



Streetcorner, 19th century, Copenhagen, Denmark

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**ISSUES TODAY: CHALLENGES FOR TOMORROW
TRANSLATION AND ENGLISH AS THE INTERNATIONAL LINGUA
FRANCA**

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As we approach the 21st century, we feel that in the last fifty years many scholarly disciplines in the humanities have, as it were, been hit by seismic tremors and must be viewed from new perspectives.¹ This also goes for translation studies.

The 20th century saw the birth of translation as an academic field of study in its own right. First, there was the foundation of the schools of translation and interpreting in Geneva and Vienna around 1940 although initially these merely served as institutionalised apprenticeships for people seeking subsequent careers as free-lance professionals and jobs at international organisations. Gradually, there

was an emergence of teachers of translation who would, obliged by student demands (or rather needs), call for an academically acceptable background for teaching (principles and theories). The major step towards the establishment of translation as an *academic pursuit* was Eugene Nida's *Toward a science of translation* (1964). However, albeit unrecognised at the time, the crucial step forward in *social and political status* was taken at the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Union (1952) since it was this body which came to form the basis of the European Communities where the languages of the four Member States were recognised as official languages into which legally binding documents must be translated: Dutch, French, German, Italian (not to be confused with the two 'working languages', namely French and German). This policy was formalised and confirmed at a Council of Ministers in 1958. It was put to the real test and implemented for good, the moment when the then Common Market in Europe decided to add English and Danish in 1973 with its first expansion.ⁱⁱ I consider this a //...84//turning point for a variety of reasons: (a) this was the first time that a political body accepted the use of 'languages of limited diffusion' with minimal international impact (henceforth: minor languages), on a par with major languages in international negotiations; (b) the decision eventually led to the large-scale employment of translators and interpreters who would discuss their work with peers (mostly inside the institution); (c) their produce was used by delegates and politicians who therefore came to regard language work as a necessary tool; and (d) the number of full-time jobs eventually increased so much (2,000+) that it attracted the attention of professional schools as a potential work-place for their graduates. I believe this was a policy adopted by happenstance for the simple reason that nobody could possibly predict the long-term consequences in terms of language policy. If anybody had done so, our world might have looked totally different - presumably more divisive and antagonistic, but this is only a guess.

The picture drawn is largely Eurocentric, because this is my area of expertise. Nevertheless, I suggest that elsewhere many features are the same, either ahead or behind in the establishment of the main elements that will affect language work in the future, namely, (a) the recognition of the rights of minor languages, (b) the academic study of translation, (c) the visibility of translation workers, and (d) the political awareness of the importance of language work in general.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the global language scene must seem simple to the average Anglophone Briton, Canadian, and American, since English (British and American) has, almost overnight, become the universally accepted and unchallenged 'lingua franca' with the demise of the former Soviet Union (1989-1991). Yet under the surface there is considerable complexity, and this is the topic I shall address below using the concepts of 'dominant languages' vs 'lingua francas',

oral vs written languages, horizontal vs vertical movements, as well as national and international issues.

Defining the terms for languages in the present lecture, I start with the fact most human beings are born in a country the language of which they accept as their 'mother tongue', and which is part of their linguistic, cultural, national, and historical identity. In the life of the individual, all other languages are related to this beginning.

However, in the individual's *international* communication, the most important distinction is between a 'foreign language' and a 'lingua franca'. A foreign language is just a mother tongue other than one's own, whereas a lingua franca is a foreign tongue which is *also* widely recognised as a means for communicating with people from other language communities, including non-native speakers of the lingua franca. In order to make some general and crucial points which also //... 85//apply to the global role of English today, I shall distinguish between a 'dominant' language, defined as a language which is somehow or other imposed on a language community, and a 'lingua franca' which is learned by non-natives for other reasons, be it travelling, learning, trade and the like.ⁱⁱⁱ The distinction is handy and applies to most cases without any problem.

But there is much overlap: in epochs and regions with only one option for a 'lingua franca' (e. g. the European clergy in the Middle Ages, Sanskrit for Indian Brahmins), this lingua franca is also the dominant language. In the course of history there may be changes in the status of a language. The main difference between a lingua franca and dominant language being that the latter is imposed, it is typically the language of power, administration, information, and religion. In the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Russian was the dominant language imposed on all states under Soviet influence. This was resented in the formerly independent nations of Eastern Europe and consequently Russian lost its recruitment of learners with the end of the Soviet hegemony (although it is, undoubtedly, in for a future renaissance for reasons of trade and Realpolitik). In Central Asia, where the regional 'republics' would comprise ethnic groups with different languages, it was readily embraced as the lingua franca and continues to be so to this day.

As European nations conquered territories overseas, they exported their languages: Portuguese became the dominant language in Brazil, and Spanish in the rest of Latin America. But at some point these dominant languages turned into national languages, each with its subtle characteristics, so that today Spanish is at one and the same time a number of national languages and also functions as the lingua franca for the Spanish-speaking world. English became the dominant language for the British administration in the British Empire and in its colonies. With independence, the predominantly Anglo-Saxon countries retained English as their national language (Australia, New Zealand, USA). Other countries with large

groups of non-English speaking European immigrants slowly officially accepted the coexistence of two languages of European origin (South Africa in 1910 with Dutch and in 1925, when Afrikaans supplanted Dutch; Canada with French in 1969). Others again, such as Malay, have been struggling with local varieties of English and even standard English (Bidin 1995). Others have retained English as a national lingua franca to keep together peoples who speak different mother tongues (Nigeria (see Anyaehie 1994: 19)), or perhaps tried to impose yet another language in the country, a national language, in an attempt to do away with English: In India, Hindi is used for national politics, radio, television, and movies (Mohanty 1994: 22)).//...86//

Beyond the European languages there is even more complexity. Thus many Arab people will insist that they speak one and the same language, namely Arabic, from Morocco to Iraq. However, in today's world, many speakers of Arabic find it difficult to understand each other, even when we discount the existence of other languages in the Arab world, such as Berber in Morocco and Algeria and Kurdish in (mostly) Iraq. Yet most films in the Arab world are dubbed in Egyptian, which means that Egyptian is clearly influencing other spoken varieties of Arabic in terms of oral norms. Conversely, religious Muslims hold that the Koran is untranslatable if it is to retain its character as a sacred work, thus essentially maintaining a linguistic central point for speakers of Arabic countries in the written (and less flexible) language. Thus the written language therefore becomes the dominant language to the exclusion of all others in the religious life of Muslims (and Arab speakers) and forms the basis of the lingua franca of the educated elite (Modern Standard Arabic or Educated Spoken Arabic). Accordingly it is not surprising that it is held that when a book is translated into Arabic in Morocco, this amounts to publication in all Arab countries. For translators, the fragmentation around the central core is painfully obvious since there is no uniformity in Arab terminology and even a simple word like 'computer' has at least four 'equivalents' (Mneimneh 1997, gives a brief survey of Arabic).

