

# **Legal Translation in the Classroom, a Case Study**

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This paper is the result of a pilot study on the teaching of certain aspects of specialised translation to final year undergraduate students in the degree course in Modern Languages and to graduate students in the master's course in Interpreting and Translation at the University of Bradford, England. The Department of Modern Languages focuses particularly on the teaching of languages in a contemporary context, emphasising the importance of translation and interpreting skills. Throughout the course, students were exposed to translations of texts with a political, economic or literary theme. Responding to a desire to broaden the nature of specialised translation offered, and to requests from applicants to the MA course in Interpreting and Translation, it was decided to initiate a study on the teaching of legal translation to the two groups mentioned above and to monitor students' progress. The two lecturers concerned in the study, Farid Ait Si Selmi and Helen Trouille, have as their mother tongue French and English, respectively. The study was carried out with the target language of each lecturer's study group being the mother tongue of the lecturer responsible for that group. Thus, the group of final year undergraduates translated into French, and the postgraduate students into English. All of the students were native speakers of English, none had any professional translation experience, and none were specialists in legal translation.

## **Objectives and Methodology**

The overall objectives of the case study were:

- to raise students' awareness of the stylistics, lexical, grammatical and cultural characteristics of legal language across cultures, focussing on French and English
- to pinpoint major areas of difficulty in trying out different methods of teaching legal translation.
- to suggest, albeit tentatively, a possible approach to the teaching of legal translation to non-specialists at the university level.

The same approach was followed in both groups. Students were given legal texts to examine in class and asked to assess the potential difficulties for themselves. Each student then completed the translation individually as homework. The translations were later brought to class where students worked in small groups, comparing versions and evaluating how their peers had worked out the same difficulties. The students whose target language was French compared their final versions with an official translation of the text, which was an international document publicly available in both English and French. Throughout the exercise, students whose target language was English had access to an English document dealing with the same subject their translation from French.

## **The Texts**

The text chosen for use with the group working into French was an official document emanating from the International Court of Justice, entitled *Case concerning Questions of Interpretation and Application of the 1971 Montreal Convention arising from the Aerial*

*Incident at Lockerbie*<sup>1</sup> (See Appendix Ia and Ib). The text (Document I) was chosen because the Court uses two official languages, English and French. Documents are either submitted in both languages or, when submitted in only one, translated into the other official language. The examples presented in this paper are taken from articles 5 and 6 of the above-mentioned document.

The text chosen for use with the group translating into English (Document II) related to police detention procedures in France. The passage was entitled “*Garde à vue*” (See Appendix II) and was taken from the Reader’s Digest book *Le livre conseil de vos droits*.<sup>2</sup> In this case, the English version of the “*Notice to Detained Person*” (Document III; See Appendix III), a document obligatorily given to any person detained in police custody in England, which details one’s rights when in police custody, was provided to students from the beginning. Along with this document, students were also given an official French translation of the English original (See Appendix IV). Students began work on Document II after comparing the two English-based texts and discussing some of the pitfalls of the French version.

This paper deals with some specific aspects of the translation that posed particular difficulty for the students. The examples chosen show that in the language(s) of the law, literal translation focusing on lexical equivalence cannot be used successfully, and that it is important to pay attention to the collocation of words and the syntagmatic relations between them in order to comprehend a text correctly. As Martin Weston explains, “During the course of the twentieth century, critical opinion has swung markedly away from acceptance of literal translation ... as an aim and has come down firmly in favour of functional equivalence (conveying primarily the ideas of the original) as the goal to be attained...” (2). To achieve this goal, our study of legal texts revealed it is important to focus not only on terminology, but also on other linguistic features of the documents, such as connectors and sentence structure.

### **The legal register**

The analysis of languages for special purposes reveals that there are no grammatical features found in one register and not in another. Also, some forms of language tend to be used more frequently in one context than in another. There is a clear tendency for certain registers to favour certain grammatical aspects, but they are common features of the grammar of the language and as such cannot be said to be distinctive forms. Like other languages for special purposes, legal language consists of a large variety of uses including professional communications between legal practitioners (oral or written), court records and the administration and drafting of legislation, to name a few. Moreover, legal terminology, which varies from one country to another, is estimated at between 10,000 and 20,000 words (Gémar, 4). It is impossible, therefore, in just a few lessons, to cover the entire register of any specialised field, let alone one as complex one as the law.

