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Communicating in the Global Village: On Language, Translation and Cultural Identity

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The paper attempts to show the effect of recent developments (particularly globalisation and advances in technology) on our production and perception of language, and on translation and the job profile of the translator. The two conflicting forces of *globalism* and *tribalism* are presented and set off against the sociological concept of *cultural identity*. The position of English as the world lingua franca (and in post-colonial studies) is discussed, along with the constellation of languages in present-day Europe and the resulting phenomenon of *hybridity*. Conclusions are drawn for the varying activities of translation today and for the rapidly changing job profile of the translator, and these are illustrated by comparing four authentic translation assignments: from an international organisation, from an electrical appliances firm with branches all over Europe, from an airline publicity leaflet, and from a recent best-selling novel. Based on the above, a job profile of the modern translator is sketched, showing him/her as an expert for intercultural communication in an internationalised world which is at the same time characterised by an abundance of individual cultural communities.

Introduction

'Kommunikation total' can be seen in bold letters on the title page of the German news-magazine *Der Spiegel* on 14 December 1998 – 'Der siebte Kontinent' (The seventh continent) was the title of the corresponding story, though the subject was not geographical or environmental but the electronic world of the outgoing 20th century: multimedia, Internet, power-books and swatch-talk. The prototype of the age is a software manager seen pedalling away at his keep-fit bike in the local gym, while surfing in the Internet via a monitor attached to the handle-bars. After ten theoretical kilometres he has glanced through three newspapers on-line, studied the latest stock market prices and read over a dozen e-mails. Instant information, presented in unlimited quantities through various channels and all at the same time – that is communication in the global village today. The sheer amount of the material, the speed with which it must be processed, the remote or virtual character of the participants in the communication act, all of this has changed the way we produce and perceive language and the way we interact with the world around us.

In the early days of human communication there was on the one hand the simple word of mouth, which until the invention of sound recording remained ephemeral, and on the other hand the written symbols perpetuated on stone or parchment but accessible only to a scholarly elite. With the invention of printing, written texts were made available to anyone with enough education to read them. In our present technological revolution, literacy is taken for granted, and

the flood of information is made available to anyone with the hardware, software or electronic gadgets to gain access to it. In a world of supposedly equal rights, high-tech creates its own insiders, its own elite and its own power groups, and communication in the global village is *de facto* the privilege of those with technological tools, marginalising millions in lesser developed countries as well as the have-nots in the richer countries. These still communicate by simple word of mouth or – provided that they are able to read and write – through conventional written texts, and their view of the world tends to be local and regional rather than global.

Globalism, Tribalism and Cultural Identity

In 1992, in a visionary article published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Benjamin Barber foresaw such a polarised world with two possible political futures, 'both bleak, neither democratic' (Barber 1992: 53). One is driven by the tide of globalism (or globalisation):

... by the onrush of economic and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity and that mesmerize the world with fast music, fast computers, and fast food – with MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald's, pressing nations into one commercially homogeneous global network: one McWorld tied together by technology, ecology, communications and commerce. (Barber, 1992: 53)

The second political future is seen in the other extreme:

... a retribalization of large swaths of humankind by war and bloodshed: a threatened Lebanonization of national states in which culture is pitted against culture, people against people, tribe against tribe – a Jihad in the name of a hundred narrowly conceived faiths against every kind of interdependence, every kind of artificial social cooperation and civic mutuality. (Barber, 1992: 53)

For these 'two axial principles of our age', whereby the planet is 'falling precipitantly apart *and* coming reluctantly together at the same moment' Barber coined the title 'Jihad vs. McWorld'. From the viewpoint of today, seven years later, his words assume visionary dimensions, not only in the areas of commerce and military conflict, but even – by means of an extended metaphor – in the fields of language and communication. And here there are three main areas that have undergone considerable changes over the last few years: the nature of the material the consumer has to process, the language in which it is presented, and the concept of text.

For the first two of these areas we can continue Barber's metaphor as it stands: our linguistic McWorld presents its own intellectual 'fast food' via the Internet, for example, and is dominated by its own 'McLanguage', which is typically American English. It is however a particular brand of American English, reduced in stylistic range and subject matter, and – with the aid of abbreviations, icons, acronyms and graphic design – tailor-made for fast consumption. It is itself a lingua franca, often colloquial in register even when in written form, and it has no great concern for native-speaker prescriptivism. It functions as a basic common

denominator for supra-cultural communication as a kind of free-floating sign system open to all kinds of interferences from other languages according to the background and the linguistic competence of the writers all over the world: an empirical study of e-mail correspondence might show how conspicuously English has left the ownership of the native speakers in England and has become, as Henry Widdowson has described it, 'world property' (Widdowson, 1994). No less drastic are the changes caused by multimedia in our concept of text and text types: at one time the products of the communication act over long distances could be neatly classified into spoken and written, into business correspondence (often governed by rigid culture-specific conventions), telegrams, phone calls, reports, and so forth. The computer screen and the endless possibilities of telecommunication have now produced a 'homo communicator' used to e-mailing, faxing, speaking, listening, reading, and viewing (typically with several of these activities going on at the same time) but often without absorbing or ordering the endless snippets of information or the flood of images into a coherent message.

