The teaching of Arabic translation
and Interpreting in Australia

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INTRODUCTION

The paper deals with the teaching of Arabic translation and interpreting not in an Arab environment but in a multicultural and multilingual society. It looks at the major differences in the aim of teaching the advanced linguistic skills of translation and interpreting. It also identifies the challenges and problems facing translation pedagogy which deals with a new generation of Australian-born Arabs.

The department of immigration and Ethnic Affairs, in the state of New South Wales, deals with translation and interpreting requests in almost 140 languages. The Telephone Interpreting Service TIS deals with requests for almost a 100 languages on a daily basis. Needless to say almost all the world's major languages and cultures are represented in the Australian linguistic mosaic.

It is therefore not surprising that the need for an efficient traductological base is both obvious and imperative. Such base would cater for the community needs and also produce and train professional practitioners. Thus in 1973 TIS was launched to respond to the more urgent needs of the community over the phone. Twenty one years down the track the service has gone substantial improvements to its profile and proficiency. It still provides its service to the public free of charge.

However, in the early years the engagement of translators and interpreters was not regulated by an official body capable of professionally testing and selecting such practitioners. In 1978 the National Authority for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters widely known as NAATI was established. Today it is the official body which concerns itself with the testing, accrediting and recognising academic qualifications in translation and

interpreting gained overseas. In other words NAATI is concerned with the academic issues of the profession at the pre-accreditation stage.

In 1987 the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators commonly known as AUSIT was established. It concerns itself with the professional and more practical side of the industry. AUSIT looks at matters such as professional ethics the practitioner's profile in society, scale of fees, professional indemnity and working conditions.

Political as well as socio-economic changes in the late eighties prompted a change towards an interest in foreign languages in Australia. For a long time, and indeed since the early beginnings of non Anglo-Saxon migration to Australia, the learning of foreign languages was confined to French and German. Italian and Greek followed as representative of two large linguistic communities. In the wake of the second world war other languages started to make their appearance.

At that stage the linguistic interest was narrowly confined to the English language on the premise that migrants' need to speak English was greater than the Australian population's need to learn the migrants' languages. This lead to foreign languages being suppressed (except French and German). It is also true to say that the erroneous conviction that English is widely spoken and that everybody else had to speak English to do business with us was, until very recently, deeply rooted in Australia

With the advent of the nineties Australia faced a recession at a time when its Asian neighbours were achieving almost double-digit growth rate. This prompted the political think tank to take a closer look at the geopolitical position of Australia. "Comfortable assumptions about the likely customers for Australia's products have had to be discarded. The likely buyers speak Japanese, Spanish, German, and Arabic more often than English at home. They are more wealthy and more in control of their national destinies than they were at the time when many of the still prevailing assumptions about them were formed". (Lo Bianco, 1992: 19). A new found interest in foreign languages was emerging with a particular leaning towards Asian languages. Of these languages, Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Arabic were among the high demand languages.

In 1991 a National Language Policy (DEET 1991) commonly known as the White Paper readdressed the issue of foreign languages within the Australian society: "Proficiency in our national language, Australian English, is obviously necessary for an individual to participate as fully as possible in Australian society. But as important as proficiency in Australian English is for Australians, we also need to enhance our ability to communicate with the rest of the world" (DEET 1991: iv). The paper also spoke of *Global economic forces* which are demanding changes in the structure of the Australian industry. It also identified fourteen languages as priority languages. Arabic,

Chinese and Japanese are among these priority languages. I will concentrate more on Arabic but I will refer to Chinese and Japanese occasionally and solely for pedagogic reasons.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) there are almost 250.000 Arabic speaking persons in Australia. The major bulk of this population (70%) is centred in Sydney. In the state of New South Wales Arabic is the sixth widely spoken language. The list of priority languages include: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese.

Pedagogically, a closer look at the make up of the Arabic population will prove beneficial. A large number of this population comes from Lebanon. But Egypt, Iraq and Jordan also have large communities. However, almost all Arab countries are represented in this quarter of a million strong Arabic speaking population in Australia. While there are Arab families which moved to Australia more than a century ago most of the Arab families made their move in the last 20-30 years. These demographic fact will have far reaching implications for the pedagogy of Translation and interpreting. More of this later.