In our translation classes, we decided to choose texts from a variety of fields to meet the needs of students who are mainly linguists and not specialists in any of the areas they are introduced to. Our aim is not to try to cover an entire discipline and dealing with as much language as possible, but rather to teach students to develop an approach to the linguistic characteristics of a text. We choose texts that can be transferred from one register to another. Our overall objective is to prepare our students to handle a wide range of specialised registers which they will be confronted with in their careers as professional translators.

The texts are chosen to illustrate the difficulties that students may encounter when they embark on the translation of legal texts. These usually contain instances of specialised vocabulary but they also form units that can be analysed systematically to develop awareness of the cohesive items of the text and the common features of legal texts. As a result, students can acquire a grasp of the basic linguistic features characteristic of the entire field.

### **Focus on terminology**

In languages for special purposes, translation problems are generally seen as problems of transfer of terminology rather than of the linguistic system as a whole. Registers have been defined from different angles, but all recent definitions include linguistic aspects rather than mere lexical items. For Halliday, a register is “a set of meanings...along with the words and structures that are used in the realisation of these meanings” (2). Similarly, Mounin argues that legal language consists not only of “le lexique spécifique du droit et de quelques particularités syntaxiques propres, mais de toute la langue française” (1). Weston defines registers as language varieties characterised by their “formal properties, i.e. by their grammar and lexis...” (1).

However, in spite of this emphasis on formal properties, structures and syntax, it appears that individual lexical terms continue to be what matters first and foremost for translators. Some guides to legal translation, such as Weston and Elliott, focus on providing accurate translations at the lexical level. They mention other linguistic levels such as grammatical items only in passing, taking it for granted that translators will be aware of them automatically and therefore will not need any guidance or help with them.

In her recent book, Susan Sarcevic laments that “the most existing studies on legal translation deal primarily if not exclusively with terminology... thus giving the false impression that legal translation is a mechanical process of transcoding, i.e. substituting words and phrases of the source legal system by corresponding expressions of the target legal system” (22).

According to Hervey, this focus on terminology is due to “the paramount use of dictionaries and lexically arranged encyclopaedia,” or, as he puts it, the “educational bias.” For Sarcevic, scholars in language for special purposes are also to blame for “spreading this misconception by over-emphasising the role of technical terms in specialised languages.” She argues that legal translation is “essentially a process of translating legal systems” and insists, “the basic unit of translation is not the word but the text” (22). Indeed, a large section of her book is devoted to the grammatical aspects of legal language (chapters 5 and 6). However, a few sentences later, Sarcevic reverts to the predominance of terminology, arguing, “Regardless of the type of text involved, all legal translators must deal with the problem of terminological incongruity.” For her, the translator’s task in translating the source legal system into the target legal system is “to select terminology that will achieve the desired results...” (22). Similarly, Olivia Mok, in her study on *Accessibility of Specialised Lexicon as Criterion for Quality Assessment of Legal Translations*, remarks, “This study has shown that the most readily identifiable linguistic features of a translated text which contribute to the quality of a finished product ... are specialised lexicon associated with legal writing” (Mok, 22).

It cannot be denied that terminology is a major problem in translation, but other linguistic aspects must not be ignored.

## **Culture-bound items**

It is well known that one difficulty of translation in general lies in finding a solution to the problems posed by conceptual difference arising from culture-specific processes, official organisations and institutions.

In legal texts, more than in any other specialised field, translators cannot provide an accurate translation of certain notions unless they have a clear understanding of the overall institutional system to which they belong. Unlike disciplines of the exact sciences whose concepts are shared internationally, the law of a country cannot be separated from its culture. The legal translator has to resort to cultural transposition when confronted with foreign concepts that do not exist in the culture of the target language. According to Newmark, while lexical items are generally “more or less translatable,” a word which denotes an item “peculiar to the source-language culture is more or less untranslatable” (1).

Translating legal terminology is a complex task due to the fact that legal systems vary from one country to another. Gémar argues that this terminology cannot be “exported” because “la réalité d’un pays ne peut être impunément calquée sur celle du voisin en raison des différences socio-culturelles et socio-économiques qui se reflètent dans les institutions” (4). In teaching linguists to translate legal texts, we are confronted with a series of difficulties. The students are not experts in the legal system of the source or target language. Thus, their comprehension of the original text may be imperfect and it is difficult for them to produce an accurate translation of the text. Moreover, students may not be able to select the right language equivalent when they translate into the foreign language as their linguistic proficiency is not always idiomatic.