But our planet does not consist only of such a Brave New McWorld: at the other end of the scale there is a brand of 'linguistic retribalisation', as in areas of Central and Eastern Europe, reflecting the tragic excesses of the more brutal tribalism in the political arena. With the emergence of new national identities after the fall of the Iron Curtain, individual ethnic groups are rediscovering their cultural heritage and with it the significance of their own mother tongue, particularly if they are in conflict with other groups. The most striking example is the emergence of Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian as separate languages (from what was known as Serbo-Croat), despite minimal, often artificially created linguistic differences arising from the implementation of new language policies (see Grbic forthcoming). If the same objective linguistic criteria were applied to the many varieties of English (cf. Stoll, 1999), and if the speakers of these 'Englishes' were in conflict with each other, the world might face the creation of literally hundreds of new 'languages'. But the definition of 'language' (as against 'language variety') is here not objectively linguistic, and it does not depend on mutual intelligibility; seen in this light, a language is simply what is officially recognised or accepted as such, whether from political, ethnic or religious motives.

Benjamin Barber's vision of a globalised world governed by 'universalizing markets' and a tribalised world torn apart by 'parochial hatreds' is sombre indeed, but between the two extremes there is a phenomenon that can be viewed more constructively: the notion of *cultural identity*. This indicates a community's awareness of and pride in its own unmistakable features – and an individual's sense of belonging to that community, whether by birth, language or common territory – but implies that it is still able to communicate with and exist in harmony with other communities in the world around (hence it is not bound by either the uniformity of globalism or the destructive aggressivity of tribalism). In a century of constant migration and mass mobility the concept of identity has been a favourite topic for scholars: in 1908 the German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel referred to the formation of a sense of identity as a process of 'setting oneself apart from others' (Simmel, 1908: 261). In a more recent essay the sociologist and psychologist Dieter Claessens (1991) described the notion of cultural identity as one based on collective self-definition and a sense of belonging, on the awareness of those features characterising one's own community and

of those characterising the Other. Language, as part of culture, is one of the most potent means of expression of cultural identity, along with those non-verbal conventions, norms and rules of conduct to which members of a group are encouraged to conform by upbringing or any other process of socialisation.¹

The term 'cultural identity' was used in a CILS-Seminar some years ago in a contribution by Lawrence Venuti, published in 1994 with the title 'Translation and the formation of cultural identities'. Venuti used the phrase in quite a different sense to mean a constructed cliché image or stereotype, and it is in my opinion simply a misnomer. An identity (CED definition: 'the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person or thing') is based on real, often objective features and includes both the notion of a subject's self-image and the way he/she is viewed from outside. Venuti's 'cultural identity' is firstly based on unreal notions and is implicitly inaccurate, and secondly, it is limited to the second sense of an outsider's viewpoint.² The concept of cultural identity (*kulturelle Identität*) as described above embraces both senses, as is also the case in recent work in German Translation Studies, and as is used here.

Language and the Concept of Hybridity

One could now call it a truth universally acknowledged, that within the context of global discourse, English, for better or for worse, has assumed the key position. It is the official language of 52 countries, with a total population of more than 1700 million (Navarro, 1997: 6). The role of English as a world language (like French, Spanish and the languages of other former colonial powers) goes back to its former role as dominant language of the British Empire, whereby standard British English has diversified into numerous regional and local varieties or 'new Englishes'. Its role as international lingua franca, however, is due on the one hand to the already mentioned world-wide domination of North American technology and culture, and on the other to the fact that its basic grammar and core vocabulary can be relatively easily acquired for everyday conversation as needed for superficial communication by speakers of other languages all over the world. This latter factor is coupled with a structural flexibility in the language itself and a general policy of non-puristic openness among the English-speaking cultural institutions. This has not only encouraged the development of the many regional varieties, but has paved the way for the use of English, not in its pristine standard form, but as a less than impeccable common denominator for communication (maybe comprehensible but often full of local interferences) by native speakers of other languages all over the world. A counter-example to prove the point is French: despite massive government-sponsored promotion for the French language, the puristic, normative policy of French institutions and academies have helped the language to preserve much of its characteristic correctness (and hence its identity as a language of culture, despite the often reluctantly accepted Anglicisms), but its role as a world language has been reduced. In the *Financial Times* of 9 February 1998, Dominique Moisi, Deputy Director of the Paris-based *Institut Français des Relations Internationales*, made the following admission:

The French should admit they have lost the language battle to 'American English', a less sophisticated version of the language of Shakespeare. To

keep the content (if not the language) and the message (if not the medium), the French must learn from the vital US qualities of openness and flexibility. (Quote of the month in *Language International* 10:2, 1998, p.8)

Another crucial factor for the role of languages in our global village of today is, however, what has been called their 'economic power' (calculated by multiplying the number of speakers in a given country by the per capita GNP, then adding together the results for all countries where the language is spoken). In a recent article Fernando Navarro has shown that:

