

informATIOn

October 2008

Number 3

Terminology: Words Matter

International Translation Day at Glendon College

By Nancy McInnis, President

International Translation Day was celebrated early at Glendon College this year. On Thursday, September 25, the Albert Tucker Room was once again filled to capacity as students, professors and professionals alike came together to celebrate translation, interpretation and terminology.

This year the focus was on terminology and that made me think back fondly to my years as a salaried translator. Terminology problem? No problem. Just call up the staff terminologist and cry for help. Even though that was back in the days before the Internet and on-line access to Termium and the BTQ, the terminologist always seemed to be able to wave a magic wand and find the solution to the problem. Those were the days when musty card files and over-filled library shelves reigned supreme.

Yet as the first speaker of the evening, Nelida Chan, explained, terminology has come a long way since then. Now there are web-enabled databases that allow translators around the world to work together and build a database. There are terminology extraction tools that pull out candidate terminology from texts so you can go through your translation memories and look at how the terms have been translated. There are bilingual corpora, or bitexts (from the French “bitextes”), that allow you to align two languages and compare sentences or paragraphs.

Ms. Chan also explained that terminology has expanded beyond translation to the world of knowledge engineering. Terminologists are mapping relationships between terms, and this has become an important concept for today’s business world. As part of corporate risk management, businesses are now trying to find ways to ensure that their use of terminology is consistent within the company.

The second speaker of the evening, Denis Perreault, provided us with an introduction to ONTERM, the Ontario government’s on-line terminology tool. ONTERM was born when the

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International Translation Day in Ottawa-Gatineau

By Elisa Paoletti, Director, Foreign Languages

This year’s ITD celebration in Ottawa-Gatineau was held at the *Maison du citoyen*, in Gatineau. I had the privilege of speaking on behalf of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) and shared the floor with colleagues from other professional associations, from the public and private sectors, and from universities.

This year’s theme was “Terminology: Words Matter.” The guest speaker was Gabriel Huard, the Translation Bureau’s Director of Terminology Standardization. We also heard Michel Parent, President of the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC), and Anne-Marie DeVos, President of the *Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec* (OTTIAQ). All speeches echoed the fact that terminologists usually work in the shadows and that there is more to be done to bring the fundamental role they play into the limelight.

I said that as a terminologist myself, I was thrilled to pay homage to the crucial role our profession plays because *words DO matter*. We all know it is not the same to call an interpreter a translator or a terminologist a translator. These seemingly slight nuances to the general public make a world of difference to us. These are

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International Translation Day at Glendon College

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government decided to outsource translation and had to find a way to provide translators with the official names of programs, organizations, departments, geographic names, etc. If terminology was not consistent, a search might lead to the wrong result or to several similar results, and there would be no way of knowing which one was correct.

Translators take note: both speakers suggested that translation has an important role to play in information management through the use of correct terminology. A text may be translated so that the proper message is conveyed, but if the translator translates around a term rather than finding the correct terminology, the information may be lost to other audiences. If there are six names for one concept, how do you find all the information? For want of a terminologist, the information may be lost!



Nancy McInnis and Nelida Chan

International Translation Day 2008 in Ottawa-Gatineau

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words that identify us and define us, and it is in our best interest to tell people what it is that we do and how important it is.

I also highlighted that ATIO has always acknowledged how relevant the terminology profession is. Back in 1996, we recognized this by making TERMIUM the recipient of the ATIO Award and then again in 2003, when the ATIO Award was dedicated to ONTERM.

I added that we not only support full-fledged terminologists, but we would also like to attract new professionals to the field. In this sense, ATIO participated at the Ontario Universities' Fair on September 26-28. I encouraged and invited students to join professional associations and reminded them that ATIO offers free membership while they are enrolled full time and supports them while they study through FondATIO awards and bursaries.

To illustrate these words, members of OTTIAQ, the School of Translation and Interpretation of the University of Ottawa, ATIO, the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), Société Gamma and Traductions Tessier presented awards to outstanding students.