Indeed, in Document II, students immediately highlighted a certain number of culturally-specific legal terms as difficult to translate. They were able to resolve some quite simply by apparently adequate translations provided by bilingual dictionaries. This is the case with ‘le procureur de la République’, in Document II for example (ii), given as ‘public or state prosecutor’ (Robert & Collins). However, when they researched the matter further, they became aware of the limitations of this rendering. The profession of public prosecutor does not exist in the English system and it is not possible to find direct equivalents within the two systems for the majority of the legal professions. However, the first instance would be an acceptable translation according to Bridge and Weston, who nonetheless warns that the choice of ‘public or state prosecutor’ is successful only when used in connection with criminal proceedings. The scope of the English term prosecutor (and the Crown Prosecution Service) is not as wide as the scope of the French ‘procureur de la République’, who can also play a role in civil proceedings. Thus, some sources suggest ‘Director of Public Prosecutions’ (Weston, 114), but, once more, this is not a direct equivalent since there is only one Director of Public Prosecutions in the English legal system, whereas each ‘Tribunal de grande instance’ in France has a ‘procureur de la République’. Again, the DDP, who has overall responsibility for the Crown Prosecution Service, is only concerned with criminal proceedings and with high profile cases, as a general rule. It is also clear that, in this case, a direct word-for-word translation of ‘procureur de la République’ would have been wholly inappropriate, and fortunately no one attempted it. When ‘public or state prosecutor’ would not produce an adequate translation standing alone, Weston suggests one to ‘transcribe and gloss’ (11).

A further culturally-bound lexical difficulty encountered was the translation of ‘officier de la

police judiciaire' (iii). Collins-Robert gives *official empowered to make arrests and act as a policeman*, a descriptive solution which would have proved inappropriate in our translation. For the general term 'officier', 'officer' appeared the obvious solution, especially when in juxtaposition with 'police'. But this is misleading, for an 'officier de la police judiciaire' is far more than an English police officer, the qualification of 'officier' indicating a higher rank in the 'police judiciaire' than that of the 'agent de la police judiciaire'. For this reason, Oxford-Hachette's 'law enforcement officer' is also not exact. The 'Police judiciaire' is given by Collins-Robert as 'Criminal Investigation Department (CID)', an English institution, which in terms of structure is not synonymous with the French 'police judiciaire'; therefore, to attempt to find an exact equivalent in terms of rank and function would be very difficult, and further complicated by the fact that an 'officier de la police judiciaire' is also to some extent an umbrella term which can cover a number of different functions (eg maire, préfet, senior members of the 'gendarmerie' or 'police nationale' can all be 'officiers de la police judiciaire'). Bridge suggests 'senior police officer' or 'senior law enforcement officer', and most students opted for the former. In this case, it is conceivable that a mistranslation could have had consequences for the rights of the detained person, since it is only the senior police officer and the public prosecutor who are empowered to designate a doctor to carry out medical examinations on detained persons.

### **Polysemy and syntagmatic relations**

Translation exercises show that the meaning of an expression is rarely literal, i.e. as listed in the dictionary. Words normally combine with other words to form new meaningful expressions whose meanings can be different from the meanings of each of the combined elements. In other words, students must be aware of the meaning of words when used with other words with which they collocate to form a different meaning. The word "law" is a good example: it corresponds to several words in French depending on the context in which it is used. It can be translated, among others, as 'la loi' in *to break the law*, 'le droit' in *criminal law*, 'justice' in *a court of law*, 'la législation' in *the law as it stands* or into a different equivalent as 'l'ordre public' in *law and order*. Below are some examples from our sample:

Document I:

6.1 the law of that State = la législation

5.3 national law = les lois nationales

Similarly: criminal can be translated as 'criminel' but

5.3. criminal jurisdiction = compétence pénale

The Council of Europe's *lexique anglais-français* gives a number of equivalents for 'criminal' listed under four categories: 'pénal' (Criminal law), 'répressif' (Criminal justice), 'judiciaire' (criminal record) and 'criminelle' (criminal attack).

Document II:

i. De nature criminelle = grave offences

In this case, 'criminel' is the adjective derived from 'crime', in contrast to 'contravention' or 'délit', and a gloss is actually provided in the text, "punissables d'un emprisonnement égal ou supérieur à 5 ans."