... the world's most economically powerful languages are those of the world's three leading economic powers: the United States, Japan and Germany, respectively. More than 60% of the world economic production is accounted for by speakers of English, Japanese and German; if we add Spanish and French, this percentage increases to 75%. It is very noticeable that of the six economically most important languages in the world, five are European languages. (Navarro, 1997: 6)

As far as English is concerned, it is important to stress that one half of the world's native speakers of English (and three-quarters of the economic power attributed to the English language) are concentrated in a single country, the United States of America. This overwhelming domination of American English has created a basic attitude among its speakers that this English and the status it enjoys is the self-evident, unmarked linguistic norm and the natural standard against which other languages are measured.³ In Europe, however, the scene is quite different. Europe is essentially multilingual and multicultural, and the individual languages – especially those of 'lesser diffusion', and even local varieties such as Swiss German – are proud hallmarks of cultural identity. The language with the most native speakers in Europe and with the most economic power is German, and economically English only takes a fourth position, after German, French and Italian (Navarro, 1997: 6). But the question of language is here not only one of economic power or numbers of speakers; it is also a geopolitical issue and one fraught with historical complications, including the historic rivalry between English and French, the proud ambitions of the Spanish, and the reluctance to accept any kind of dominance of German (despite its historical role as the major lingua franca of Central Europe). At the same time Europe, in the guise of the European Union, is emerging as one of the world's largest economic entities, and one with a declared policy of democratic multilingualism. However laudable this may be, it is even today illusory (cf. Dollerup, 1996) and with the further expansion of the Union will some day, at least in its present form, prove unmanageable and financially untenable. For internal purposes French (for historical reasons), English (for practical reasons) and (despite the reluctance) German are already used as the chief means of communication.

However, it is quite clear that in Europe both languages and cultures are constantly in contact, whether within the institutions of the European Union, through business transactions, mass tourism, cultural exchanges or whatever. This intensive intercultural communication has resulted in what Schäffner and Adab (1997) have defined as the hybrid text. In their view, hybrid texts result from a translation process (Schäffner & Adab, 1997:325) and are characterised by

features (vocabulary, syntax, style etc.) which clash with target language conventions and are 'somehow contrary to the norms of the target language and culture' (Schäffner & Adab, 1997: 327). They also admit EU texts however, which do not necessarily involve translation:

In the process of establishing political unity, linguistic expressions are levelled to a common, (low) denominator. Eurotexts reflect a Eurojargon, i.e. a reduced vocabulary, meanings that tend to be universal, reduced inventory of grammatical forms. [...]

Acceptance is due to the limited communicative functions of the texts. EU texts [...] function within the Community within which they are created (e.g. for the staff, or for meetings of the respective bodies). This means that there are clearly defined user needs. The multinational EU institutions as such are the target culture, hybrid texts are formative elements in creating a (truly) supranational culture. (Schäffner & Adab, 1997: 327–8)

This creation of a supranational 'culture' through 'Eurojargon' – mainly affecting the three working languages – English, French and German (see also Born & Schütte, 1995) – is reminiscent of the global and rootless 'McLanguage' we have described above, likewise reduced in stylistic and lexical range and open to all kinds of interference features. Such texts are typical products of our age and are a natural result of our international, globalised lives of today. They reflect the reality of our world in the outgoing 20th century, where the former clear-cut and conflicting power structures and systems (whether capitalism vs. communism or coloniser vs. colonised) have given way to interacting, heterogeneous groups and often unpredictable forces in a constant state of flux.

The term 'hybrid text' has however been in use for some years, but in another context and with an essential shift in meaning. In the early 1990s and within postcolonial studies, the hybrid text was defined as one written by the ex-colonised in the language of the ex-coloniser (such as the Nigerian or Indian writing in English or the North African writing in French), thus creating a 'new language' and occupying a space 'in between':

These postcolonial texts, frequently referred to as 'hybrid' or 'métissés' because of the culturo-linguistic layering which exists between them, have succeeded in forging a new language that defies the very notion of a 'foreign' text that can be readily translatable into another language. (Mehrez, 1992: 121)

Samia Mehrez devotes her essay on 'Translation and the colonial experience', from which this quotation is taken, to the francophone North African text, but many of her observations apply equally to the anglophone scene. In memorable words, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe describes the language suitable for use by the African writer as a vehicle of expression in postcolonial English literature:

The African should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. It will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new surroundings. (cit. Villareal, 1994: 62)

Such texts, written in a 'new English' as expression of a specific cultural identity – here in contrast to the hybrid Eurojargon – are likewise a characteristic feature of our constantly changing hybrid world, and they have enriched the English language and the English-speaking cultures by yet another dimension.

To summarise the observations made so far, we can say that the world language English can be viewed from three different perspectives. Firstly, there is the free-floating lingua franca ('International English') that has largely lost track of its original cultural identity, its idioms, its hidden connotations, its grammatical subtleties, and has become a reduced standardised form of language for supra-cultural communication – the 'McLanguage' of our globalised 'McWorld' or the 'Eurospeak' of our multilingual continent. Then there are the many individual varieties, by and large mutually intelligible, but yet each an expression of a specific cultural identity with its own idioms, metaphors and cultural allusions (Indian English, for example, or British English as demonstrated by any feature article in the *Daily Mail*).⁴ And finally, there are the literary hybrid forms as demonstrated in postcolonial literature, forging a new language 'in between', altered to suit its new surroundings.