China boasts of the largest population in the world (1.3 thousand million), but they do not all 'speak Chinese'. Even though it may be true that there are 500 million speakers of Han Chinese, there are at several major dialects which are not mutually intelligible.^{iv} In modern China, Mandarin (the Beijing dialect) is the Standard Chinese propagated in education; in this way it is the dominant oral language. Simultaneously it is the mother tongue of people speaking pure Mandarin and the oral lingua franca of those who have learnt to master it. Written Chinese, however, is common to all, and therefore it is, in turn, the written mother tongue of all Chinese.^v The Chinese situation is singularly complex in terms of linguistics; at first glance, it thus seems that there are few loanwords in Chinese if one goes by the pronunciation (of e.g. 'sofa', 'gene'); in fact there are more, which are often

unrecognised because once a word has been loaned in one region, it is transcribed into the common ideographic and pictographic Chinese signs which is pronounced in different ways in various regions. The moment a word has been committed to writing, it may therefore be realised orally in such a way that it cannot be recognised as a loan. Translation work in China is to a large degree dictated by the dominant language, Mandarin: few translators in areas using the other dialects master Mandarin to perfection - the translators from the //... 87// Beijing region have an edge. For instance, Hong Kong translators (who use Cantonese) must content themselves with being the experts in translating out of Chinese.

السلام عليكم

'Hello' in Arabic

Arabic and Chinese illustrate the importance of the written language as a central core for linguistic communication along an important axis (horizontal or vertical), in order to have a common religious or cultural repository which, in principle, is accessible to all. In the course of the 20th century, the relationship between writing and the script, the alphabet has changed in many languages. To take one example, Turkish switched from the Arabic alphabet to a modified version of the Latin alphabet under Atatürk in the 1920s. In Uzbekistan (which uses another Turkic language), getting a new alphabet has been the order of the day in the 20th century: the elitist Tajik was in the process of being replaced with some kind of standard Uzbek at the time of the Soviet Revolution. A simplified Arabic alphabet was introduced in 1923. This was replaced with the Latin alphabet (1927-34) which underwent some changes until it was replaced with the Russian alphabet in the early 1940s. As of 1995, the newly independent state decided to replace this Cyrillic alphabet with a modified form of Turkic over a five-year period. Linguistically the switch from the Cyrillic letters makes for a better approximation to pronunciation (since Uzbek uses a modified form of Turkish diacritical letters). The introduction of the first Latin alphabet coincided with the successful Soviet effort to wipe out illiteracy completely. Overall, there is no doubt that the 1995 switch in the alphabet will promote westernisation, but it jettisons part of the cultural heritage and it also predictably creates 'secondary illiteracy', where some people are literate only in one - the old, the outdated - alphabet. This poses problems at the individual level for audiences, for translators and for communication in general. Similar changes are being undertaken elsewhere in former Soviet states in Central Asia.

The relationship between the written and oral language is yet another parameter to be taken into account: many nations which have come into existence in the 20th century did not previously have a stable, written language. The

orthographies of these new languages are largely phonetic and close to oral pronunciation, so there is no problem for native speakers in spelling and for foreign learners in pronunciation. German spelling follows the 'Bühnensprache' (or vice versa) and may present a problem for speakers of German dialects but normally not for people learning German as a foreign language. This standard German, which has a tolerably close relation between pronunciation and spelling, and calls only for minor revisions, is centuries old, but works because German national unity is a recent phenomenon, hardly more than a hundred years old. // ...88//

Conversely, languages whose orthography were established in the 15th or 16th centuries and whose oral versions have developed since then, such as English and Danish, pose formidable barriers to the unwary learner who essentially has to grapple with two, not one, foreign language. Spelling and even grammar are difficult even for natives. Much translation work into English is undertaken by non-native speakers; it is striking how proficiency of either of the two systems may far surpass the other. For example, it is not unheard of for Scandinavian language professionals to have a good oral mastery but fall short of the expected written performance - or for Chinese translators, to do excellent written translations but to be nearly incomprehensible in speaking.

Throughout history, there have been lingua francas in Europe, but their importance is often exaggerated. In the Middle Ages, Latin was the lingua franca of the clerics, the scholars and the clerks. In trade, Low German - and pidgin varieties - had a wide circulation in northern Europe since the time of the Hanseatic league (13th century). French became the lingua franca in 18th century Europe and dominated in most international cooperation in Europe until the middle of the 20th (diplomacy, the postal services, etc.). The point to note is that these lingua francas were used in well-defined domains and social strata and domains which cut horizontally through different societies, by traders, or by religious, cultural, social or political elites. They never affected entire nations vertically, from top to bottom.

As mentioned, English spread in the wake of colonisation; so did Spanish, French and to some extent German. Despite the fact that only English and Spanish are major languages internationally, the serious battle for domination in today's international scene is largely confined to these European languages, although virtually all countries include an ever increasing range of foreign languages in teaching programmes. The domination of European languages is odd, and may of course change in the 21st century, where we may expect to see, for instance Chinese and Japanese. As far as the European languages are concerned, however, we see the following picture:

German began losing ground when it was stripped of its overseas dominions (e.g., South West Africa, Kenya) after World War I, and radically reduced after its defeat in World War II. Today the cause of the German language is promoted discreetly and steadfastly, most obviously so by the ‘Goethe Institut’, by means of the invitation of scholars (students) of German to Germany, by placements of German scholars abroad, and by generous donations of books, educational hardware and software to institutions teaching German (this often means that small German language departments own the best equipment in the humani-// ...89// ties at many third-world universities). The German sphere of influence is also determined geopolitically. It is most marked in parts of the Old Prussian and Austrian-Hungarian Empire (former Communist Yugoslavia,^{vi} Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Poland and Ukraine).