These examples also show that, in translating legal terminology, as is the case for other specialised fields, some words are familiar to the translator because they are used in everyday language, but they take on a specialised meaning in legal texts. Access to an up-to-date dictionary is essential, though even the best dictionary cannot give every possible instance in

which a term could occur, and they certainly rarely give one unambiguous equivalent for technical terms, since lexical items are rarely monosemous. Dictionary definitions of words are often given in the form of synonyms, leaving the user to choose the most appropriate one for a given context. Gémard points out that legal terminology is extremely abundant and ambiguous. It is characterised by “une grande abondance de termes, une polysémie chronique et une synonymie non moins importante.”

The Collins-Robert dictionary definition of *offender* is ‘délinquant, contrevenant’ which can be used appropriately in certain legal translations but not in the text chosen here, where its translation should be the less specific ‘auteur de l’infraction.’ How can a student produce this phrase when it does not appear in the dictionary under ‘offender’? And when it does appear, as in the lexique anglais-français, it is given next to ‘agent de l’infraction’ and ‘infracteur’. The context in which words occur is fundamental to the choice of an adequate equivalent: ‘offence’ has a number of equivalents (délit, infraction, violation) as does ‘custody’ (garde à vue, emprisonnement, état d’arrestation, détention préventive, détention provisoire).

### **Cohesion and Connectors**

A specialised dictionary, such as *The Council of Europe French/English English/ French Legal dictionary* or Quemner’s *Nouveau Dictionnaire Juridique français-anglais*, could be helpful in solving lexical problems, but no dictionary can be of use in choosing the appropriate grammatical item for a given context. The study of the linguistic devices that link phrases, sentences and paragraphs together to form cohesive units of meaning is as important as studying the terminology of a specific field. By analysing the grammatical aspects of a text, we consider a text at the discourse level rather than as a sequence of isolated sentences. Indeed, part of the meaning of a text is conveyed by grammatical structure. Therefore, together with terminology, students must develop a feel for the right grammatical elements.

Although we are dealing with classroom translation as an academic exercise, students should be aware that a professional translation is usually intended for a particular audience. Therefore, the linguistic characteristics of a translated text will differ according to the specific audience to which it is addressed and the purpose it sets out to achieve (descriptive, argumentative, narrative, legislative). We chose a sample of an authoritative text used in communication between lawyers (Document I) and another with an advisory or informative function addressed to non-specialists (Document II). International conventions such as the one referred to in this paper are aimed at lawyers who may take advantage of the smallest ambiguity of any translation loss that may occur in the target text. It is therefore important that the translation be as precise and as close to the original as possible. Although aimed at different audiences, these texts show a number of linguistic similarities making it difficult to translate regardless of the language of the translation.

The language of Document I is very formal, a formality reflected in the use of impersonal structures, and notably the third person singular, characteristic of legal texts. The third person is a neutral form, and it is the form in which to present a statement as authoritative. Sarcevic remarks that “Anglophone drafters commence universal provisions with *every person, all persons, each person*” - as we see in Document I. She finds that “francophone drafters prefer impersonal formulations ... such as ... *il peut* for *every person may*,” (17) but the French-language versions of both our texts used ‘toute personne’. This is another example of how French and English seem to view things differently. Where English refers to things as separate entities using ‘each’ or ‘any’, French seems to consider them collectively, using

‘tout’ instead of ‘chaque’.

#### Document I

5.1 Each contracting State = Tout Etat contractant

6.1 Any contracting State = Tout Etat contractant

6.3 Any person in custody = Toute personne détenue

French grammar defines ‘tout’ as “un déterminant à valeur collective,” while “chaque est un déterminant distributif, c’est-à-dire qu’il marque que l’on considère en particulier les divers éléments d’un ensemble” (Grévisse).

While it cannot be denied that structures such as ‘est coupable de’ and ‘le fait de’ have a considerable degree of impersonalisation, the third person singular form ‘toute personne’ also has a similar effect, and contrasts with the very informal language used in the English ‘Notice to Detained Person’, Document III, which is written in the second person singular. It is true that the audiences of Documents II and III are not the same, the French document appearing in an informative book of reference, and the English document to be handed to a person in detention at a police station, but the English document perhaps also bears witness to the commitment of public bodies to the use of plain English.

Clarity and precision are also achieved by using anaphoric items to refer back to previously mentioned elements in the text. These help in determining the interpretation of sentences. Let us consider the following examples which illustrate the difficulty with which students are confronted in their choice of demonstratives:

#### Document I:

That = ce, cet, cette

5.a the territory of that State = le territoire de cet Etat

5.b registered in that State = immatriculé dans cet Etat

However, when a term has already been mentioned in a legal text, French uses ‘ledit, ladite, le/la/dit(e)s’, or even more specifically ‘le susdit’.

