

**O'CONNELL, E.M.T. (2003): *Minority Language Dubbing for Children: Screen Translation from German to Irish*, Bern, Peter Lang, 211 p.**

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O'CONNELL, E.M.T. (2003): *Minority Language Dubbing for Children: Screen Translation from German to Irish*, Bern, Peter Lang, 211 p.

This is a description of the considerations bearing on the dubbing of two series of German children's programs into Irish. It is also a critique of the translations underlying the dubbing in question. The original German (animated) television cartoon series both bore the title Janoschs Traumstunde, based on the work of Horst Eckert, a well known and widely translated author, whose pen name, at least for his numerous children's stories, is Janosch. The corpus for the study under review was composed of six of the original German programs and the Irish versions of each of them.

The first chapter, "Irish as a Minority Language" (pp. 33-63), recounts the external history of the Irish language in modern times and describes its present status. The author seems to take the position that Irish, though it is learned mainly in school, is a "Low" language in a diglossic relationship which is threatening to degenerate into language shift in favour of English (p. 43). We will be obliged to return to this status question.

Chapters Two and Three ("Dubbing," pp. 65-76, and "Synchrony," pp. 77-99) deal with technical aspects of "revoicing," the general term adopted by the author (p. 65) for four techniques: voice-over, narration, free commentary and lip-sync dubbing. This last is the technique used in the present corpus, a fact which leads the author to explain the types of synchrony required between the (moving) picture originally recorded and the audio script of the translation, which must "match" the movements of the characters, both articulatory and gestual, as well as other visual features of the film. She also evaluates the importance of these different types of synchrony in dubbing generally. Since the articulation of animated cartoon characters is not observable in as much detail as that of human television or film actors, however, the author does not criticize the dubbing of her corpus from this standpoint.

In fact, she does not criticize the dubbing as such, regarding it as "highly professional" (p. 76). Dubbing enters into her critique only insofar as she suspects that considerations of synchrony may have influenced certain parts of the Irish translation which was the input to the dubbing. It is the nature of this translation that is the real focus here. Thus Chapter Four deals with "Translating for Children" (pp. 101-121) and Chapter Five (pp. 123-186) presents the target of her critique: "Lexical Simplification."

The main criticism of the translations underlying the dubbing of this series of children's programs is the loss of information from the original German script, especially through choices within the target language lexicon (p. 28 and Chapter Five). In the author's view, speakers of Irish, and above all native speakers (especially the children, of course), should have been offered a richer and more challenging translation than that underlying the dubbed audio of these programs. More particularly, she says that the Irish version lost information from the original German script by the translating not only of specific terms by

more general ones, but unusual words by common ones; it lost the humour generated in the German original by incongruous combinations of terms; it lost the allusions that adults, adolescents and older children would appreciate (e.g., to traditional children's stories); it lost the lexical cohesion obtained in the original by successions of associated terms; and finally, it sacrificed translation fidelity to certain types of synchrony which are irrelevant in the animation context.

The probable reason for "simplification," which is the author's most general diagnosis of inadequacies she finds in the translation, is not far to seek. In the late 1980's, the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* devoted an entire issue to the macrosocio-linguistic status of Irish (Ó Riagáin 1988). Therein, an article by P. Commins shows that in the late 20th century, census claims of Irish-speaking competence declined in the "Gaeltacht." This term designates the set of pockets, dispersed mainly along the west coast of Ireland, which traditionally have been native-Irish-speaking. Commins' examination of census declarations in these regions showed that claims to be able to speak Irish have correlated with age. That is, in 1971, a census year for which the relevant data are available, 83.3% of respondents aged 65 and over claimed the ability to speak Irish, while this claim was made for only 59.9% of three-to-four-year-olds (p. 21). In 1961, 86.6% of the overall population of the Gaeltacht claimed the ability to speak Irish, while in 1971, the proportion was 82.9% and in 1981, 77.4% (ibidem). The Gaeltacht constitutes about 7% of the area of the Irish Republic, but in 1981 (the last census year before Commins' article), its total population was 79,500, i.e., only 2.3% of the Republic's total (p. 12).

If we return to the three-to-four-year-olds of the 1971 census, we can take 60% as the upper limit on the proportion of thirteen-to-fourteen-year-olds in 1981 in the Gaeltacht who may have been native speakers, ignoring the out-migration of part of this population from these regions, which is mentioned in other articles (Ó Riagáin 1988). [The author of the book under review gives answers to slightly different linguistic questions from the census of 1991: 35.]