The French effort is more visible: ‘l’Académie française’ (founded in 1634) functions as the guide of correct French usage, the ‘l’Institut Français’ promotes French and there is a ‘service culturel’ in out of the way places. French language policy is directed by a Parisian-based body of 80-100 experts, and goes hand in hand with both foreign trade (‘là où on parle français on achète français’)⁷ and foreign policy, most obviously so in the French military interventions in former, but still Francophone, colonies in Africa (Gabon, Senegal, etc. (Zaire used to be a Belgian colony)). French has lost ground with younger generations in the ‘near abroad’ (Italy, Spain), but not in distant parts of the former empire.^{vii} In certain countries and regions, French is the lingua franca. Yet as presently executed, the French language promotion is rigid and fails to properly understand the difference between the imposed dominant language and the voluntarily accepted lingua franca: The anti-Franglais policy may make for an official, pure, predominantly written French versus an unofficial, predominantly oral French with international loans among the younger generations even in France, thus undermining it from within.



The Academie Française, Paris, France

English is on the upswing internationally. However, the establishment of English as a lingua franca did not come about until the latter half of the 20th century, although it was certainly the dominant language in the British Empire, and consequently the lingua franca after the colonies gained independence. I have discussed the spread of English as a lingua franca in more detail elsewhere (Dollerup

1996), but the main points are as follows: internationally French dominated in the first half of the 20th century in, for instance, the diplomatic domain, whereas German was strong in the domain of basic research. The Nazi regime exiled important scientists. Research and development moved to the US where its triumph was spectacularly demonstrated in the explosion of the nuclear bomb in 1945. Within ten years of this event, basic research and technology was dominated by English-language publications. From the perspective of language, the allied forces during World War I were largely uncoordinated national armies, whereas World War II was fought largely by coordinated Anglophone forces and under a unified Anglophone command. European goodwill towards things British and American (from chewing gum to language) was ensured in the countries liberated from Nazi rule. Riding on the wave of gratitude, English became the favoured 'easy-to-learn' foreign language in northern Europe overnight, whereas // ... 90// German was all of a sudden 'difficult' because of its complicated grammar. The diffusion of television with subtitling in minor speech communities in Europe in the 1950s (e. g., Belgium, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries), and the emergence of an independent youth culture inspired by the American Beat Movement in the late 1950s and 1960s, with its consequent Anglo-phone songs (the Beatles, Elvis Presley, the Doors), contributed to the increased diffusion and (possibly) knowledge of English. French held sway in Mediterranean Europe until 1970-1975, coinciding with the entry of the UK into the European Community. Today it is the first foreign language in only Portugal and Luxembourg (Quell 1997:71).

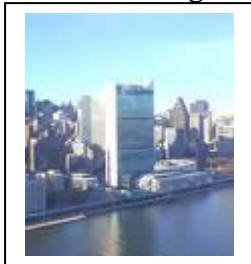
In the former Communist world, most nations have at some stage or another had Russian as the first foreign language, as the dominant language, or as the lingua franca. But there is no uniform picture. In Russia itself, English has 'always' been the first foreign language (competing with German). As part of Communist Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia hardly had any large-scale Russian teaching because of Tito's early break with Stalin in 1948. Yet geography and history dictated that in the Balkan nations, German also had to be taught extensively. The People's Republic of China severed its ideological and close ties with Russia, but because of the Cultural Revolution's stranglehold on all teaching (1966-1976), it was not until President Nixon started the process of normalisation with China that English became the first foreign language. The unquestioned command position of English is thus of 'old' standing (that is of more than 20 years) in Russia, Poland, Slovenia, and China.

But it is very recent, as of 1989-1991, in other places such as the Newly Independent States, the relics of the Soviet Union.

Worldwide there is an incredible surge of interest in learning English in order to use it as a lingua franca to get in contact with other nations.

At this point I feel that it is necessary to emphasise that most scholars and virtually all native speakers of English fail to grasp the fundamental distinction between English as a lingua franca versus a dominant language in the eyes of non-

native speakers: non-native speakers do not learn English in order to come under the domination of some benign Anglo-American rule, but in order to communicate with peers in the world at large, no matter whether these are from countries where English is the mother tongue or taught as a foreign language. Of course, it is laudable and important that scholars like Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas expose Anglophone people in high political positions who believe that the voluntarily acquired lingua franca can be used as a tool for domination in terms of politics, trade, and culture. Although I understand this attitude, I also find that it springs from ignorance and insensitivity, and I do not sympathise // ... 91// with it. My support for the propagation of English springs from the conviction that, given the realities of this world, it is, at present at least, the best means for promoting basic human rights.



United Nations Headquarters, New York

Returning to the problems confronting *English language teaching* as a first step in the creation of the basis for translation, there are many countries in which there has not been a slow and careful establishment of a teaching infrastructure for the extensive teaching of English now in demand, and there is a crying need for qualified teachers. In Hungary, teachers of Russian were retrained to become English teachers and thus at least technically made for more pedagogically trained staff. Previously similar processes apparently took place in Slovenia and China, and Uzbekistan has seen some small-scale attempts at intensive courses for language teachers. Yet most former East bloc countries have not changed their old government regulations that the teaching of the first (second/third) foreign language courses must be introduced at a specified stage in the school system. So, since there is a shortage of English teachers, students in many countries (e.g., Hungary, Poland, and Uzbekistan) are obliged to learn whatever foreign language the teachers know - normally German, Russian, or (occasionally) French. Free market economy, however, allows private initiative to set up schools or courses. In Poland, private schools catering to language learners are mushrooming (often with staff from secondary or tertiary educational systems). In Uzbekistan, I have visited a language school where teachers could hardly speak English, but their students were highly motivated and delighted with whatever instruction they got. In a provincial town in China on the trekker route, I came across an enterprising school manager who operated a highly successful course - trekkers were offered free board and lodging in exchange for their teaching English at his establishment. Wherever I go, I have observed expatriate English speakers offering English conversation to students for a fee in cafeterias and in student canteens.



