

Editorial

I am delighted to welcome you to the first edition of *JoSTrans*, the *Journal of Specialised Translation*. This is a bi-annual web-based publication which aims to provide a new platform for professionals in the fields of translation and interpreting.

These two professions are governed by four factors: the global context in which they operate, a heightened awareness of diversity, the development of communication at increasingly specialised and complex levels and an ever increasing speed of communication. *JoSTrans*, has been created with these features in mind. In the last decade, resources available to translators, interpreters and academics have developed considerably. Electronic dictionaries and other sources are now available in most fields and most languages. A range of publications, discussion groups and forums is available to consider relevant issues and share information: from journals such as *Meta* (Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal), which replaced *The Translator's Journal* in October 1956 and which emphasises a comparative approach from the start and is still a landmark in the field, to the recent *Forum* (co-published by the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, and the Korean Society of Conference Interpretation), which aims to get away from the Western-centred approach which has characterised translation research, or the web-based *Translation Journal* (<http://accurapid.com/journal/01index.html>), prioritising accessibility; each publication has its own specialism. As the director of a postgraduate course in translation, I felt that a journal dedicated to specialised translation was needed, both to promote research in non-literary communication and to exchange information between translators, subject-field specialists and academics. The diverse attributes mentioned earlier have direct consequences in the world of translation which we intend to take into account in this new translation journal: the speed at which knowledge evolves and is exchanged; the fact that, with over 6000 official languages and 192 countries in the world, a lingua franca is an indispensable communication tool, but that English cannot replace a native tongue for writers of other languages. If we want diversity to be expressed, multilingualism has to be promoted. It is now well established that translation is as much about cultural transfer as it is about linguistic transfer. Yet, we still often limit the notion of culture to traditional forms of artistic expression. Culture permeates all mind-related activities, as any non-literary translator finds out, and is found in the professional world as well as in art galleries. Expressing yourself in your language on any topic also means expressing our culture in the widest sense of the word. We want *JoSTrans* to be a truly transcultural publication by being open to different languages and cultures and by discussing cultural issues relating to non-literary translation. Some current translation journals offer bilingual articles, but minority languages on the whole are excluded from mainstream publications for commercial reasons, and their writers tend to have no choice but to write in English to make their voice heard. Culture

may be "what is when all has been forgotten" as states the old oriental adage famously rephrased by Edouard Herriot. But when languages are forgotten, so are cultures, and half of the 6000 languages spoken on our planet are estimated to be endangered or dying out¹. Publications mirror the state of the world but they also allow us to shape it to a degree. *JoSTrans* intends to contribute to turning what is sometimes in the publishing world a hollow concept into a reality. Speed is another issue mentioned in the first lines of this editorial. Paper publications, particularly when they are produced through the academic network, can take a long time before they are available. Information may lose its relevance by the time it is circulated. The Web allows us to update information at the click of a button and produce publications cheaply and globally. Our aim is to publish both peer-reviewed articles biannually, as well as pieces reflecting what is happening now, such as events, professional interviews, topical issues, on a more regular basis. To promote accessibility, the editorial board decided to issue this journal free for a period of two years. The situation will be reviewed in 2006, when we may decide to publish a paper version of the journal too.

The idea of *JoSTrans* originated among a group of colleagues, in a spirit of collaboration. The core members of the journal team are European and based in London. It is our intention however develop more collaborative links with Africa, America and Asia. The current journal description of *JoSTrans* is available from the homepage, but as comments from contributors and readers reach the editorial board, it will evolve to reflect the ideas and suggestions that are passed on to us.

This venture is a challenge and an opportunity for language mediators who have not only to transfer information but to adapt it and often produce the words to express new concepts. *JoSTrans'* mission echoes the translator's role: it aims both to mirror and create the multicultural world we all shape and share.

¹ Stephen A. Wurm, *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, Unesco Publications, (1996), 2003.