
Gouadec, Daniel. *Translation as a Profession*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007, 396 p.

In *Translation as a Profession*, Daniel Gouadec provides a detailed step by step how-to regarding the process of becoming a successful professional translator. Gouadec holds professional translators to a high standard of professional etiquette. He states that translators “are in fact experts in multilingual multimedia communication engineering”. He works to point out the multidimensional nature of being a true professional translator. His theories take translation beyond having a mastery of linguistic skills and writing ability. He believes that the mastery of cultural, technical, and commercial skills is also essential. This work is drawn from the results of the author’s own studies as part of developing a translation quality management project in the form of surveys taken by translation professionals over the past 15 years, as well as the 2002 publication of *Profession Traducteur*.

Lacking a detailed bibliography, the author draws the material for his book mostly from personal experience and the surveys he has gathered over the years. As a professor at the University of Rennes, Gouadec is head of the University’s Translator-Training Institute, and with this book he combines his life experiences with that of other professional translators to provide a very detailed and coherent outline on the “translation process from A-Z”.

Translation as a Profession is split into six sections that cover what Gouadec feels to be the five broadest ranging themes within professional translation as well as a general overview on industry tendencies. The author also includes a detailed glossary which gives definitions of pertinent terms in addition to an in-depth index to provide the reader with quick access to key subjects. The first section, “Overview”, aims to point out the level of professionalism that exists within this industry and how diverse the occupation can be. Gouadec makes the bold statement that “If professional translators get satisfaction from their work, they certainly do not translate for the sheer pleasure of translating. They

mean business.” Section two, “The translating profession”, focuses on the profession itself and its available jobs, highlighting the current tendencies of job availability and diversity within the different sectors of the industry. Gouadec’s focus, however, is on the European translation market, where this activity is a more prevalent industry. Even so, this book’s ideas are applicable to a wide range of translation settings in a global context.

His third section, “Becoming a translator”, explores what it actually takes for one to become a translator. The author makes the straightforward statement that “no one is a born translator”. With this introduction to the section, Gouadec goes on to explain the needs, skills, and amount of practice that is necessary in order to perform successfully as a professional translator. Following this logical order, his fourth section is “Being a translator”. Here, he explores the current issues facing translators in today’s job market, such as what can be expected in terms of pay and working hours, and the range of professional titles and certifications which can reinforce a translator’s credentials.

The fifth section of the book, “Evolutions and revolutions”, deals with new technologies being incorporated into the translation profession that have turned the industry into more of an automated process, one that demands a high degree of technical proficiency. Gouadec insists that a translator’s computer should be top-of-the-line and replaced every two years to keep up with evolving software requirements. For him, the translation industry is dominated by the technology industry. The evolving nature of translation is pushing it further and further away from the pen and paper approach that has been dominant since the practice began. The computer world has created the possibility of receiving a text via PDF file, translating it on a personal computer with applicable software, sending the translation back to the source via e-mail, and having remuneration wired directly to a bank account. Given the nature of the industry, it comes as no surprise that Gouadec insists that technical mastery plays a vital role within the industry. Gouadec addresses the technology revolution in a subsection entitled “The unfriendly revolution”, in which he argues

that even though machine translation may seem unfriendly to a formerly human-based industry, it is certain that many “types of documents are perfectly suited to machine translation”, and that this revolution is here to stay. From complex all-in-one translation memory packages such as IBM’s Translation Manager™, to translating text on the automated www.babelfish.com, the technological nature of translation, Gouadec argues, will only continue to evolve as industry and government investors continue to promote “machine translation in the name of technological progress.”

Gouadec’s final section returns to the start of the life cycle of a translator by discussing the importance of educating translators with a well-designed curriculum. In “Training translators”, Gouadec points out that potential translators need instruction beyond the basic language and writing courses offered by universities today. He sees a trend in more translator-oriented classes and degrees being offered by universities, though they are still limited in number. A lack of proficient and well-trained translators, he believes, will be the

Achilles heel of the translation industry in the future as translation demands increase and the ever-evolving nature of the industry requires constant adaptation. Gouadec emphasizes that it is only through structured translator training curriculum that we can best combat the deficiencies within the industry.

Translation as a Profession provides a checklist style approach to succeeding in the world of professional translation. Gouadec describes industry tendencies, requirements, and opportunities that will be useful to those wanting to be a part of this industry, whose diversity creates a broad-ranging job market catering to people with different skill sets. The author, having developed a translator training based curriculum, affirms the importance of having a mastery over a multitude of skills while further taking the time to specialize in a select few. Providing a detailed look at the whole translation process, *Translation as a Profession* is best suited for those involved with the translation industry and those seeking to enter it.

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