Translation, Globalisation and the European Language Scene

Both the rapid development of our globalised 'McWorld' with its technological 'cultura franca' and the emergence of new national and cultural identities after the end of colonialism and the fall of communism have deeply affected translation and the work of the professional translator. In another visionary article called 'Jack in the Year 2000', originally presented as a conference paper in Misano Adriatico in 1994, Patricia Violante-Cassetta (1996) described how she then envisaged the translator at the turn of the millennium. Her sketch runs as follows:

My name is Jack, and I am a translator in the United States, although I share many traits and characteristics with colleagues all over the world. Jacks such as myself may be staffers at international organisations, multinational corporations, government agencies, private concerns, or we may be self-employed. We wade through documents that are often highly technical (sometimes barely legible⁵) and translate them into other languages. One day it might be environmental regulations and the next day the specifications for a desalinator. (Violante-Cassetta, 1996: 199)

'Jack' has a variety of tasks and varied working conditions, but it is clear that his work is unthinkable without a good technological infrastructure: computers for producing texts, online services providing continuously updated glossaries of terms, e-mail, Internet, MT systems and so forth. This translator is seen in a computerised future, which sounded like grim science fiction when the paper was read five years ago; however, we can now say that the vision has not only become reality but has even been outdated by the 'homo communicator' of our multimedia age. Meanwhile we might also say that the following changes – in part already envisaged by Violante-Cassetta – have taken place or are at least imminent:

(1) Due to the vast amount of material transmitted by telecommunication, the

speed with which it is processed, the increasing use of colloquial forms and the tolerance of what were traditionally viewed as language errors or typing mistakes, some communication relies simply on basic mutual intelligibility, and here translation has been made obsolete (much communication is carried out in *lingua franca* English). Formal business correspondence has to some extent been replaced by e-mail, much is dealt with by fax and mobile phone.

- (2) The same necessity for speedy processing and the tolerance of less than impeccable language forms, along with the levelling of culture-specific differences within the technological '*cultura franca*', mean a potentially greater role for machine translations (e.g. rough versions of insider information for internal use within a concern).
- (3) Multimedia communication creates new text types – the audio museum guide is a good example – some of them multisemiotic, with the verbal signs interacting with icons, layout tricks, pictorial images and sounds (as can increasingly be seen in advertising techniques).
- (4) In the area of intercultural communication, requiring not only language mediation but heightened cultural expertise, the (human) translator (and interpreter) will play an increasingly important role, whereby he/she will take the full responsibility for the '*final product*'.⁶

For the American translator 'Jack' – with English as his unquestioned dominant language, almost in a neocolonial sense – the position within our global village is different from that of his European colleagues, where intercultural differences still form a fundamental element of our lives. Here too, however, things have changed. Apart from the hybrid character of Eurospeak, the normative and levelling influence of bureaucratic Euroculture and the *de facto* dominance of the three main languages, English, French and German, we have a large number of 'exotic' languages of lesser diffusion – Finnish, Slovene, Polish, Lithuanian, to name only a few – jockeying for position within our complex and swiftly moving European world. One way of solving the problem is by gaining expert proficiency in one or more of the 'main' languages and by producing highly skilled professional translators: Finland and the Scandinavian countries are proud examples. Another solution might be the phenomenon of 'passive multilingualism', whereby people gain reading and listening skills in several foreign languages without necessarily perfecting their active skills. Then discussions or meetings can be conducted in different languages at the same time (where languages are mutually intelligible, as in the Scandinavian, Romance or Slavonic regions, this is entirely unproblematic) leaving it open for people to speak or write in any language in which they can be understood by those present. Another option, already a necessity in languages of very limited diffusion like Slovene or Lithuanian, is regular translation into the non-mother tongue (with special modules for this purpose within translator training), whereby once again – as in the case of International English and MT – a '*suboptimal translation product*' as Prunc has called it (Prunc, *in press*), is not only tolerated but even included in the translation brief (with a correspondingly suboptimal fee). For example, this would be the case – not in literary translation of course – but with a summary of business information for internal use within the firm only.

From the Translator's Workshop

From the above it will be clear that the European translator of today operates in a world that is globalised, hybridised and at the same time still characterised by intercultural differences. I would like to illustrate this briefly by excerpts from four authentic texts, along with their translations, spanning the range from global to culture-specific, from technical to expressive. The English version of each of these excerpts is reproduced below.

Translation in international organisations

The first excerpt is from a text used as material for translation into several languages at the United Nations Translation Service in Vienna. It was discussed in a doctoral thesis by Mohammed Didaoui, head of the UN Arabic Section (Didaoui, 1996).