Looking at Arabic from the Australian linguistic perspective is also pedagogically instructive:

Arabic is *typologically different:* not only is the alphabet different but also the etymology and the syntax. The language, has diglossia and clearly marked registers which are dependant on the sociolinguistic background of the speaker.

It is also *culturally dissimilar:* the language has a history, politics and religion, that are totally dissimilar to the predominant Anglo-Saxon culture in Australia. The history and traditions of the Middle East have a strong bearing on the culture as well as the life style.

Arabic is also *geographically distant:* unlike the other Asian languages which come from countries much closer Arabic seems distant and at times out of reach. This factor is extremely important not only in organising teaching materials but also in, updating linguistic skills.

While the above, more or less, applies to Arabic, Chinese and Japanese except for the geographical factor which varies with the country in question. It has been suggested that the teaching of these foreign languages requires four times the length of time usually allocated to European languages. In other words about 2.400 hours.

These significant factors will influence the teaching of the more advanced linguistic skills of translation and interpreting.

One important fact must be borne in mind: our translation and interpreting population in Arabic and Chinese are themselves *native speakers.* These natives while born into the language exhibit varying levels of command.

However the more significant fact to remember is that they have already mastered the alphabet and the phonetics of the Asian language. As for Japanese, the picture is indeed different. Learners are mostly *bilinguals* who come from different linguistic backgrounds.

Increasingly the number of monolingual persons of Anglo-Saxon background who are studying a foreign language (particularly Japanese) is encouragingly on the increase. It is important to note that Arabic and Chinese are taught as community languages (due to the large population of native speakers) where as Japanese is taught for a different reason: business and mostly tourism.

The former two are taught, in more than one institution, to translation/interpreting competence while the latter is taught to conversation competence. The University of Queensland is the only institution in Australia which teaches advanced Japanese interpreting and translation).

LINKING THEORY TO PRACTICE

The Professional Environment in Australia

The professional enironment in Australia necessitates that our graduates not only perform both linguistic activities i.e. translating and interpreting but also do so into and from their mother tongue. Thus they work witfi people whose English is their mother tongue and others whose English is an acquired second language. They also work with an Arabic-speaking population whose Arabic might be regionally different to theirs. This environment also imposes restrictions on employment. Employment as a full-time staff translator and/or interpreter is very competitive. The majority of our graduates work as freelancers. Finally investing in further development technology and reference materials is the *sine qua non* for freelance translators in Australia.

Domain of Professional specialisation

It is quite safe to say that the main domain of translation and interpreting in Australia revolves around the Medico-legal domain. While there is an exception to every rule, the general trend is that assignments more often than not would have either a medical or legal element in it. The following diagram shows how this element is always present in the daily task of the practitioner:

Medical — Worker's Compensation — Legal
Surgery   Court   Office

Around that revolves a myriad of other assignments which naturally could cover any topic. Linguistic training in the skills of translation and

interpreting is not the only difficulty. Subject language training is also another area which attracts the attention of the course designer, professional trainer and the accredited translators/interpreters as well.

Linking theory to practice, within the Australian context, means that the training of Arabic-speaking learners to become translators/interpreters in the medico-legal field and be able to work from and into their mother tongue should take into consideration some linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. The linguistic factors are those relating to the learner's competence in both Arabic and English, the identity of first language, the history of second language acquisition, the specific dialect of Arabic, and training in Arabic linguistics.

The extra-linguistic factors refer to, but are not exclusive to, the learner's age, educational background (overseas v. Australia), first degree, world experience, personality, and natural talent and interest in the profession.

The theory-practice nexus is better achieved when the learner profile is examined in some detail.