5.d his permanent residence = sa résidence permanente dans  
in that State = le dit Etat

6.1 the law of that State = la législation dudit Etat

5.2 relates to those offences = concerne lesdites infractions

Similarly *such* is rendered with ‘ledit’

6.2 Such State shall... = Ledit Etat.

The following example where ‘that’ is rendered by ‘ce dernier’ shows that French needs another degree of precision with demonstratives:

5.2 In so far as that paragraph = pour autant que ce dernier paragraphe

‘This’ is used to express a relation of greater proximity in time and place. It is systematically translated as ‘le présent’ especially in section 5.2 and 6.4 where reference is made to other articles and paragraphs. The use of ‘ce/cet’ would be too vague and therefore it is necessary to resort to an expression such as ‘le présent’.

5.2/6.3 in paragraph one of this article = paragraphe 1 du présent article.

5.3 This convention = la présente convention.

As in general English, the English definite article, which can be ambiguous, is often equivalent to a French demonstrative:

6.1 The custody and other measures = Cette détention et ces mesures

When translating Document II from French into English, students automatically tended to translate 'ce/cette' by 'this', which is unusual in English. Instead of a demonstrative, one would expect to find a definite or even indefinite article, a paraphrase, or perhaps the use of 'such a' in the interests of precision.

ii. cet appel = such a phone call

iii. cette personne = the detained person

iii. cet examen = a (medical) examination

'Ce délai est de 36 heures...' (iv) was rendered simply as 'or 36 hours...' To avoid potential ambiguity, 'ce/cette' could be modified in order to be more precise as in

iii. cet examen = a medical examination

iii. cette personne = the detained person

The last two sentences of paragraph (iii) of Document II use a demonstrative three times, where English would use a different formulation on every occasion (e.g. 'the detained person', 'a medical examination', 'which', respectively).

The use of personal pronouns and possessives can also be problematic for students in terms of gender reference. In Document I, the problem of avoiding sex bias has been resolved by using, systematically, the masculine pronouns 'he, his' for all noun phrases referring to human beings.

Document I:

5.d. a lessee who has HIS residence = qui a sa résidence

6.1 Such person.... HIS detention = sa détention

This of course is not a problem in translation into French since the possessive agrees with the object possessed rather than with the possessor. The problem arises for personal pronouns which have to agree with the noun they replace:

6.1 the offender shall take HIM into custody

6.3 Any person. The state of which HE is national

The French version of Document I avoids using a pronoun. The author resorted to an indefinite noun such as 'auteur', 'personne'

6.1 l'auteur de 'infraction... assure la détention de cette personne

6.3 Toute personne.... dont elle a la nationalité

The use of the possessive pronoun was a matter for discussion in Document II, since three paragraphs begin with 'Toute personne'. For this reason, some students opted to use the second person singular in place of 'toute personne', as in Document III, followed by 'your'. Others opted to juggle with 'them' and 'his or her'. The French text has a tendency to avoid the possessive, repeating instead, as in Document I, the noun preceded by a demonstrative: 'Toute personne gardée à vue peut demander à être examinée par un médecin... Un membre de la famille de cette personne...'

### **Modality**

In English, legal commands are expressed by the use of 'shall' which students generally translate into a future tense. This practice of imposing legal duties by the legal imperative 'shall' is "a long standing practice dating back to English translation of Roman law texts" (Sarcevic, 13).



Document I:

5.1 Each contracting State shall take such measures... tout état contractant prend des mesures...

6.1 shall take him into custody = assure sa détention

6.4 The State shall promptly report = L'Etat communique rapidement

In French, legal commands are commonly expressed by the indicative present tense, or normative indicative. The use of this tense to express legal obligation is prescribed by the *Règles de techniques législatives* of the EU which also warns against using the future tense and confirms the use of 'shall' in English (Sarcevic). Similarly, where English uses 'will' to express the idea of a future possibility, French uses the present tense, for example:

The management will not be responsible for lost articles = La direction n'est pas responsable des objets perdus.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, who gave this example "le français préfère l'absolu au contingent: maintenant ou plus tard, la maison n'est pas responsable" (13).

Our students did not seem to realise the use of 'shall' expressing obligation. They confused the future modals 'shall' and 'will', and invariably used the future tense where the present was required.