Text 1

A. Note on Morocco's Nuclear Power Programme

Organisation structures for implementation of nuclear programme

1. The National Electricity Board (ONE)

The National Electricity Board, being a public industrial and trade authority, has the monopoly of electricity generation and transmission in Morocco. In this connection it is designated as the owner and future operator of any nuclear power-stations to be set up. This is the framework within which ONE, within the assistance of IAEA, has prepared the first planning studies, which will be examined and taken further under the agreement with France, and has also started to collect information and data on site choices. A special study has also been made of present population distribution in the area where a nuclear power-station may be built.

As Didaoui points out, a major problem with United Nations source texts is that they are often compiled jointly by a number of authors who are not native speakers, and they are hence linguistically defective. They are like the EU texts mentioned by Schäffner and Adab (1997), whereby, in the process of establishing political unity, linguistic expressions are levelled to a common (low) denominator. The above text illustrates clearly what happens to English as 'world property' beyond the control of native speakers, and in the opinion of some translators I have consulted so far, it needs to be transedited before it can be translated. An acceptable English version⁷ might run as follows:

The National Electricity Board (ONE), a public industrial and trade authority, controls the generation and distribution of electricity in Morocco. Due to its monopoly of this area, it is considered to be the owner and future operator of any nuclear power stations which may eventually be set up in the country. Taking this into consideration, and with the assistance of IAEA, ONE has initiated a series of investigations which are, however, subject to approval by the French government. A survey to gather information and data on possible site choices has already begun and a special study is under way concerning the redistribution of the population which pres-

ently inhabits the area in which nuclear power stations may be built in the future.

Even now however, the text has its problems. While it is on the one hand a prototypical product of a supra-cultural, technological, globalised society, it requires some degree of subject-area competence and insider knowledge on the part of the translator.

Multilingual information booklets

The second text (Text 2) is part of a multilingual information booklet (on service and guarantee conditions) issued by the German firm 'Bauknecht', which produces quality electrical appliances and is represented in several European countries under the name 'Whirlpool'. The English version produced here is aimed at customers in Ireland:

Text 2

IRELAND

SERVICE FOR YOU

This product is constructed of high quality materials and great care has been taken in its manufacture. It is designed to give you every satisfaction, provided that it is properly installed, operated and maintained.

YOUR GUARANTEE

If any defect in manufacture or material should appear in this product within 12 months of the date you purchased it, Whirlpool Ireland Service will arrange for such defect to be rectified without charge, provided that:

- (1) reasonable evidence is supplied that the product was purchased within 12 months prior to the date of claim.
- (2) the defect is not due to the use of the product on an incorrect voltage or contrary to installation and operating instructions or to accidental damage (whether in transit or otherwise) misuse, neglect or inexperienced repair.
- (3) the product has not been used for other than domestic purpose.
- (4) the product is located in the Republic of Ireland.

In addition, you may apply for a ten year parts guarantee. If you did not receive a guarantee application form from your retailer, at the time of purchase, please contact Whirlpool at the address shown. We will forward this form to you, which you should complete and return to us within 30 days from the date of purchase.

SERVICE OUTSIDE GUARANTEE

Whirlpool Ireland Service will continue to be available at normal charge, usually in your own home, during the entire life of your appliance.

You should remember that either during the guarantee period or later, a charge will be made for a Service visit in the event that no defect is found in your appliance.

Before requesting a call therefore, you should make the checks suggested in the instruction booklet to see whether you can correct the problem for yourself. If after doing so you are satisfied that the appliance itself is at fault, when requesting a Service call you should specify the model number and serial number of your appliance, to be found on the rating plate fixed onto or inside it and describe the symptoms clearly.

While Text 1 functioned as basic information material for reproduction in several languages in an international organisation, Text 2 is intended to function specifically within the culture and legal system of the Republic of Ireland, and it has to some extent been localised. This means text type conventions have been changed, particularly in the area of syntax and pragmatics. The technological subject matter is, however, supra-cultural, it requires subject-area competence on the part of the translator but does not pose intercultural problems. All this emerges clearly from a comparison with the text used for Germany (copied exactly as it stands – apart from the passages omitted as indicated – including the printing errors):

Garantiebedingungen für Haushaltsgroßgeräte

Sehr geehrte Kundin, sehr geehrte Kunde,

Sie haben gut gewählt. Ihr Bauknecht-Gerät ist ein Qualitätserzeugnis – wie andere Bauknecht-Geräte auch, die zur vollen Zufriedenheit ihrer Besitzer in Millionen Haushalten ganz Europas arbeiten. Wenn es doch einmal zu einer Störung kommen sollte, hilft Ihnen unser Kundendienst. Die Service-Nummer an Ihrem Gerät ist dann besonders wichtig: Bitte nicht entfernen!

Garantiebedingungen

Als Käufer eines Bauknecht-Gerätes stehen Ihnen die gesetzliche Gewährleistungsrechte aus dem Kaufvertrag mit Ihrem Händler zu. – Zusätzlich räumt Ihnen Bauknecht eine Garantie zu folgenden Bedingungen ein:

1. Leistungsdauer

Die Garantie läuft 12 Monate ab Kaufdatum (Kaufbeleg ist vorzulegen). Wenn Sie uns ein mangelhaftes Bauknecht-Gerät in die Kundendienststelle bringen, erfolgt die Mangelbeseitigung (Ersatzteile, Arbeitszeit) unentgeltlich. Wünschen Sie die Reparatur am Aufstellungsort, so berechnen wir nach Ablauf von 6 Monaten die Fahrt- und Wegezeitkosten unseres Kundendienstes. [...]