Later, the hosts of the evening, Alana Hardy, from ATIO, and Louise Brunette, from OTTIAQ, invited everyone to visit the different kiosks. Guests could then mingle to talk to colleagues and enjoy delicious appetizers.

ATIO extends warm thanks to Meloche Monnex and Comtra Inc. for their International Translation Day 2008 sponsorship.

Terminology Week 2008 in the National Capital Region

By Elisa Paoletti, C. Tran. (Canada)

Last week, language professionals in general, and terminologists in particular, had the incredible chance to attend many events related to terminology. The IVth *Journée scientifique* Realiter was held on October 6. On October 7 and 8, the IVth Terminology Summit took place, organized by the European Association for Terminology (EAFT) in collaboration with the Government of Canada's Translation Bureau, and held for the first time outside Europe. The week closed with the Terminology in Advanced Management Applications (TAMA) conference, which focuses on language technologies.

Within this eventful week, a cocktail, sponsored by ATIO, was held on Tuesday, October 6, to celebrate both the 40th anniversary of *Terminology Update / Language Update*, the

quarterly publication from the Translation Bureau, and the launch of the book *La terminologie au Canada : Histoire d'une profession*, written by Jean Delisle, Ph.D. in translation, University of Ottawa.

It was an unforgettable evening, since many names that have defined terminology in Canada attended. To name a few, Pierre Auger, Nycole Bélanger, Jean-Claude Corbeil, Robert Dubuc, Nada Kerpan, Louis-Jean Rousseau and Michèle Valiquette were present in the same room. They were joined by colleagues from abroad, among them, María Teresa Cabré, from Spain.

Everyone had a great time after a very intense day. We had time to talk to colleagues from here and to meet those who came afar, and who were delighted by such a warm reception in Canada.

XVIII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators

By Marielle Godbout, C. Tran. (Canada)

The XVIII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) was held from August 4 to 7, 2008 in Shanghai, China, marking the first time that the FIT Congress was staged in Asia. Hosted by the Translators' Association of China (TAC), the Congress took place in the Shanghai International Convention Centre located on the bank of the Huangpu River in the newly developed Pudong district, directly across the river from the historic Bund, heart of colonial Shanghai. The China International Translation Industry Exhibition, co-hosted by TAC and the Shanghai Translation Centre, ran concurrently with the FIT Congress.

Translation and Cultural Diversity, the theme of the XVIII World Congress, was fittingly reflected among the 1,500 participants from 76 countries all over the world. Over the three days of the conference, 90 seminars allowed more than 400 delegates to present research findings and updates on a wide variety of topics, including translation and culture, translator training and new developments in technology.

Four keynote speakers addressed delegates. Yohannes Mengesha, Assistant Secretary of the United Nations, and Karl-Johan Lönnroth, the European Commission's Director General for Translation, both spoke about the challenges of translation in a large, multilingual organization. Wu Jianmin, a former diplomat, recounted some of his personal experiences and the impact of translation. Gu Yueguo, a researcher at the Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Assistant Principal at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, gave a presentation outlining the evolution of the Chinese language and Chinese characters.

Among the 25 Canadians who attended this year's congress were four ATIO members: Luc Bouchard, Denis Bousquet, Marielle Godbout and Fang Sheng. Canadian attendees to the Congress participated actively in the proceedings as session moderators, panel participants and presenters. A number of presentations by the Canadian contingent revolved around professional associations and their administration, one of the main topics of the Congress. Former FIT President Jean-François Joly from Montreal described the organization of translators' associations in Canada. The role of CTTIC in protecting the public was highlighted by CTTIC President Michel Parent, while Johanne Boucher, former President of the Association de l'industrie de la langue/Language Industry Association (AILIA), outlined the role of this organization in promoting and enhancing the competitiveness of Canadian translation service providers in Canada and around the world. Nicole Sévigny, from the federal government's Translation Bureau, described the new Canadian standard for translation services. ATIO member Marielle Godbout explained how the activities of translators' associations



Photo: Marielle Godbout

Marielle Godbout with Marion Boers, new president of FIT

in Canada, as well as those of AILIA, have impacted on the professionalization of translators in Canada. Her statement that the Canadian standard for translation services had just been approved a few days earlier was greeted by a warm round of applause for Canada.