Oversimplifying, then, let us extrapolate from the group who were in their early teens in 1981 to the older and younger population. Sixty percent of 2.3% is almost 1.4%; the population of the Republic of Ireland in 1981 was 3,456,522; 1.4% of that population was 48,391. This last figure represents a stab at the number of native speakers of Irish, if we (optimistically) extrapolate from what was claimed about three-to-four-year-olds in the Gaeltacht in 1971. The overall decline, during the late 20th century in these regions, of census claims of ability to speak Irish suggests, however, that native speakers are unlikely to surpass one percent of present pre-schoolers in the Republic.

This age group is the main population targeted by the translations with which the book under review is concerned. These Irish-dubbed programs, then, are primarily aimed at non-native learners, and are part of the prolongation of the 20th-century attempt to teach Irish to the descendants of its native speakers, mainly through the school system. Other articles in Ó Riagáin (1988) deal with this effort, which must not detain us here. The author of the book under review mentions but does not wade into the debate about the numbers and kinds of Irish speakers. She does, however, repeatedly emphasize the linguistic needs of the native-speaking group in her critique, implicitly exaggerating its absolute and relative importance.

Nevertheless, this critique, like the book as a whole, is clear, well-written and relevant to film translation more generally. The reader cannot, however, help sympathizing with the much-maligned Irish translators here. They knew, in 1989, when Janoschs Traumstunde was to be dubbed (p. 73), that English, not Irish, was already the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of the target audience, and that Irish is a dying language which perhaps 99% of present-day young children in the Republic must learn in school, if they are to learn it at all.

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SOMERS, H. (ed.) (2003): *Computers and Translation: A Translator's Guide*, Amsterdam/Philadelpia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, xv + 351 p.

L'ouvrage décrit ici s'inscrit dans la collection *Benjamins's Translation Library* consacrée à la traduction sous toutes ses formes. Son éditeur, Harold Somers, du University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), est bien connu pour sa vaste expérience de recherche et d'enseignement dans le domaine de la traduction automatique. Pour la réalisation de ce collectif, il s'est entouré de spécialistes du milieu de la recherche et de l'enseignement ainsi que du secteur privé. L'ouvrage est avant tout destiné aux traducteurs, mais tous les langagiers le consulteront avec intérêt.

L'objectif de Somers est de clarifier, d'expliquer et d'exemplifier l'influence des ordinateurs sur le travail des langagiers. L'auteur désire aussi permettre aux lecteurs de cerner non seulement ce que la technologie peut apporter comme solutions aux problèmes du traducteur, mais aussi ce qu'elle ne peut pas faire. L'ouvrage aborde autant la traduction automatique (TA) que la traduction assistée par ordinateur (TAO).

Le premier chapitre, rédigé par l'éditeur (Harold Somers) fait acte d'introduction. On y trouve un bref historique de la traduction automatique depuis les idées à la base des premières recherches, en passant par la conception des premiers systèmes, jusqu'aux pistes exploitées dans les plus récentes recherches.

Somers consacre le chapitre 2 au « poste du traducteur ». La première partie de ce chapitre porte sur l'origine de ce concept et sur les divers outils pouvant s'intégrer au poste. Parmi ceux-ci, on compte l'inévitable traitement de texte (compteur de mots, correcteur orthographique, dictionnaire des synonymes), les technologies en concurrence avec le dictaphone, les outils d'édition ainsi que les langages de balisage et de structuration des documents électroniques (HTML, SGML). Le lecteur peut ensuite consulter une courte section consacrée aux dictionnaires électroniques et aux banques de terminologie suivie d'une présentation des fonctionnalités les plus courantes des systèmes de TA et de TAO commerciaux. L'utilité des corpus unilingues et bilingues pour le travail du traducteur est aussi soulignée.

Issues d'une idée lancée au début des années 1970, les mémoires de traduction constituent fort probablement la technologie d'automatisation de la traduction la plus répandue auprès des traducteurs. Dans le chapitre 3, Harold Somers présente les méthodes d'élaboration des mémoires de traduction, les techniques d'appariements utilisées par les logiciels et les critères d'évaluation de ces logiciels. Le chapitre se termine par une mise en opposition des mémoires de traduction à la traduction automatique fondée sur l'exemple afin de permettre aux lecteurs de bien distinguer les deux concepts.

Dans le quatrième chapitre, Lynne Bowker (Université d'Ottawa) s'intéresse à un autre type de logiciel que l'on retrouve de plus en plus fréquemment dans la boîte à outils du traducteur : les systèmes de gestion de la terminologie. Après un bref historique des banques de terminologie et un aperçu des éléments qui composent une fiche terminologique traditionnelle, l'auteure passe en revue les particularités et les avantages des systèmes de gestion terminologique. Une présentation des techniques d'extraction automatique de termes clôt ce chapitre.

Le chapitre 5 est consacré au domaine en forte croissance qu'est la localisation. Bert Esselink (Lionbridge – Amsterdam) brosse un tableau très complet de cette sphère d'activités