2. Umfang der Mängelbeseitigung

Innerhalb der genannten Fristen beseitigen wir alle Mängel am Bauknecht-Gerät, die nachweisbar auf mangelhafte Ausführung oder Materialfehler zurückzuführen sind. [...]

3. Geltungsbereich

Unsere Garantie gilt nur, wenn das Bauknecht-Gerät auf dem von uns in

unseren Lieferbedingungen vorgeschriebenen Vertriebsweg erworben wurde und in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Betrieb ist.

Für Geräte, die in einem EG-Land erworben und in ein anderes EG-Land verbracht wurden, werden Leistungen im Rahmen der jeweils landesüblichen Garantiebedingungen erbracht. Eine Verpflichtung zur Leistung der Garantie besteht nur dann, wenn das Gerät den technischen Vorschriften des Landes, in deren der Garantieanspruch geltend gemacht wird, entspricht.

The differences between the English and German texts are manifold. On the pragmatic level the English text promises service, the German states conditions of guarantee. But as a text type, the German text is a blend of legal information (in strictly legal terminology) and promotion gags of the operative text type as understood by Katharina Reiss (1976). This starts by addressing the customer personally as in a letter ('Sehr geehrte Kundin, sehr geehrter Kunde') and congratulating her/him on having made a good choice in opting for an appliance made by Bauknecht, pointing out that Bauknecht products are used by millions of delighted customers all over Europe. In the unlikely event of anything going wrong, the service department will be available. The customer is then advised how important the service number would be in this situation and urged not to remove it from the appliance. With the sub-heading 'Guarantee conditions' – with period of guarantee (1) and conditions for rectifying defects without charge (2) – the text assumes a purely informative function, with stipulations comparable to those in the English text under the heading 'Your Guarantee', whereby it is significant that in the English version 'reasonable evidence' for the date of purchase suffices, whereas the German customer is required to produce the receipt. Of special interest is the final section (3) indicating the area within which the guarantee applies ('Geltungsbereich'). Whereas the English version simply requires the product to be 'located in the Republic of Ireland', the German version refers to the 'Bundesrepublik Deutschland' and adds further legal restrictions. There follows information about products purchased and transported in another 'EC country' ('EG-Land') – in such cases the guarantee would depend on local stipulations. The term 'EG-Land' betrays that the text must have been written before the introduction of the term 'European Union' (EU) in 1993 – although the actual electrical appliance concerned was a deep-freeze unit purchased in 1998.⁸

Advertising texts

The picture changes with texts where linguistic and cultural or local issues are inextricably intertwined, hence involving some kind of cultural identity, as in advertising and tourism. One typical genre is the illustrated leaflet with texts in two or more languages, one of them usually English for an international readership; here is a translated English version taken from a leaflet of the airline Lauda Air. The subject is prototypically Austrian and presents a specific aspect of the Austrian cultural identity (both as self-image and in the presumed cliché image projected from outside).

Text 3

The Art of Austrian Confectionery

The people of Salzburg may have their sweet 'Nockerln', Carinthians their 'Reindling' and the Viennese their world-famous Apfelstrudel – but all Austrians everywhere sing the praises of the 'Guglhupf'. Its history is the subject of many a coffee-house dispute, though the wonderfully light sponge cake is thought to have originated in a decidedly archaic environment – namely (sic), in the Capuchin Monastery. The hoods of the Capuchin monks were commonly known as 'Gugl'. And when one particularly sweet-toothed monk baked a cake in a mould which had more than a passing resemblance to his hood, the holy brother jumped in the air for joy at the success of his sweet speciality. The Austrian dialect word for jump is 'Hupf' – and so the 'jumping Capuchin', known as the 'Guglhupf', was born.

The subject described here is the culture-bound item *Guglhupf*, recognisable as a kind of cake – though not so clear from the text is its characteristic form.⁹ Culture-bound items are commonly defined as elements from the daily life, history, culture or institutions of a given community which do not exist as such in other communities, and hence they often present notorious problems for bilingual lexicographers and translators.¹⁰ For our purpose it is important that such items are an integral part of the cultural identity of a particular group (cf. Markstein, 1998), particularly in their distinguishing features and in the associations they arouse. Thus the *Guglhupf* is important, not for being just any kind of cake, but as part of the specifically Austrian tradition of confectionery – and as such it was offered as a refreshment on the Lauda Air flight.

For the reader not familiar with the subtleties of the German source text, one might say that the basic information content is reproduced in the English version, though as a text it seems rather puzzling, and it is clearly recognisable as a translation (a hybrid text in Schäffner and Adab's sense), both through interference errors ('nam(e)ly') and other strange features. The title does not really relate to the text (the word 'confectionery', particularly in combination with 'art', leads one to expect a description of how chocolates or sweets are made), lexical items such as 'archaic' or 'passing resemblance' are incongruous, and there are several weaknesses in cohesion and reference ('the hoods/Gugl', 'the Capuchin Monastery'). It is a subject for debate whether it fulfils its function as an advertising text (singing the praises of Austrian traditions) for the world-wide English-reading public.