The Arabic Learner's Profile

In broad terms the profile of the Arabic translation learner is one which could be depicted like this:

> A female, about 25 years of age, married, with Arabic as the first language, English as a second language, French as the third and all learned or acquired in the Arab world. With high school education finished in the Middle East. Widely read in classical Arab literature, with a university degree mostly in the humanities. With sufficient world experience i.e. was gainfully employed, travelled to at least two Arab countries and to more than one foreign country.

This profile also reveals the areas of weakness which the academic institution has to address:

> Learner's linguistic command of both Arabic and English is not balanced, with Arabic stronger than English. It also shows that western culture is an area which needs special attention in both written and spoken English. Translation skills into Arabic were sufficiently good to begin the course. However, those skills of translation into English required attention not to lexical items but to syntactic and idiomatic structures and to the transfer of cultural-specific imagery.

This profile meant that the translation class showed sufficient homogeneity to make the translation class manageable and successful. In pedagogic terms the challenge then was:

> To capitalise on the semi-bilingualism of the learner placing more emphasis on Arabic to English translation. A strong dose of English linguistics and training in translation tech-

niques and cross-cultural communication addressed the imbalance. Such a class is hard but experience has shown that when the advanced skills of translation are taught as a post-graduate course it is pedagogically possible (and indeed faster) to meet the challenge.

However, recently the profile has been changing and presents a more challenging learner profile:

> Australian born (or arrived in Australia at pre-school age), female, 17 years of age, unmarried, with English as the first language. Arabic as the second language, with no experience in learning a third language. And with all schooling done in Australia, no training in reading Classical Arab literature, literary analysis or reading Arabic newspapers produced in the Middle East. Due to the young age-group it is hardly reasonable to expect any work experience or world experience, travel overseas to an Arab country let alone a foreign one.

Such profile shows that the new generation of translation learners requires a different pedagogy. One which will focus on the linguistic process of second language acquisition and gradually lead to bilingualism. And a balanced one for that matter.

The profile also shows that there appears to be a linguistic conflict between both languages on which is *really* the mother tongue. While Arabic is indeed spoken at home, the notion is that it is the first language. But a closer look at the acquisition of Arabic by these young learners shows that while they can read and write they do not have native fluency in Arabic.

The language used everyday has become limited in its Arabic lexical domain and full of lexical borrowings from English. Thus the Arabic they speak is a form of Kitchen Arabic, of limited vocabulary and limited use. This Australia version of Arabic or OZARABIC (Gamal, 93) is characterised by a strong Lebanese flavour and a high percentage of English borrowing.

While the older generation required achieving a better translation competence by focusing on bilingualism the younger requires an in depth training in First Language Acquisition (Arabic) and Middle Eastern cultural studies in order to achieve the same goal.

Bearing in mind the Australian context for translators and interpreters (both facets and also both directions) the younger generation requirement (bilingualism) would appear most appropriate. Training in Arabic Diglossia, Dialectology and linguistics would make a lot of difference to learners who learnt their Arabic while living in a non Arab environment.

However appropriate this requirement might be it is rather difficult to tackle at the academic institution offering training in community translating and interpreting. Universities are attempting to be cost effective and at the same time able to provide quality training. Although it is quite obvious that it is not easy to perform this balancing act.

Constraints and challenges for the translation Pedagogy

The changing profile of the young translation learner is by no means unique to Arabic. Other languages which are now witnessing the advent of their university —age children who are Australian born and educated are also affected by this phenomena.

All linguistic communities and regardless of their background, linguistic activity or how rich their mother tongue might be would agree that after a short while of settling into the new environment a process of linguistic attrition sets in. Not only does it affect them but it also affect, and more irrevocably so, their children who increasingly feel dissociated with the mother tongue.

A short trip home or a conversation with a newly arrived migrant shows the level of attrition quite vividly.

The linguistic implications of living away from home are well know. However, the linguistic risks of migrating to another place where one's language is typologically different, culturally dissimilar and geographically distant are more challenging.

Linguistic attrition, lagging behind the new lexical items, the fossilisation of some linguistic structures are some of the risks a migrant has to face. While these concerns are rather unnoticed by those living in Australia, the issue becomes more serious when one of our graduates interprets for a newly arrived migrant, say in court.