FIT congresses take place every three years. The XIX World Congress will be held in San Francisco in August 2011.

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To Fresh Woods and Pastures New

By Gabriel Huard, C. Tran. (Canada)

Director, Terminology Standardization

Translation Bureau

Public Works and Government Services Canada

Translation Luc Bouchard, C. Tran. (Canada)

Most members of ATIO probably already know the Translation Bureau's Terminology Standardization Directorate (TSD) and its mandate to standardize terminology within the public service. To do that, the TSD created TERMIUM, the Government of Canada's language and terminology database, and has published over the years 325 lexicons, including about fifty that are still available.

The TSD continues to feed TERMIUM at breakneck pace. In 2007-2008, the Bureau's terminologists produced 55,000 TERMIUM transactions for a total of 3,900,000 terms, including 210,000 in Spanish, making TERMIUM both the largest English-French database in the world and the largest Spanish database in the Americas. Last year, it was used about 66,000,000 times.

Last year the TSD also produced three new lexicons related to the Agreement on Softwood Lumber; contract law and tort law (common law); and the names of countries and their inhabitants. These lexicons are compiled at the request of our partners or client departments, in response to a need they express. All lexicons produced since the late 1990s are available for free on the Bureau's website. Of course, their content is automatically added to the database.

However, the needs of the public service are constantly evolving, along with government priorities and demographic realities. For example, we are increasingly asked to work with aboriginal or foreign languages. Meanwhile, Canadian officials are increasingly in need of support when they write, whether in their mother tongue, in the other official language or, for allophones, in both official languages of Canada. Here are some promising initiatives in those fields.

Regarding aboriginal languages, Inuktitut is by far the most translated language in the government, and the Bureau has begun working with the Government of Nunavut to share terminology and support our colleagues in the North in establishing a terminology methodology that meets their needs. Over the past few years, the Bureau has provided terminology courses to some twenty public servants from Nunavut, using terms that are specific to the North. In addition, 10 of the 12 French-English-Inuktitut lexicons produced by the Arctic College in Iqaluit have been revised and made available on the Bureau's website, and there are plans to do the same for the other two. In the same way, a link has been established to the Government of Nunavut's Living Dictionary, an Inuktitut

database. The work performed so far has required the support of an English-Inuktitut translator from the Bureau, but the TSD is about to hire two Inuktitut-speaking terminologists who will coordinate our work with Inuit organizations and provide the Bureau's translators and interpreters with the terminology they need.

As for foreign languages, where the need is even greater, the TSD decided about 10 years ago to create a Spanish section and, more recently, a Portuguese section. This decision is obviously due to the Bureau's large volume of translation and interpretation in these languages. Spanish is by far the most translated foreign language in the public service, while Portuguese ranks fifth. Both languages are, however, united by the geographical reality, given the recent willingness of the government to increase its diplomatic and trade relations with other countries in the Americas. Our team therefore includes four Spanish-speaking terminologists of various origins (Argentina, Canada, Chile, Peru) and a Portuguese-speaking terminologist of Brazilian origin. The TSD is working with several universities in Europe and Latin America to establish terminologies in various cutting-edge fields (wind energy, climate change, etc.).

This international cooperation also extends to Africa, but the background is completely different. At the request of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Bureau became the Canadian correspondent for the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*, and part of the mandate of this organization is to help African countries promote the development of their national languages alongside French. In this capacity, the Bureau has agreed over the years to take part in various OIF-funded projects designed to give partner countries the technology and language tools they need so that their languages can express modern aspects of life. In this regard, the Bureau's experience in Africa has helped us in our Inuktitut projects; even though the languages are very different, the problems are similar.

Closer to home, Canadian public servants are asking for more and more tools to write in both official languages. The Bureau responded a few years ago by creating an electronic magazine: *Language Nook*. The magazine includes articles, exercises and interactive language games that allow Canadians to improve their writing ability in both their mother tongue and their second official language. Articles and exercises are short and touch upon issues of general interest, so a public servant can easily include a lesson or an exercise in his or her schedule and learn gradually, without interrupting the workflow.

