all text functions? If not, what are the decisive criteria? Is there an operative text typology?

• Given that different cultures have different expectations about translation, should the same translation practices be used for all cultures? More exactly, are specific readerships (class, age, ethnic or linguistic background) taken into account by translators? Are those readerships known?

• To what extent do translation strategies influence the public perception of the EU? Do we know anything about the variables concerned?

• If linguistic pluralism is the goal, why not translate into *all* the languages used in Europe? If not, are we not simply repressing stateless languages?

• If translation is needed for the creation of symbolic values, how many resources should be spent on those values? How could we assess the upper limit of those resources?

• What percentage of the translated pages remain unread?

• Do EU translators work in the name of their languages and cultures, or is there an EU interculture? When the crunch comes, which way do professionals decide? Which way should they decide? Which way do the younger intermediaries decide?

• Do EU translators have the power to add to or take away from the texts they work on? More exactly, beyond the realm of legally binding texts and the like, are translators also employed as active rewriters? Should they be so employed?

• Is the professional vision of translators inward toward the intercultural institution, or outward toward receivers who are not in intercultural positions?

• Why is so little said about language policy in the field of relations between the EU and the rest of the world? What languages will we speak beyond our imperial borders?

The answers, I'm afraid, are strictly 'forthcoming'.

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