The gravity of the situation stems from the fact that the Arabic spoken in Australia has a large dose of Lebanese dialect and accent an increasingly larger dose of borrowed words. Since the Lebanese were the first Arab migrants to Australia the spoken discourse is heavily dominated by the Lebanese dialect even if no Lebanese is present or taking part in a conversation.

While this might sound usual to some one who has lived in Australia for a while it is not the same case for a newly arrived person. For one simple reason, the Arabic spoken in Australia has also undergone some lexical, syntactic and phonetic changes which could only be understood by a receptive *local.*

The constraints one faces in teaching Arabic translation/interpreting in Australia could be grouped under two general headings:

— One, administrative:
   More hours of tuition, teaching translation as a postgraduate course, availability of primary source teaching materials and parallel texts, the engagement of professional translators who can actually teach, teacher training, inclusion of more units on comparative linguistics and cultural studies, etc.

— Two, pedagogic:
    Dealing with changing learner's needs, achieving balanced bilingualism, syllabus design, selection of texts (without too much specialisation in the Medico-Legal field) practical experience, comparative cross-cultural studies and more importantly dealing with a mixed class.
    This is one of the main constraints on the pedagogy and when faced with a mixed class of the older and younger learners the challenges and constraints become one and the same thing.

The Challenges are

1. To produce translator/interpreter capable of performing both tasks and in both directions.
2. To train practitioners sufficiently prior to their graduation.
3. To provide comprehensive expertise upon which learners could build their own.

The Constraints are

1. Limited time for tuition.
2. Quite often learners are of varying levels and have different needs.
3. Learners have limited world knowledge.

    These constraints slow down the pedagogic process and retard the maturity of the learners. Quite often academia can not provide all the answers. For example dealing with the issues of offering translation as a postgraduate course rather than an under-graduate course, increasing hours of tuition and providing enough world experience. The pedagogy itself could help address the constraints and meet the challenges. It must be remembered however that such pedagogy would rely on a translation teacher with a keen interest in applied linguistics. And a group of learners who are also keen to learn and who have exhibited some linguistic sensitivity towards the art of translation.

The pedagogy

Such pedagogy relies on *Cross-cultural communication* as the basic element in the process of *linguistic transfer.*
    Learners begin to appreciate the significance of this process after initial drills in cross-cultural transfer of colours, numbers, vegetables and fruits, proper names, etc. The focus here is on the cultural difference as exhibited in a linguistic form. Learners are introduced to the two primary problematic aspects of translation transfer: form and content. This drill which varies in complexity with the passage of time and the internalisation of the skill taught

introduces learners to fact that the same reality could be perceived differently by different cultures.

For example, the following exercises are given for translation and commentary: explain the cultural significance of the following then translate into Arabic:

— Proper names

> Tom, Dick and Harry
> Lazy Susan
> and Bob is your uncle

— Fruits and Vegetables

> To upset the apple cart
> Carrot and stick method
> It's peanut

— Numbers

> To be on cloud nine
> To be behind the eight ball
> to get the third degree

— Colours

> Red tape
> Blue movies
> Green light

The above exercises help in strengthening the fact that the process of linguistic transfer is not just lexical but also semantic. The purpose of the drill is to provide a base of competence upon which learners could continually build and gradually expand their knowledge. Pedagogic experience has shown that translation classes should be interesting, stimulatings, challenging and above all give the learner the feeling that there is an expertise to be gained from every task given in class or attempted at home.

These are some of the examples given to Arabic translation learners in the first year. They form a Body of Enabling skills which by the time they finish their third and final year a general level of competence would have been achieved. By then it is hoped that they would be able to tackle culture-specific imagery with relative ease.