The nature of ad hoc requests that we receive daily has also convinced the TSD to offer the public service a new product—*Linguistic Recommendations and Reminders*. Sometimes you can't find the answer to a thorny question anywhere, or you

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To Fresh Woods and Pastures New

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find contradictory opinions, so you need a reliable source to guide your decisions, hence the *Linguistic Recommendations*. The *Linguistic Reminders*, as their name suggests, focus on problems that were thought to be eradicated but seem to be reappearing. Examples of these problems include *affect vs. effect*, *fewer vs. less*, or, in French, *à date*, *aviseur légal*, and so on. The enthusiastic comments (and new questions!) we receive regularly tell us that we are doing something right by offering this new series to our fellow public servants.

In closing this brief overview of the new directions taken by the TSD in recent years, I would like to mention an ambitious project that the Cabinet approved in June as part of the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality*. We are planning to set up *Canada's Language Portal*, which would be available to all Canadians and would include, in addition to a magazine, a comprehensive list of links to all Canadian sites and books related to language. Our hope is to make this portal THE point of entry for all those who are interested in linguistic matters and want to upgrade their knowledge in this field.

As you can see, the Translation Bureau's Terminology Standardization Directorate has greatly diversified its activities

in recent years. In addition to meeting the needs clearly expressed by its clients, the federal public servants, these activities fit in perfectly well with the Translation Bureau's desire to position itself as the supreme language authority of the Canadian federal system, a role which in turn is derived from the mandate given to the Bureau by the Government of Canada.

To fresh woods and pastures new...

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What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up? A Firefighter? A Doctor? How About a Terminologist?

By Elisa Paoletti, C. Tran. (Canada)

Terminologist, Multilingual Team, Professional Development Division

Terminology Standardization Directorate

Translation Bureau

Public Works and Government Services Canada

If you have an inquisitive mind, like to stay on top of the latest developments and breakthroughs, love research and find the peculiarities of language fascinating, then read on!

All of these qualities and interests are put to use in terminology, especially if you work in more than one language. Each language expresses reality in a different way, and this is an important factor to consider when you are searching for equivalent terms—an aspect that adds flavour to this *métier*.

Here, where I work, most people first encountered formal terminology training during their translation degree. In Canada, terminology is closely related to translation. It is required to produce glossaries, vocabularies and specialized dictionaries, in other words, the tools of the trade that enable translators to find equivalent terms in their target language.

The Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada has a team of full-time terminologists who specialize in different fields. Most of them work in Canada's official languages, English and French, but there is also a multilingual team whose members work in Spanish or Portuguese. Its members (including myself) come from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

Many students get to know the Translation Bureau through co-op programs with their universities. Co-op is an excellent opportunity to work in a real professional setting and learn from experienced terminologists and translators.

Many recent graduates have joined the Translation Bureau in the past few months. As soon as they are hired, they begin a formal training program lasting about two years. I speak from personal experience when I say that the program truly reinforces what you learn during your degree. Your supervisor and other seasoned colleagues are always there to support you and guide you along the way.

The training program is divided into five stages. First, you get to know your assigned subject field. Then you learn how to prepare base lists, create and modify term records for TERMIUM®, the Government of Canada's terminology and linguistic database, and eventually turn the product of your research into glossaries. Throughout the training program, you

take on various projects of increasing degrees of complexity. But don't worry; you can always rely on your terminology handbook to help you get your work done and meet the quality standards that distinguish the terminologist's work.

If your performance is satisfactory and you have achieved all the goals set out for each stage of the training program, your supervisor will recommend that you be promoted to full-fledged terminologist.

Are you a thrill-seeker? Then try your hand at an SVP request. While most of your work deals with a particular subject field, you will sometimes receive calls from clients who need an answer when, for example, they are looking for an equivalent that is hard to find or a name for a new concept, in a document they are translating or writing. Once, a colleague and I had to help a client explain in French what some Latin-American treats were. Imagine doing research on *dulce de leche* and *jericya*. Sweeet!