Teaching English to Chinese children

One relevant parameter is whether governments are aware of the need to boost the effort to learn foreign languages. For instance, in Poland and in Slovenia there seems to be a significant awareness in the Ministries of Education, and they therefore cooperate with foreign bodies. Conversely, Hungary saw severe staff cuts at universities because of stringency measures (1995), which is perhaps understandable from a financial perspective. Until then, the World Bank had poured money into upgrading foreign language teaching. Incredibly enough, Hungarian politicians and bureaucrats did not include modern language teaching in the priority areas with international assistance programmes (EU or US) in order to lessen the blow when there was no more World Bank support. This is, at best, a case of // ... 92// poor foresight and, of course, also evidence of naive political and bureaucratic beliefs that language command is something static which you acquire once and for all. Although the case of Hungary is most conspicuous, similar patterns are repeating themselves on a smaller scale over most of the East bloc. As far as I know, there is no officially recognised need for foreign language teaching in China.^{viii}

It stands to reason that with the general internationalisation, the demand for translation is enormous, and that everybody with a smattering of foreign language is called upon to interpret and translate: sometimes they are ordered to do so, but it may also be that they are the only ones who can mediate between interlocutors and are therefore pressured into service. Language students and students with experience from stays abroad are in high demand. The point to note

is that in many nations where English is catapulted into the role of the lingua franca which must be learnt, it is not the translators and the interpreters who define the nature of the marketable goods. It is the market which creates and defines interpreters and translators and their services.

The linguistic relationship of the mother tongue to English is important. West Europeans have a Germanic or Romance language background and numerous international loanwords in common, thus easing their interlingual communication, and - for the non-natives - the acquisition of English. Russians, Poles, and Slovenes can approach English as a first foreign language. Their Slavonic mother tongues are also Indo-European, but not as close to English as are Dutch and the Scandinavian languages. Hungarians and Finns must tackle the Indo-European language system and often have substantial problems. The barriers are formidable to speakers from most other nations, witness Chinese and Uzbek, because in these communities speakers often have to be bilingual before they can start learning English: Most Chinese have been brought up with a non-Mandarin dialect and must then learn Mandarin before they can tackle English. Ethnic Uzbeks (and other Central Asians) will still have to learn Russian before they can tackle English. Of course, these scenarios are changing, but this is a slow process.

In some states, especially in Central Europe, purism looms large: It turns out that even when they were Yugoslavians, Croats and especially Slovenes actively resisted 'foreign' language influence from their Yugoslav compatriots. Now they uphold rigid norms for correct language usage: in Slovene schools many native Slovene students fail strict exams in language usage; in television, Slovene subtitles are censored by linguists who see to it that the Slovene is correct (but not whether the subtitling adequately renders the source text). Croatians, Czechs, and Slovaks are insisting on their separate identity in accordance with official // ... 93// policies. Poland has no official policy, Uzbekistan is trying to recover the Uzbek language as new faculties of Uzbek are established in lieu of the former faculties of Russian; this is not unproblematic, for the Uzbek ethnic majority is in the process of establishing Uzbek as the dominant language among the other ethnic minorities in the nation. Hungarian has a high degree of state-supported purism, with television programmes aimed at instilling correct language usage. Purism, of course, is not new under the sun, as it has been (largely successfully) in operation in Iceland since Norse times.^{ix} But the blatant state promotion of language identity is new and reflected in other ways: in Hungary, foreign language material in the mass-media is dubbed (or voiced-over), whereas most other of the above-mentioned nations simply do not have the resources to do more than a simple voice-over.^x

Purism is tied in with the identity of the mother tongue (namely as something different from any other language), with political power, and with nationalism. It also relates to 'the right to speak one's own language'. To jaded

Central European interpreters and translators, it was a shock all of a sudden to meet with demands for specific Czech, Slovak, Bosnian and Serbian interpreting and translation from clients who used to be happy with shared Czech and Slovak interpreting and translation services, and with combined Bosnian and Serbian ones. It demands only a small degree of 'linguistic flexibility' for the recipients to understand 'the other' language perfectly. At first glance these are political and murky waters, but there are parallels elsewhere. Englishmen and Americans normally use a common interpreting booth in international organisations and at international meetings. Danes, Swedes and Norwegians whose languages are mutually intelligible, do not object to a common booth at, say conferences in trade unions, but they vociferously object to such booths at the European Union institutions. The opposition in this last case is due to politics versus pragmatics: once interpreting and translation are outside the political limelight, users are more tolerant. In practice (pragmatics), the European institutions which are geared towards down-to-earth work and consist of permanent staff and national experts and delegates flown in from the Member States function with three 'working languages' (French, German, English); this goes for most meetings at the Commission and its adjunct bodies. It is in the politicised bodies, notably the European Parliament (and sometimes at the Council of Ministers), that politicians insist on the right to be heard and to be understood in all the eleven official languages (Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish).^{xi}

I suggest that another parameter is whether the users of languages have 'recently', i.e. sometime in the 20th century, had to bow to an external dominant //... 94// language: this would explain the jitters among Czechs, Slovaks, and Hungarians. Actual war that between Bosnians and Serbians.



Pragmatic communication

The fact that in pragmatic situations, any linguistic middleman will do (at least in a scrape), means that in the foreseeable future the language professions will have problems in defining themselves as professional, not universally, and not in all contexts, but yet in quite a few. They will not do away with 'non-professionals' by merely sneering at them. I believe that a constructive approach to non-professionals will be wisest: In most societies there will be foreign languages, the knowledge of which is so peripheral that even if one person was given all the translation work from and into that language, she would not earn a living. No Dane could feed herself, however frugally, by translating between, say,

Yoruba (in Nigeria) and Danish, so why not accept that this is 'non-professional' territory?

Such acceptance will not pose a threat to the status, the quality, and the professionalism of language work in between those languages with sufficient work for translators and interpreters to make a living. This course can be pursued in various ways and at different levels simultaneously, notably if it is internationally differentiated and consequently adapted to different societies and different definitions of 'status', 'quality', and 'professionalism'.

I suggest that it is important that language workers are not blind to social and political realities and take them into account in their efforts to improve the 'status', the 'quality', and the 'profession'.