Some of these oddities are clarified by reference to the German text:

Österreichische Zuckerkünstler

Was den Salzburgern ihre süßen Nockerln, den Kärntnern der 'Reindling' oder den Wienern der allbekannte Apfelstrudel – ist für alle Österreicher gemeinsam der vielgepriesene Guglhupf. Über seine Herkunft scheiden sich so manche Kaffeetratscher: Man vermutet den Ursprung der freudigflaumigen Mehlspeise in durchaus archaischer Umgebung – im Kapuzinerkloster. So bezeichnete man die Kapuze der Mönche als 'Gugl'. Und als ein gar naschhafter Bruder Teig in eine Form füllte, die so ähnlich

aussah wie seine Kapuze, hüpfte der fromme Mann nach dem Backen vor Freude über das Gelingen der süßen Spezialität in die Luft. Der hüpfende Kapuziner, genannt Guglhupf, war geboren.

Here we can recognise the relation between title and text, which is actually about Austrian confectioners (in the sense of pastry-cooks, the monastic ones in particular) and not confectionery. The word 'Zuckerkünstler' is a coinage based on the term 'Zuckerbäcker' (the Austrian word for 'Konditor' or pastry-cook), whereby '-künstler' indicates 'artist'. Another form of word-play is the compound 'Kaffeetratscher', based on 'Kaffeetratsch' (Standard German: 'Kaffeeklatsch'), which refers to light-hearted conversation over the customary coffee and cake.¹¹ (The more serious-minded but ironically used 'coffee-house dispute' could not be described as lexically equivalent, but it works well within the coherence of the English text.) The origin of the interference errors can also be diagnosed from the German (in the German text, 'archaisch' does not imply 'outdated' but rather stresses 'historical, traditional'), as can the weaknesses in cohesion and reference, one of which is not present in the German ('Kapuze/Gugl' are both singular), the other can be explained by German grammar rules ('im Kapuzinerkloster' here reads as 'in a monastery'). Such elementary textual principles can explain how a text which relies heavily on witty connotations could be weakened in translation by a too pedantic search for linguistic equivalence. What the German text seeks to get across is the monk's delight ('jumped for joy' --hupf) at his success in producing a cake that was shaped like his hood (Gugl-), whereby the English translator made another positive contribution to the coherence of the text by explaining that Hupf is a dialect word for 'jump'.

Literary hybrid texts

Our fourth text is an example of postcolonial prose. It is taken from the prize-winning novel *The God of Small Things* by the South Indian writer Arundhati Roy, is hence a literary hybrid text as described above by Samia Mehrez, which has created a 'new language' that has come to occupy a space 'in between':

Text 4

While the *Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol* play was being performed in the front verandah and Kochu Maria distributed cake to a Blue Army in the green heat, Ambassador E. Pelvis/S. Pimpernel (with a puff) of the beige and pointy shoes, pushed open the gauze doors to the dank and pickle-smelling premises of Paradise Pickles. He walked among the giant cement pickle vats to find a place to Think In. Ousa, the Bar Nowl, who lived on a blackened beam near the skylight (and contributed occasionally to the flavour of certain Paradise products), watched him walk.

Past floating yellow limes in brine that needed prodding from time to time (or else islands of black fungus formed liked frilled mushrooms in a clear soup).

Past green mangoes, cut and stuffed with turmeric and chilli powder and tied together with twine. (They needed no attention for a while.)

Past glass casks of vinegar with corks.

Past shelves of pectin and preservatives.

Past trays of bitter gourd, with knives and coloured finger-guards.

The language presented here is the exact opposite of the globalised supra-cultural 'McLanguage' for online fast consumption as described at the beginning of the paper. In the technical sense this is a conventional piece of narrative: what is being described is a traditional family-run pickle factory in Kerala with the characteristic name 'Paradise Pickles', and the standard ingredients ('green mangoes, yellow limes in brine, turmeric and chilli power'). But it is a description full of local colour and atmosphere, certainly an expression of a local cultural identity (with the blend of dankness, pungent smells, cake, pectin and pointed shoes) and not without irony (the reference to the Indian boy's 'Elvis puff' or the owl's 'contribution' to the flavour of the preserves). What is most significant is that this isolated fragment is not immediately comprehensible without prior knowledge of the context (as the allusions to names and items mentioned and explained elsewhere in the novel can demonstrate). The hybridity is shown particularly in the names combining Christian and local traditional elements ('Sophie Mol', 'Kochu Maria'), the rich and exotic imagery ('islands of black fungus ... like frilled mushrooms') and the word-play ('Bar Nowl') that recurs constantly throughout the novel to show how Indian children perceive English phrases. It is also present in such extensions of the English language norm in phrases like 'pickle-smelling premises' or 'a Blue Army in the green heat'. It is the multi-dimensional, highly evocative character of such elaborate and finely wrought prose – which would need a separate paper to analyse – that poses a problem and creates the challenge for the literary translator.