Are you a bit of a technogeek? If so, then you might enjoy terminotics—the use of software tools in processing terminology. The Translation Bureau has its own set of proprietary tools it uses to create and modify term records, as well as to perform automatic extraction and prepare its own glossaries and vocabularies for publication. Depending on the projects you are assigned, you might have a chance to work with all of these tools.

Maybe you have a knack for writing? Put it to work for *Language Update*, the Translation Bureau's quarterly publication. The editorial team is always eager to receive interesting articles about the language industry.

Many terminologists also play an active role on different committees. Depending on your methodology expertise and knowledge of a specific subject field, you could be asked to assist international organizations, like ISO, or other standardization bodies in Canada and abroad.

As you can see, the work of a terminologist caters to all tastes. For more information about working in terminology, contact the Internship Co-ordinator at your school or visit www.jobs.gc.ca to keep an eye on job openings.

Terminologist: A Profession Worth Discovering

By Louis-Dominic Bertrand, Terminologist
Scientific and Technical Division
Terminology Standardization Directorate, Translation Bureau

What do you do for a living?

I'm a terminologist.

Oh...What's that?

For as long as I've been working as a terminologist for the Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada, that is how most of my conversations with people outside of work have started. It's not surprising; before I began studying translation, I had never heard of terminology either. And yet, it is a profession well worth discovering!

For people who are curious, have a knack for languages, enjoy doing research, have strong analytical skills and an eye for details, being a terminologist is a great job. You say you have the same characteristics? If so, you could be on your way to a new career. At a time when many baby boomers are retiring, the language industry is in need of new recruits.

Terminology work at a glance

Terminologists work with terminology. Not surprisingly, each field of knowledge has its own terminology. A terminologist's work consists primarily of identifying the terms in a particular subject field and disseminating them by means of glossaries and vocabularies, or terminology records, which are loaded into computerized data banks. Translators, journalists, writers of all types and the general public all benefit from terminology work.

Since terminology is so closely tied to translation, terminologists in Canada generally work in both official languages. They compile English and French terms for the subject field they are working in and look for equivalents in the other language. When there is no equivalent in the other language (a situation quite common in French, especially in the field of information technology), the terminologist proposes one. Such a newly created term is called a neologism. For example, I recently came upon the term *microhybrid*, which means a type of hybrid car. I suggested the term *voiture à microhybridation*, after learning that French-speaking automotive specialists were still using the English term to refer to this type of car and that no reference book listed a French equivalent.

Terminology at the Translation Bureau

The Translation Bureau's terminology unit is the largest employer of terminologists in the country. Each terminologist is assigned one or more subject fields. I personally work in the field of auto mechanics and printing, but my colleagues

work in fields as varied as botany, economics, computer science, medicine, the military and even sports. In fact, most subject fields are covered. The results of our research end up in TERMIUM, the Government of Canada's terminology and language database. Terminologists who are fluent in Spanish or Portuguese (in addition to both official languages) can work in the unit's multilingual team. What's more, the Bureau is said to have plans in the works for Inuktitut!

You may wonder what kind of things a terminologist is asked to do at work. To give you an example, I recently compiled a list of bilingual terminology for alternative fuel vehicles and updated the TERMIUM records for different types of tires. Did you know that you can equip your car with "self-sealing tires"?

Like all my colleagues, I regularly answer requests for information from Bureau translators and other public servants who ask for our services when they are having trouble finding equivalents for specific terms or when they need to verify their usage.

I also participate in terminology work carried out by a committee responsible for standardizing automotive terminology in France. It should be pointed out that the Bureau works with a number of international standardization organizations, such as ISO. So if you like to travel, terminology can give you the opportunity. My office neighbour, whom I envy ever so slightly, has travelled to Germany and Norway to represent the Bureau at conferences put on by a committee that he belongs to.

Becoming a terminologist

There are several paths you can follow to become a terminologist. In my case, I obtained a bachelor's degree in translation, as did many of my peers. More particularly, I chose the co-op program option, which allowed me to do a work term in terminology at the Translation Bureau. Several Canadian universities offer this type of program.