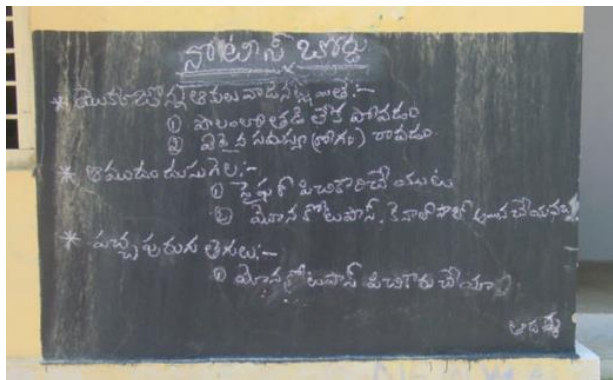
As I see it, professional bodies should pay heed to basics: For most people, careers in translation start with language acquisition, and there is an often ignored but nevertheless obvious overlap between foreign language learning and translation work: even professionals are not perfect, and they can still continue to learn new things about the languages they work with. This awareness should be conveyed to language *teachers* so that they take care to teach learners of a foreign language first and foremost to master their own mother tongue. If future translators are not made cognizant of the importance of the linguistic characteristics of their own A-language, they will often as professional translators, undermine the identity of their own language by usage of interlanguage features which are not loyal to its nature, and hence potentially dangerous to its continued existence. Secondly, the teachers should then focus on teaching the foreign language, stressing its characteristics in the teaching. Although in most cases it is English, in many nations and even domains, it is Hindi, German, French, and Spanish - or some other language.

The most tangible problems in foreign language teaching are found in developing nations and in the former Communist countries. Foreign language knowledge can be promoted in many ways, but it is a prerequisite to be conscious of the implications of specific procedures and their long-term impact.

Having students in immersion courses in target cultures is, for instance, fruitful to individuals. They return cognizant of the target language and become, for instance, language experts in joint ventures and industry, much to their own benefit, but of little relevance to their societies as such. Similarly, it is a fine human gesture for the visitor from Australia, North America, and Europe to leave books, writing pads, and transparencies, but in the long run it has limited impact.

In order for measures to be efficient and have substantial impact, they must be supported by governmental or international bodies and assistance programmes (the US, the European Union), for the problems are daunting and beyond the capability of the individual visitor: in the former East bloc and in the

third world, English and other foreign language teachers are battling with such concrete problems as shortages of textbooks and dictionaries, so that several classes frequently share only one. There are also shortages of blackboards, and even when these are available and in working order, then there is no chalk. There are no overhead projectors, no fancy video equipment, and (if any at all) language laboratories using old-fashioned large tapes which demand that individual teachers call upon a technician for help. When such things are available, for instance, thanks to the intervention of the German embassy, the scanty equipment is often kept under lock and key. The latter is frequently in the possession of an alcoholic janitor, nowhere to be found. It is a major cultural problem that when help is offered many requests for new equipment are unrealistic in the sense that the receiving institution has no staff to master a pentium computer, a language laboratory, the intricacies of a multicolour photocopying machine; there is no thought of maintenance, and there are often no possibilities of getting the right cartridges and toners when the originals are empty. Bureaucrats far from the scene of the battle do not have the expertise to realise that sending in state-of-the art equipment may be an utter waste of money.



Language professionals, teachers and translators, do play a role here because they can mediate between reality and the way money is spent. In my projects, receiving institutions are told that staff can be updated and that they will get used equipment in working order - in quantities which they cannot keep under lock and key, and must therefore be made accessible to all staff, as well as a sizeable number of students - not only to the dean and the rector. True, some institutions will consider it insulting not to be given one or two brand-new machines, even when they know that these machines are so expensive that no further acquisitions will be possible within the budget, and the donor knows that the equipment is //... 96//often doomed to be used so sparingly as to be worth nothing. If so, that's the end of the discussion, since a continued talk will only further the impression that something is foisted off on recipients. Other institutions accept the offers at face value and get equipment which serves the long-term goal of familiarising more people with modern equipment.

It is useless to discuss new ways of command, to try and convince people in face-to-face debates that it is pedagogically sound to let the students think - just for ten seconds - before the teacher demands an answer, and that immediate response calls for rote learning. It is a waste of time to try to convince directors and heads of departments in strongly hierarchal states that delegation is good. These ideas must be demonstrated in more subtle ways: by sending staff on training visits, where they are presented with other methods than their own, which they are encouraged to adapt for use at home - but not told slavishly to imitate; by setting up alternative systems of command that do not challenge the existing ones, but just offer another way of doing things (and by being less time-consuming);^{xiii} by encouraging communication among all participants in a programme, independent of their status; by providing name tags and lists of participants at meetings, and providing students at any course with a list of the other participants' addresses and telephone numbers; and by publishing an ever so modest news sheet which gives everybody involved the feeling that they are kept abreast of developments. It requires insight into local needs and hard work, and frequently also tact and diplomacy.

Direct exposure to the foreign language taught is important: self study units open for long hours are probably better than boring classes in language laboratories with teachers who cannot figure out what buttons to press. Videos and films from cultural, educational, tourist and export institutions are often available. A native speaker is a godsend, but volunteers are quite often young and nearly always inexperienced in pedagogics, like the trekkers in China I mentioned above, and most of the 'foreign language' teachers of the Peace Corps I have come across.



Yunan, China. A backtracker teacher's paradise

But what version of the target language should be taught? With German and French there is no problem. In Spanish, 'el castellano' still has some status. Within the English-speaking world there is a confusing array of 'correct' languages: Australian, New Zealand, South African, Canadian, American and British English. Each of these has its own dialects and sociolects. Received Standard English spoken by no more than 3-4 per cent of the Brits even in its heyday, has had a great fall. In non-Caucasian parts of the former British Empire, regional Englishes are prominent. This is a problem in teaching and in translation: All // ... 97// non-English speaking nations will, no matter whether the educational and translational bodies are aware of it or not, have inbuilt "interference errors" which are so common that translators, teachers, and learners don't normally notice, let alone mention them (e. g., Danes "try to walk to somebody's place", they are "very delighted", they "sit and eat", and "they have a building on the right hand side"; whereas native speakers of English normally "walk to somebody's place", "are delighted", "are eating", and "the building on the right hand side is..."). In China, television programmes for the teaching of English are produced locally, and thus promote regional English for new learners. I have no facile solution to this: depending on teachers, organisation, perhaps even country, students might define their personal target language (dialect and sociolect) in consultation with teachers and then strive to reach it (although it is probably mostly the other way round: it is not until you master English that you appreciate the nuances).

