

Letters

Email linguist.editor@googlemail.com with your views

Let's get 'The Linguist' online

I want to congratulate you on the makeover. These days, each issue of *The Linguist* covers a wide range of interesting topics in lively fashion, the writers are expert and experienced, and visually the pages have woken up to modern journalism. I thought the article about the language views of the American presidential candidates was particularly timely (TL 47,5).

But I have a request: could you bring *The Linguist* up-to-date by making it available in electronic format? A recent issue states, "The Linguist is online via the IoL website with summaries of the main articles." So I looked at the website and all I found were lists of contents with one-line descriptions.

There are at least three advantages to electronic publishing: 1) machine searchability, instead of having to wade through hundreds of pages; 2)

compactness and portability (I live in a flat and have little room for storing more paper); and 3) economy – internet distribution is cheaper and faster than paper, printing and postage. Not that people should be deprived of the traditional medium, but some would accept the internet as an alternative.

Brian Harris FCIL

Editor replies:

This is something we are looking into. We hope to provide an online version of *The Linguist* to members and subscribers once the Institute's website has been redesigned. In the past, the website did have summaries of the main articles but since this is no longer the case we have removed the reference to the website recently.

Translation of libretti unsound



© INGER ANNE HULBÆKDAL/DREAMSTIME.COM

I found the articles by Marcia Lemke-Kern most interesting (TL 47,5 & 6), particularly as I taught Italian at a specialist music school in Edinburgh for many years. One small point: I cannot find a copy of the libretto of *Il Seraglio* to check, but I wondered if the English translation for *Chi sol, sol sempre amare* ("Him alone will I love for ever") was correct. I suspect it comes from one of those old-style English singing versions of opera libretti, which often bear only a passing resemblance to the original. The Italian means, I think, "Those who (are accustomed to) love, must always love". In other words, the *sol* is not *solo* ("only/alone") but from the verb *solere*.

Caroline Higgitt MCIL

'Sworn translation' doesn't apply

In Poland, the phrase "sworn translator" is often used as a synonym for "good translator", so it is no wonder that when looking for someone to translate their school diplomas or course certificates, the majority of Polish immigrants working in the UK are looking for no less than that: a sworn translator. They cannot know that sworn translation does not apply in the UK, and any translator who points out that there is an absence in the UK of the regulations that our colleagues on the continent are subjected to is likely to lose a potential customer. No doubt that customer will soon find someone who claims to have a licence or to be entitled to certify translations in the UK, however unfair the practice (to fellow translators) and deceptive (to the customer).

In reality, no such formal stipulation exists in the UK. And yet the UK market teems with self-proclaimed "sworn translators". They offer their services in free Polish-language magazines and online. A Google search produced 433 references to *tłumac przysięgły* ("sworn translator") on UK-based websites, including one site that actually has *tłumac przysięgły* in its domain name. When a

London-based Polish translation agency was asked to abandon the practice of claiming that they have sworn translators they threatened legal action, arguing that their ads make the distinction clear between sworn translations provided by their collaborators authorised by courts in Poland and certified translators for the UK market. This is clearly an important issue. By offering the customer an illusory extra service, translators can charge much more (for example, ordinary translations at £10 per 1,800 characters; sworn translations at £15 per 1,125 characters).

The free Polish-language magazines circulating in London tend to perpetuate this impression. One reported recently on how many sworn translators there are operating in Bristol; another advised prospective students to submit a sworn translation of their diploma to their chosen university.

It would be interesting to know if there are also *beeidigte Übersetzer*, *traductores jurados* and *traducteurs jurés* out there, ready to exploit their German, Spanish and French compatriots' unfamiliarity with the UK's amazingly unregulated ways.

Wojtek Jasiewicz MCIL

The wrong war

I was surprised to see the gloss for "Cold War" from a recently published handbook (quoted in "Translation Now 54", TL 47,6). In fact, *drôle de guerre* and *Sitzkrieg* are equivalents of the "Phoney War" between September 1939 and the German *Blitzkrieg* of May 1940. "Cold War" is simply *guerre froide* etc.

John Whitton ACIL