For more information, visit your school's guidance department, or click on the following link: <http://www.translationbureau.gc.ca>.

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On the Lighter Side: Rates

By Nancy McInnis, President

Our last survey asked you about your rates, what you charge and why you charge it. We thought this would be a hot topic and, while it did generate some interest, we didn't get the response rate we were expecting. Only 12 percent of members took the time to answer our questions. Interestingly though, 73 percent of respondents were certified.

Of the 12 percent of members who answered our survey, half said that their rates were average for their language combination/area of work, one quarter said they charged slightly more than average and one quarter said they charged slightly less than average.

Not surprisingly then, when we asked members how they determined their rates, 44 percent said that they went with the average rate and 39 percent said they went just above or just below the average rate. The other 17 percent said simply that they charged what they needed to make a living.

When we asked members how they explained their rate, 41 percent said that they charged the industry average; 25 percent said that they charged slightly more because of their area of work, experience, training, etc. and 30 percent said that they charged slightly less because they were trying to build their business, attract clients, gain a competitive edge, etc.

There was nothing too earth-shattering in the percentages. It was the comments that were the most interesting. One group of members complained that large agencies undermined the value of a good translation by paying translators poorly (but charging their customers dearly). They said that translators were being exploited and turned into translation machines. Another group said that they kept their rates low because their target market could not afford to pay much, and translation was a necessary service. A third group said that they were very familiar with their subject area, so their high production compensated for their lower rate. They were making a good living, so they didn't feel any need to charge more, even if the market would bear it. A fourth group of members felt that going with an average rate was the only way to go. They felt they needed to find middle ground between expensive translators on the one hand, and production-line agencies on the other. They claimed that charging an average rate helped promote reasonable fees, while preserving the translator's self-respect.

We received comments from individual translators who complained about recent downward pressure on rates. One member said that every time we read an article about the shortage of good translators, we should all charge more!

We heard from members who complained that certification was working against them. They said that advertising that you were a certified translator was akin to saying that you charged more. Yet we also heard from other members who said that ATIO should set a minimum rate and no professional translator should charge less than that rate. They said that mediocre work for ridiculous rates hurt the profession and that the profession should be regulated.

We also heard from those who charged more, who justified their rates by explaining the difficulties they have just trying to get

a final version of a text and the frustration of having to work around different perceptions of what a deadline really means.

Many members said that their rate depended on the type of client, the type of job, the size of the job, and whether the client was a regular or a one-off. Interestingly, we also heard that rate was often less important to clients than the deadline, which was often the most important consideration, followed by quality, and finally the rate.

Lastly, we heard several calls for a new survey of independent translators. It seems that everyone is always interested in rates and what they should charge. We'll pass the word along to our Director of Independent Translators!

Calendar of Events

✓ OCTOBER 2008

October 29-31, 2008: Languages and the Media – 7th International Conference and Exhibition on Language Transfer in Audiovisual Media

Berlin, Germany

Information: <http://www.languages-media.com/>



✓ NOVEMBER 2008

November 5-8, 2008: 49th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association

Orlando, Florida

Information: <http://www.atanet.org/conf/2008/>

✓ DECEMBER 2008

December 8-13, 2008: World Congress on Specialized Translation “Languages and Intercultural Dialogue in a Globalization World”

Havana, Cuba

Information: http://www.fit-ift.org/download/en/pr-acti_cttic-20081208.pdf

✓ APRIL 2009

April 1-3, 2009: International Conference “Translation: philosophical, linguistic and pedagogical perspectives”

Lille, France

Information: http://stl.recherche.univ-lille3.fr/colloques/20082009/Traduction/traduction_accueil.html

April 25, 2009 : ATIO Annual General Meeting

Chateau Laurier, Ottawa

✓ MAY 2009

May 16-17, 2009: ITI International Conference 2009 – Sustainability in Translation

London, UK

Information: http://www.fit-ift.org/download/en/ev-call_for_papers_iti-2009.pdf

✓ JULY 2009

July 9-10, 2009: 3rd Conference of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) Mediation and Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context Monash University