6.3 Any person in custody ...shall be assisted in communicating = Toute personne détenue... peut communiquer...

In this instance, not only is there a change in tense but also in modality, from obligation to possibility with the French 'peut'. In Document II, 'peut' is repeatedly used to express a facultative option - the detainee is free to make a certain number of requests if he or she chooses to do so. Students tended to choose the obvious 'can', and did not immediately recognise that, in this instance, it is a matter of authorisation ('may') rather than physical ability ('can'). There is a clear difference in this text between expressing authorisations using 'peut' and obligations using the normative indicative:

iv. Toute personne gardée à vue peut demander à s'entretenir avec un avocat lorsque 20 heures se sont écoulées depuis le début de la garde à vue. Ce délai est de 36 pour certaines infractions particulièrement graves...

The use of 'doit' expressing obligation in the final sentence of this text allowed students the possibility of using the imperative 'shall' in English:

v. La personne gardée à vue doit être informée ... de l'ensemble de ses droits = The detained person shall be informed of his rights.

### **Conditional Clauses**

As is common practice in legal texts, series of conditions are set apart by being placed in columns or paragraphs. Each enumeration is introduced by the conditional marker, but where the English version uses the conjunction 'when', the French uses 'si'. For example, in Document I, the four conditions in 5.1 begin with 'when':

5.a a) when the offence is committed... si l'infraction est commise

In this case, French does not appear to prefer 'l'absolu au contingent' since 'si' refers to a

hypothetical event, while ‘when’ refers to a more probable reality.

In the second article, however, ‘when’ is rendered by its formal equivalent ‘lorsque’ French, rather than ‘dans le cas où’ or another conditional locution.

6.4 When a State has taken a person into custody = Lorsqu’un Etat a mis en détention...

In the past, translators have followed the syntax of the source text “...out of fear that any changes might disturb the thought process” (Sarcevic, 162). However, with a proper understanding of the legal language and the message it conveys, it is possible to use different syntactic structures to express the same idea. Sarcevic remarks that “...translators are now widely permitted to select the formulation which expresses the propositional content of the fact-situation most clearly and effectively in their own language” (Sarcevic, 166). There is, therefore, no obligation to translate ‘when’ by ‘quand’ or ‘lorsque’, nor ‘if’ by ‘si’. In Document II, conditional clauses commencing ‘si’ or ‘lorsque’ are often best rendered by a paraphrase. Thus, ‘si les nécessités de l’enquête l’exigent’ (ii) becomes ‘in the interests of the inquiry’. Similarly, ‘lorsque la personne...est un mineur’ (iv) may be translated ‘in the case of a minor’.

## **Conclusion**

One of the objectives in these translation exercises was to ensure that students made the right ‘strategic decisions’ about the genre-marking characteristics of the text before starting their translation and, by extension, to help them make adequate “decisions of detail” (Hervey and Higgins) when dealing with specific lexical and grammatical problems.

A multi-level approach ensures that students acquire the techniques to develop some proficiency in translation by raising their awareness of the specialised register and how language is used for general or special purposes.

In the course of our work, we found that the linguistic problems encountered in legal translation were not that different from those encountered in translating other genres. Taylor argues that producing a correct translation “requires a rather different mental approach than many other genres” (27). Yet his advice to translators does not seem to contain any recommendations that would be valid for legal translators only.

“In their search for the right (or initially right-sounding) term, syntagm or expression, translators must remember that their choices are limited by collocational restrictions that are sacrosanct in legal discourse. It is possible that such language is unknown or only partially familiar to the translator, and recourse to authentic documentation, legal glossaries ... may be absolutely necessary” (Taylor, 276-7). This, we believe, is sound advice for any person embarking on translation work of any kind.

Bearing in mind that we are training English linguists whose knowledge of British and French law is limited to the articles that they read in the newspapers, our overall aim is to help them minimise translation loss in order to achieve a translated text which is linguistically adequate and which preserves the cultural features of the original text. They are also aware that they need to develop technical expertise in the legal field if they intend to become specialists in legal translation. To this end, they may need to have recourse to a whole range of text books and dictionaries for the specialist and non-specialist alike, they may use the ever-widening possibilities proposed to them by world-wide web, and they would also ease their task by

visiting law courts and observing procedures.

We hope to have developed students' confidence to approach legal translation in a more systematic manner and equipped them with the necessary tools to make the right choices in solving problems with the translation of legal or other specialised texts into an adequate target language version.

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