This point also reveals why we cannot blithely expect that "professionalism" in translation work is a blanket term immediately understood by everybody. Translational professionalism will vary between contexts, the most important parameters being the general command of the target language in the nation. The general knowledge of the demands individual clients will set in specific communicational contexts. In other words, the standard that can be demanded of a "professional translation" in the Netherlands is infinitely higher than the one that can be demanded of a "professional translation" in Uzbekistan. In addition, these demands can be made by the clients only - and they are normally *not* experts as far as the foreign language is concerned, nor are they identical with the recipients. This means that recipients must learn to be more tolerant - at least for the foreseeable future - of what they would normally term "poor translation" in their own societal contexts. This linguistic toleration will be necessary because nations are reaching further out than ever before and thus checking out one another's needs via communication in language, and, more often than not, the communicators need to share a language which is not their mother tongue, a lingua franca: more often than not, this is English.

In teaching (and subsequently translational) contexts, the definition of a dominant language and a lingua franca will be determined nationally and geopolitically: French will continue its die-hard battle in Africa and the other Francophone territories (e.g., in the Pacific). German will, I guess, slowly recede in importance in Central Europe, but probably will never disappear completely from syllabi. Russian will, for geopolitical reasons and because most decision-makers were fostered on Russian, remain the lingua franca in Central Asia for the next twenty to thirty years. // ... 98//

It is a generally held tenet - including mine - that English is in the process of becoming the lingua franca of the future, especially so among young people because of the popularity of US culture. The existence of regional Englishes in the old colonies such as India and Nigeria and the teaching of regional Englishes in China is, however, an omen of what will happen: A high-level type of geographically identifiable English will be the preferred goal of elitist language professionals (teachers, translators, interpreters), and perhaps also of other elitist leaders and diplomats.

Most users at the lower level (experts, delegates, captains of industry) will be satisfied with a mastery that gets them through simple situations, but will often rely on interpreters and translators as communication gets more complicated. They may not demand top-quality work from language professionals, but still sufficiently good for their ends. In this group we might include the tourists, the trekkers, and others.

And then, of course, there will be the language users whose English will be of some interference or pidgin variety, useful for package tours to tourist ghettos, international hotels and the like.

Inevitably, the English used as a lingua franca at any level will affect local languages, not perhaps to the extent of the highly exposed languages of the Nordic countries, which are at present reeling under the onslaught of Anglo-American loans and having their syntax and rules for word formation affected (Dollerup 1996c). The fact that legislation in the EU is at present translated into the eleven official languages (and eventually those of future Member States) implies that the target language laws are affected and they, in turn, influence the daily lives of the citizens. There will be an increase in international legislation in the years to come and it will bear the linguistic imprint of source language law-making.

But not all citizens of non-English speaking countries will learn English at all. Peoples all over the world will continue to speak their own mother tongues, which will, however, be influenced by other languages, especially English because it is a lingua franca to the segment of the population which has an interface with the international community and which, at the same time, tends to have the larger political and cultural influence in their own national cultures.

English does not at present seem to be on the verge of becoming the first language of any other nation beyond the ‘original’ users of English. I have already mentioned how Hindi challenges the role of English in India in a horizontal move through society.

The minor languages can also be viewed from a historical perspective: the scholarly elite and the clerical authorities in the Middle Ages used Latin for their // ... 99// lingua franca internationally. It slowly lost this role with the introduction of the vernaculars in written works among the decision-makers. This happened at different times in Europe, in many cases related to the appearance of ‘authoritative’ Bible translations, but not always so (Hungarian was thus not accepted in lieu of Latin in the Hungarian Parliament until 1844). The acceptance by the Soviet authorities of the ethnic and regional languages of all the republics at the large Party congresses in the Soviet Union was window-dressing: there was no training of interpreters or translators in these languages, although the EU Commission was awed by the fact that the Soviets could manage with approximately 100 different languages at Party congresses, and went on study tours to Moscow to observe this.

Despite the fact that the Communists thus paid only lip-service to the ‘right to speak one’s own language’, few people knew it was a sham: the propaganda, of course, claimed that minor languages were dealt with as the ‘equals’ of Russian at the highest level in the Soviet Union. The point in the present context is that the propaganda promoted the *idea* of equal language rights for speakers of minor languages, and that many people were made to believe that it actually worked.



I have already made the point that in Europe it is in all likelihood the accidental use of Dutch and Italian in the original Coal and Steel Union (1952), cemented politically in the European Community in 1957, which ultimately set the ball ‘of equal rights for minor languages’ rolling (although there have, of course, been previous moves). Danish made it in 1973. The EU has information offices in regions with minority languages such as Wales for Welsh speakers, despite the fact that the organisation is adamant in its policy of accepting only national languages for official work. This explains why Basque, Catalan and Andaluz (1985) will never be used in European Union settings.

I submit that although the European Union seems to have had no policy in this area when it was founded, these developments are symptomatic of another parameter: Although Communist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Central Asian

republics fell apart along ethnic lines, they were soon bolstered up by real or imagined linguistic differences. The modern national state ensures its own survival by accepting linguistic variation within its national boundaries, rather than having the national state disintegrate. This would explain why Norway with two or three 'languages' ('bokmål', 'rigsmål' and 'nynorsk') has had an acrimonious and divisive language debate going on for generations; this would also explain why the UK accepts the revival of Welsh and Gaelic, and Spain of Basque, Catalan and Andaluz. In other parts of the world, it is true that language differences // ... 100// make nations disintegrate. The crucial factor is, in my view, the wealth, the gross national product on a per capita basis, of the nation involved: the question is simply whether the State can afford to uphold language services that keep together the nation in one piece for all the divisiveness. Even with all the conflicts over culture and language, Belgium and Canada are still unified countries. There are countries like Switzerland which stay peacefully together despite the fact that they have several recognised languages; possibly because most people do not understand the language of their compatriots, since it appears that only 6% of the Swiss are bilingual (Dürmüller (1991) as cited by Romaine (1996: 423)). So, provided the nation state has a stake in retaining unity and a bureaucracy up to the challenge, it is done.

In my view the acceptance of minor languages is also related to language rights. Such rights are now emerging and becoming visible in the US and in Europe, notably as multilingual, multiethnic societies.

I believe that there is a lesson in the conflicting trends towards multilingualism and monolingualism, specifically with reference to stratification and the role of education; we need to acknowledge that we should use experience learnt in different parts of the world. I believe this can be gleaned from the US and the EU perspectives and that it also illustrates how the world of translator and the interpreter is constantly changing.