Conclusion: The Hybrid Profession

Over the last twenty years the profession of the translator has undergone radical changes. In the *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1979, a *translator* is defined simply as 'a person or machine that translates speech or writing', and *translate* is defined as 'to express or be capable of being expressed in another language or dialect'. Such a simplistic impression – which even twenty years ago was amazingly naive – comes nowhere near describing the complex activity of the translator today. Even looking at the four short excerpts from recent translation assignments (each text in its own way a 'hybrid' text), we can see how much technical, legal and cultural knowledge is required for producing a text, not only in another language, but for a target community, and our glimpse of language work in the global village gives us some idea of how language is processed by multimedia and technology, so that even our traditional concept of text must be questioned. Schmitt (1998) has sketched a job profile of the professional translator and interpreter, as based on studies of the mid- and early nineties, and even this needs amending to accommodate developments that have taken place in the meantime. Using Schmitt's article as a frame of reference, we could describe the activity of the translator of today as follows:

Translators (and interpreters) are experts for interlingual and intercultural communication, and assume full responsibility for their work. They have acquired the necessary professional expertise, above all linguistic, cultural

and subject-area competence, and are equipped with suitable technological skills to meet the challenges of the market today and those to be expected over the coming years. On the basis of source material presented in written, spoken or multi-medial form, and using suitable translation strategies and the necessary work tools, they are able to produce a written, spoken or multi-medial text which fulfils its clearly defined purpose in another language or culture. Translators are engaged in fields ranging from scientific and literary translation over technical writing and pre- and post-editing to translation for stage and screen.

In the 19th century, Jakob Grimm famously compared translation to crossing a river or sea, whereby the ship is the text, the navigator is the translator, the passage across the sea or river is the translation process, and the land beyond the two shores are the source and target cultures (cf. Schäffner, 1994: 199). For those times, when boundaries were clear, nations neatly defined and distances difficult to cover, the image was apt. In our heterogeneous global village of today, where distances have been overcome by telecommunication, where the concept of nation has been complicated by mass-migration and the development of subcultures and multi-cultural societies, and where boundaries – even between languages – have often grown fuzzy or have disappeared completely, it seems simplistic and naive. ‘Jack in the Year 2000’ has more in common with the ‘homo communicator’ of our ‘seventh continent’ than with a 19th century navigator: as citizen of a hybrid and/or virtual globalised world, he/she has skills and expertise in multiple areas which are needed for instant use and often simultaneously to overcome those interlingual and intercultural barriers which technology still has not conquered.

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Notes

1. ‘Menschen entwickelten im Gruppenzusammenhang eine bestimmte Sprache, eine bestimmte Art des Verhaltens zu sich selbst und zu den ‘Genossen’ und eine bestimmte Art und Weise, ihre unlebendige und lebendige Umgebung, die Natur, zu deuten, einschließlich der großen Naturphänomene und so unbegreiflicher Dinge wie Träume’ (Claessens, 1991: 50).
2. This is clear from the following statements: ‘By far the most consequential of these effects, I want to argue, is the *formation of cultural identities*. Translation wields enormous power in *constructing representations of foreign cultures*’ (Venuti, 1994: 202, emphasis added). In essence, I would agree with Venuti’s argumentation – as long as the term ‘cultural identity’ is replaced by stereotype or cliché image.
3. An example of this characteristic Anglo-American attitude is provided by Venuti: ‘This project takes as its point of departure the misunderstanding, suspicion, and neglect that continue to greet the practice of translation, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the major English-speaking countries, not only does the volume of translations published remain low; 2 or 3% of the total annual output (roughly 1200 books), but translation is relatively underfunded by government and private agencies, unfavourably defined by copyright law, and virtually ignored by reviewers and readers’ (Venuti, 1994: 219). This may be true of the situation in the

- 'major English-speaking countries' but cannot be elevated to the status of a universal truth. In countries such as Israel, Finland or the Philippines, due among other things to the status of the national language(s), the figures and the situation would be quite different.
4. A good example might be Paul Johnson's article 'Elizabethan Mania' of 13 February 1999, pp.12–13, on the British sense of identity created during the reign of Elizabeth I, as against the present process of being integrated into Europe, of which Johnson states: 'We feel we are being de-Englished, neutered and emasculated'.
 5. Violante-Cassetta may possibly mean 'barely readable'.
 6. Séguinot (1994) has pointed this out for advertising and marketing, but in fact it applies to all professional activity.
 7. This was made by Patricia Vaughan, University of Ceará, Brazil.
 8. Meanwhile a new manual has been produced and the information updated.
 9. There is also an impressionistic drawing of a *Guglhupf* on the front page of the leaflet, but only with a partial view, and for the non-initiated reader this gives incomplete information on its actual shape.
 10. They are often left untranslated, but their basic meaning is made clear from the immediate content. Cf. the debate following Venuti's paper in *Current Issues in Language and Society* 1:3, 1994.
 11. All lexical information verifiable in *Duden Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*.

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