

Isadore Pinchuck. *Scientific and Technical Translation*. André Deutsch, London, 1977. 264 pp. Boards R8.25.

Both the theoretical analysis of sound translation practice and the actual process of translation are regarded in this book as a branch of applied linguistics – an approach with which few theorists of translation would quarrel, but which might be less acceptable to practising translators, who tend to work intuitively. The peculiar characteristics of service texts are explored, and this involves a consideration of a certain amount of basic linguistic theory and of different views about the nature of translation. All approaches, from the naïve word-bound approach behind the first attempts at machine translation to the concept of translation as a highly sophisticated activity involving a transfer of meanings, are covered. The units of translation, the scale of equivalence and the pitfalls of synonymy and interference are competently discussed.

The language barrier and the five levels at which a translator works are dealt with comprehensively, from the point of view of a translator working from German to English. (Indeed, German is the source language and English the target language of the examples throughout the book.) Translators working in other languages will nevertheless find much that is of interest. The remarks on collocation – one of the most complex of translating problems – are illuminating.

The characteristics of technical language of various types are explored. While I found the distinctions drawn between 'scientific', 'workshop' and 'sales' language rather artificial, the remarks on the criteria for technical terms are extremely cogent.

The full range of translation procedures and the criteria for successful translation are covered.

After some concrete observations on what help a translator can expect and what constitutes an adequate terminological dictionary, a few valuable hints on the extralinguistic resources available are supplied.

This work provides an invaluable insight into what translation is all about, and is highly commended to the student of translation. The practising translator should also benefit, even though much will be familiar ground.

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Peter Trudgill (ed). *Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English*. Arnold, London, 1978. pp. 186. Boards R23.15.

At the last count, there were about 358 million English-speaking

people in the world. The social implications of this vast usage are clearly of paramount importance. Social values and the ethics of behaviour are indissolubly bound up with the language we speak; so also are the concepts or ideas that civilization uses for its advancement or destruction. And when language changes its form and usage, as it does constantly, then the change is reflected in social mores. Of course, this consequential effect works both ways. The way we behave and think radically alters our mode of expression.

The field of language study especially concerned with the inter-relationship of things done and said is, strictly speaking, that of secular linguistics. The more general term is sociolinguistics, a discipline that embraces such issues as the linguistic identity of social groups, the patterns of national usage, the influence of race, sex, environment, and religion on language, and the social status conferred on the individual by an approved accent and choice of expression. A preliminary discussion of the ramifications of language in relation to society appears in Peter Trudgill's *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction* (1974). The present collection of essays by seventeen linguists, all except one located in higher centres of teaching in the United Kingdom, provides information on current sociolinguistic research into the changes taking place in British English.

Did you know that (in Trudgill's words) 'something is happening to the perfect' in Britain to-day? Several linguists have observed that

increasing numbers of speakers are using constructions such as:

He's played for us last year  
They've done that three years ago

One's initial reaction to observations such as these is that they are nonsense, and that no one would ever say such things. Having been alerted, however, one notices that native speakers *are* using these forms. They may have their origin in a form of blending: *He has played for us* + *He played for us last year*.

(p. 13)

It must be pointed out that the present collection of essays is by no means easy reading for those without some basic knowledge of linguistics. So perhaps the reader unfamiliar with the subject should start with Trudgill's little *Introduction* mentioned previously. Cognoscenti, on the other hand, will find much that is stimulating in, *inter alia*, Jenny Chesire's essay on the violation done to present tense verbs by the small fry of Reading e.g. 'We does things at school with tape-recorders' and 'We has a muck

around in there'. And if you have difficulty making out what the Beatles are singing about, then Gerry Knowles's contribution on the nature of phonological variables in Scouse will help.

In the postscript to *Pygmalion*, Shaw declared that an honest and natural slum dialect is more tolerable than the attempt of a phonetically untaught person to imitate the vulgar dialect of the golf club: perhaps this is so, but as Shaw himself demonstrated an accent cultivated along Oxford or Mayfair lines prevents one from being cut off from high employment. Or so most Englishwomen believe. In the essay 'RP-accented female speech', Olwen Elyan, Philip Smith, Howard Giles, and Richard Bourhis present the statistics of research into RP (Received Pronunciation) and its significance to a representative body of female speakers. They report that

RP women are expected to bear fewer children, to create a more egalitarian relationship with their husbands and are seen to be more masculine in their sex traits (positive and negative) while at the same time being rated higher on the femininity trait than Northern (i.e. North of England) accented females. Thus, we have a stereotyped picture of RP-accented women as highly competent, articulate, lacking in warmth, masculine in certain ways and yet feminine and espousing egalitarian ideals between the sexes. Interestingly, this profile of the RP-accented female is highlighted more by women than by men.

(p. 129)

Which is another way of saying that phonetically the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

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