The US has largely been built by immigrants from many countries, who as individuals wished to become part of the great US community. They came from different linguistic backgrounds, prompted by a common wish to have a better life. This involved becoming Americans which in term meant becoming monolingual, a fact realised in their mastery of the American language. This language, in turn, functioned as the catalyst for the establishment of a unique culture. In such a simplified historical interpretation, people who were underdogs in their countries of origin went to a country of equal opportunities. However, facing a linguistic barrier when they arrived, they were, like all immigrants anywhere, anytime in world history, plunged down in society to a state of virtual illiteracy. Not until they had acquired linguistic equality with peers at the horizontal level (by learning American with their social peers), could they begin to climb up the social (vertical)

ladder by their own effort. Highly motivated as many of them were, they succeeded in making themselves a part of US society. Yet all over the US there are Chinatowns, little Italies, little Polands and so on and so forth which protected those of the old country who were reluctant, incapable or simply not interested in learning another language. The vertically imposed American 'English-Only' policy was a logical outcome of the recognition that if people want to integrate // ... 101// and climb socially, they must learn the dominant language and transform it into their mother tongue. In sum then, the horizontal movement in the US has been from multilingualism which the users wanted to replace with monolingualism. Only monolingualism, the embrace of the American language as the mother tongue, would ensure national unity for the nation and motivate the individual to attain the good life. On the other hand, multiethnicity has physically if not officially also been part and parcel of the US as a nation - so much so that it is part of its specific cultural identity.

Further, the sheer geographical size and the wealth of natural resources allow the US to be largely self-sufficient. The same is the case with many other large nations, for example, China, India, and Russia. Yet they differ in terms of official recognition of multiethnicity. For this, Brazil offers the closest parallel with one nation, one language, and multiethnicity.



Float from Brazilian Carnival

Self-sufficiency means that motivation for foreign language learning is fairly low in such countries - or has been so until quite recently. Foreign language learning, and, consequently translation, has not been looked upon as prestigious work. Generally, interest in ensuring accurate decoding has been subsumed to an anthropological, existentialist, philosophical approach to translation where the importance was with the spirit of the text. Not surprisingly so, because once you are literally thousands of miles from the nearest foreign language speaker, this is a legitimate approach. The historical heritage of translation in monolingual societies is to strengthen the monolingual culture by means of input from a multilingual

outside world. Real multilingualism was for those who have not arrived yet, mentally and socially.

The European background is one of linguistic diversity at the horizontal level, and the multilingual experience has been one of wars (involving generals and drafted peasants), of consolidating rule and nationality; for better and for worse it has been characterised by the need for nations to communicate, to understand one another. For wars, as well as for travel and trade which tend to be cross-national, you need language to extract information as correctly as possible in horizontal confrontation with other nations. For the consolidation of rule, the ability to set exact guidelines for your own compatriots and subjects vertically through individual societies was of paramount importance. Similarly, for nationalism, defined as the negation of other nationality, you needed a vertically accepted definition of the national language in an accepted written form. In order to cope with the language barriers, the Europeans used mixed languages or, above all, Latin for international communication, until sometime in the 15-19th century when it was gradually replaced by the respective vernaculars. The use of vernaculars called for precise translation between different languages - in treaties, trading documents and the like. No matter whatever the parties involved might privately think of one another, they were, by and large, peers. In their different positions in society they had arrived. In Europe, multilingualism or plurilingualism has been the preserve of the privileged ones. Despite the influx of minor groups, such as gypsies and Jews, multiethnicity never was an issue in most European countries.

World War II and, especially, its ripple effects and the mass migrations at the end of the 20th century have changed all of this.

Internationally, the US' participation in World War II, its scientific advances, and above all the collapse of the Soviet Union, are the main reasons why English is now firmly entrenched as the lingua franca all over the world, if not today then at least in the future.



In Europe, the high-level use of multilingualism continues to this day, most obviously so at the supranational organisations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, and NATO. At the same time, however, multiethnicity has made its appearance since the 1960s with the influx of large groups of guest workers (from Yugoslavia, Turkey, Pakistan, etc.) and refugees who, like the American immigrants of past and present, have to start life anew and who, within their new host cultures, must come to terms with the 'national language'. They

force the European nations to face multilingualism on the same vertical social axis as was the case with the US during the epoch of the birth of the nation. And in the long run, it is likely that the immigrants will make Europe multiethnic as well.

These issues of modern multiethnicity and monolingualism in Europe are reminiscent of those in the past and present of the US: it is now the European 'haves' who must come to terms with the 'have-nots'. This is an obvious example of a renewed need for a type of linguistic transfer which existed in the past, yet was ignored, but which we would all have benefited from, had it been preserved. In present-day Europe, non-native speakers need to communicate with the authorities (e. g. doctors, social workers, courts). For communication they use liaison interpreters. Liaison interpreting is an art that must have flourished in the US, but was overlooked in the everyday work of forging the nation. It was, furthermore, not elevated to a craft or a real trade. Worldwide, it was never taught in school until quite recently, but now with the movements of the peoples we must accept that it is found all over the world. There is a recognised need to teach it.

But it is not the only type of interlingual communication: there are all sorts of translations that have been used in the past and where past experience should // ... 103// not be slighted in the teaching and promotion of translation. The American background for translation was different from the European, but the tremendous changes in the modern world means that we start to have more features in common than we may realise at first glance. We are getting closer to one another in terms of societal backgrounds.

This is particularly obvious at the intersection of the linguistic rights of speakers of minor languages to be not only physically, but also linguistically and ethically present in situations involving themselves. These rights have been established by court rulings in the US and by legislation in many European countries and have then reached down vertically in the social system to be hammered out in horizontal strata. Such linguistic rights are of 'old' standing, notably, in Australia and Sweden where egalitarian political principles developed in the early 1970s determined that immigrants had the right to be understood. There is a strong international movement promoting linguistic rights, which essentially extends the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (1948). It was first formulated as 'linguistic rights' in 1987 and has gained ground ever since (*Universal Declaration* 1995). There is, in brief, a more humanitarian understanding that the mother tongue is part of one's identity.