Melbourne, Australia

Information: <http://www.foxevents.com.au/Current-Events/2009-Events/IATIS-Conference/Default.asp>

PWGSC Consultations on Translation Services

By Ken Larose, C. Tran. (Canada)

I have for some time now been attending the meetings of the Commodity Team Consultative Committee – Translation Services, one of many such groups within PWGSC. The work of this particular group began over a year ago, with a general meeting of all stakeholders in Ottawa (CTTIC, AILIA, Translation Bureau, independent translators, companies etc.), followed by a series of meetings in several centres across Canada, which I am sure some readers attended. The stated intent was to rationalize the manner in which the government contracts out translation work in order to simplify the process for contractors, save the government money by reducing the amount of internal administrative work and establish various categories of standing offers and contracts (by monetary amount), with more stringent and complex bidding processes as the dollar amount increases.

After this initial process, a series of regular meetings began in February 2008, with representation from many of the key players mentioned above. The topics covered at the seven meetings to date have been largely based on an AILIA document entitled *PWGSC and official languages translation contracts: AILIA's point of view*.

The range of topics has been extremely broad, and the general aims of PWGSC are relatively clear. However, the conduct of meetings can only be described as loose and unstructured. We have not been proceeding in any logical way from broad principles to implementation details, but rather looking at individual issues out of context. AILIA's clear aim is to have the recently approved Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) standard for translation services adopted by PWGSC as a criterion for qualifying as a bidder on government contracts. While I have no objection to this, I see no reason why any individual or company using only certified translators should have to pay the money involved in the process of adopting the standard, or follow the burdensome procedures that are part and parcel of that standard. I note in passing that, in the course of those earlier CGSB meetings, we (ATIO, OTTIAQ, STIBC, CTINB, CTTIC) were never accepted as being in the "regulatory" category of committee members, but rather relegated to the "general" category. Just as we were not taken very seriously in that process, I see little deference from PWGSC towards our role within the translation process in Canada.

The fault is partly our own. The CTTIC representatives did not come to the meeting with a clearly articulated position on issues of concern to our members. This we intend to correct over the next few weeks in an attempt to determine the extent to which input from participants is taken into consideration by PWGSC.

Several other factors could be detrimental to our existing role and status in the maintenance of high standards for translation, such as the inclusion of FR→EN translation services as a small component of larger EN→FR contracts, the exclusion of independent contractors and small companies from being able to bid on larger contracts, and short- to medium-term downward pressure on rates paid to translators.

Unless a dramatic shift occurs in the way these meetings are being conducted, I would recommend ATIO's withdrawal from the process. We are not really being told where we are headed, or what the potential benefits might be to our members.

The Commissioner of Official Languages has previously expressed concerns about the quality of the language found in government publications and websites, and should perhaps be informed of our concerns about the potential impact of the direction being taken by PWGSC on the quality of translation in government documents. Something needs to be done to improve this consultation process.

A meeting was scheduled for 24 September and plans had been made for Denis Bousquet and me to attend, together with Marcel Gagnon from OTTIAQ, with a clearly stated CTTIC position on key issues affecting our associations, in the hope that we can begin to address such concerns more directly. However, on 15 September we received the following note from PWGSC, no doubt at least in part a consequence of the election campaign.

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"Report des consultations

Malheureusement, les consultations touchant l'initiative d'une nouvelle méthode d'approvisionnement en services de traduction en vertu du cadre de gestion des biens et services sont reportées jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Il est prévu que les consultations reprendront plus tard au cours de l'automne 2008. Mon bureau enverra une notification de la reprise des consultations au moyen du processus de diffusion par courriel. Mes excuses pour tout inconfort que cela pourrait causer.

Veuillez agréer mes salutations distinguées.

Postponement of Consultations

Regrettably, consultations regarding the translation services initiative for a new method of supply under the commodity management framework are postponed until further notice. It is anticipated that consultations will resume later in the fall 2008. Notification of resumption of consultations will be sent by my office using the e-mail distribution process. My apologies for any inconvenience this may cause."

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