Approaching the end, I would like to return to the frequent failure to distinguish between English as a dominant language and as a lingua franca, especially in the English-speaking world. Non-English speakers are overwhelmingly in favour of using English as a lingua franca, but they do not want English to be a dominant language in their everyday life. The best proof that there

is a fundamental difference between having English as the preferred second language for lingua franca purposes, and a 'English only' movement, is best exemplified by looking at translation in today's world. If the latter were true, one would expect the increasing diffusion of English in today's world, to lead to a decrease in translation work. However, a look at the statistics in the *Unesco Yearbook* reveals that there is an unprecedented growth in translation work. This makes sense only when we appreciate that there is an increased respect (based on financial considerations to be sure) for minor languages and that the minor languages are, to a greater extent than before, being translated into the major languages (first and foremost English), often, of course, for political reasons, in order to make sure that their voice is heard. But the trend is also proof that there must be large audiences in minor language communities which prefer messages in their own languages rather than a major language (i.e. English). This preference is not necessarily nationalistic, but rather stems from a desire for better understanding. It is true that many multinational firms are switching to English for in-house communication. But in order to survive in the market-place they must appeal to the public at large. And although there are many countries (especially in Europe) where even locals make ads and similar material in English in order to appear more sophisticated, you still have to speak the local lingo to sell the goods. The in-house English will, in many cases, also stand in need of revision by native speakers who trained in the art and craft of revising texts with interlanguage errors. The indications are that translation will continue to thrive.

On the other hand, the increase in translation (interpreting, subtitling, dubbing, voice-over) means that the text types translated are becoming more and more differentiated. Many texts (e.g., business letters, instructions, etc.) which nobody would have bothered to translate twenty or thirty years ago, are now translated as a matter of course. Meetings which would not have been interpreted previously, now take place in environments with equipment for simultaneous conference interpreting - and consequently use it. At the same time that all this translational activity is protecting the minor languages, it will also cause changes in them, but not destroy them so as to make lingua franca English the only language in the world. For the minor language communities, the lesson from quarters as diverse as China, the Arab world, Slovenia and Iceland, is that they must possess written mother tongues which function as their linguistic and cultural core. If so English will be an alternative mode of communication - namely the one used with the rest of the world, but not with compatriots. As such it may change international communication. I would not be surprised if English becomes the oral lingua franca not only between Icelanders and Slovenes, but even between speakers of different varieties of Chinese in coexistence with written Chinese.

According to a global view, many trends are only speciously contradictory. There is no contradiction in expecting the continued promotion and preservation of languages of limited diffusion, the progress of English towards

becoming the most prominent international lingua franca, and in the prodigious increase in translation work. It illustrates that in order to come to grips with the problems facing them, the translators of today have to chart and analyze the national and international forces which are forming the linguistic world in order to better understand and meet the challenges of the future.

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The Iguazu Falls between Spanish-speaking Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazilian-speaking Brasil

NOTES

i. The present article draws on information from numerous sources, most heavily however, on my own travels. Much information has been published as notes, interviews and articles // ... 105// in *Language International: the journal for the language professionals* since 1990. I have unscrupulously added information not published in those articles. I am also indebted to Kristine Anderson, Ding Xinshan, Adolfo Gentile, Robert Phillipson, Said Saiq, Xu Yanhong, and numerous others. I wish to stress that in some countries, 'facts' in the Western sense are difficult to get.

ii. Both Italian and Dutch were official languages from the beginning, and probably nobody foresaw that this would create a precedent for making the national languages official languages in the European Union institutions. The official decision in the Council of Ministers was published 6 October 1958 as Council Regulation No. 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Community (see Quell (1996: 76). Today there are three official languages (English, French and German. The role of German was strengthened immediately

after the reunification of Germany, but it seems to be fading out). The overall picture is that English is winning out, especially, but even the European Commission (the bureaucratic heavyweight) will probably never accept one language only (Dollerup 1996b; for interesting evidence, see Quell (1997). In late 1996, the European Parliament (the political branch) decided to retain translation into all languages. The lack of overall strategies in other international contexts is discussed by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996: 433); Phillipson (Forthcoming).

iii. The distinction has been around for a long time in scholarship concerning language policy. My attention (from a Translation Studies perspective) was drawn to it by Mary Snell-Hornby's plenary paper at the Second 'Transfere necesse est' conference in Budapest, 1996.

iv. The number of mutually unintelligible versions varies from source to source. To this it should be added that there are at least 56 officially classified minorities which do not necessarily mean that they speak a language of their own (various sources, China; for a further discussion, see Taylor & Taylor (1995)).

v. Which, of course, is not true. There are two types of written Chinese, the complex or traditional (used in Taiwan and Hong Kong) and the simplified one (used in the People's Republic and in Singapore).

vi. I refer to the Communist Yugoslavia as the state united by Tito and existing until the Slovene secession in 1991.

vii. Coste 1984 as quoted by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996: 438)

viii. This is not always obvious because the present-day decision-makers in Greece, Spain, Italy, etc. were brought up to learn French (This explains why Van Deth (1991) as cited by Romaine (1996: 423) implies that the mediterranean countries are Francophone; and why, for example, Romania, Greece, Portugal and others signed a warning against a monolingual UN (see Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996: 429-430)).

ix. It is, however, highly indicative that even the humblest university I have visited in China has a fairly large contingent of foreign-speaking teachers (mostly Westerners).

x. The implications of Icelandic purism for the modern translator is discussed by Ragnarsdóttir (1996). There have been many loanwords in the past history of Icelandic, but they are so successfully integrated that most modern Icelanders do not recognise them.

xi. The set-up of the European institutions is labyrinthine, and it took even a fairly politically well-informed animal like my august self several weeks to understand its complexities (I was employed as a consultant on loan from the University of Copenhagen). One problem is that the institution has changed its names (and one still gets conflicting information when asking): The European Economic Communities (c. 1970), the European Community, the European Union. // ... 106// Oddly enough the total staff is fairly small (less than 50,000 persons), and in a language context, it is the indentity of the various bodies that count (for this see the glossy brochures), and the general trend: Quell (1977) and Dollerup (1996a) that English is gaining ground but will never dominate completely.

xii. In the Communist system the boss who is the only one to decide. If this is accepted, you are bound to wait until the great man is around for even the most insignificant decisions. It cannot be neutralised from within.

xiii. Voice-over is a type of translation where only one announcer or one actor renders the sound track the original of which had several speakers.

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