One other popular pedagogic element is the use of Specialised Articles. Such articles appear in the magazines (*Time, Life, The Newsweek,* etc.) or in the daily papers and usually have the words *Anatomy of...* in their titles. Thus after the bushfires in Sydney a local magazine published an article entitled *Anatomy of a bushfire.*

Life magazine published an excellent illustrated article about a heart surgery in the US entitled *Anatomy of a $ 63.000 medical bill.*

These articles make great pedagogic tools for translation and indeed interpreting classes because they are usually laden with specialised terminology; rich vocabulary, supported by pictures or graphics and more importantly are of high contents. Reading these articles also provides the translation class with the much needed world experience which otherwise comes from extensive reading or from actual translation work. Also the articles provide contemporary topics which are in the news and reflect more often than not real life situations which learners could encounter in their careers. Linguistically speaking they provide information in a compact manner like encyclopedia unlike encyclopedia they are more relevant and up to date. Learners are encouraged to collect these articles and to exchange them for a bigger selection.

However to combat the inherent danger of seeing the articles turn into a collectors item for its own sake attention is had to the use of these articles and the sequencing of their topics so as to form a corpus of prescribed reading.

TRANSLATION AND THE MEDIA

Teaching a mixed class with a large number of learners who are young and lack experience places some added pressure on the pedagogy and the design and sequencing of teaching materials. The best teaching materials are those which convey much without explicit pedagogic intervention. A good example of these are commercial advertisements.

They usually include more than one traductological element and learners are quite often quick to see them and the transfer process comes into its own. Learners realise more readily that their translations have to make sense. This is done in an atmosphere where they know that their talents are constantly being challenged and that they are expected to break the cultural barrier. It is a far better exercise than using texts which more often than not could be mute and have little overt challenge. How many times did learners fail to see the difficulty in the first place? and if they did they blamed their awkward translation on the original text itself.

The pedagogic content and benefit of advertisements are very high. This exercise is introduced at the more advanced stage where learners have reached the stage of looking at a text and see the extra linguistic elements in it. Here learners discover that power of language (Punch lines), the power of using language (pun, alliteration, etc.) and also how Arabic is typologically different from English.

Experience has shown that lessons are better learnt through trial and error rather than through a biblical-like list of dos and do nots.

SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF AN ADVERTISEMENT

Selection

Advertisements are selected for their various degrees of complexity: lexical, syntactic and semantic. Twelve types of advertisements (the list is not exhaustive) *are identified.* These types reflect different levels of linguistic complexity. For example, simple and direct relexification to the more demanding aspects of traductological transfer. The latter could also include: pun, alliteration, culture-specific imagery, controversial statements (in reference to ethnic religious beliefs, sexual preferences, or personal freedoms), typological incongruence, metaphorical or allegorical structures.

Purpose

The ads are prepared in groups according to their linguistic complexity which reflect at the surface structure a problem in translational transfer but at the deep structure a difficulty in cross cultural communication.

Awareness of this potential risk in carrying out a linguistic transfer, be it a translation of at text or interpreting in a medico-legal situation alerts the learners to the complexity of translation and the ensuing need for cultural analysis and research.

The ultimate purpose of this exercise is to train the learner to identify the potentially *problematic* situation and to isolate it, research and finally attempt the translation transfer reflecting not only the syntactic structure but also the semantic as well. For both translators and interpreters, the exercise is of high professional significance. The important lesson to know, is how not to experience or cause cultural embarrassment.

Implications for the translation Pedagogy

Living in a non-Arab cultural environment a great deal of semiotic references fall outside the command of the Arab learner. Thus colours, sounds, smells, abstract values, orientation and some times cultural expressions are lost to them (Gamal, l993). The pedagogic value of the selected texts lies in stimulating interest in finding the most appropriate cultural equivalent. This proved to be a popular exercise and it indeed has had high results. Perhaps what characterises the pedagogic value of these texts is the effort learners so willingly put in disentangling the linguistic and extra linguistic web of interrelationships within the text itself.

Example

The ad in appendix 1 refers to the low value of an insurance policy after its expiry. The ad used straight and simple wording but included a picture of peanuts. This graphic details enhances the meaning in English. However to translate the ad without conveying the same graphic effect would seriously weaken the translation. Learners attempt to analyse this graphic effect and attempt to find the equivalent in Arabic. Needless to say peanuts do not carry the same effect of cheap, low cost or worthlessness in Arabic.

Learners are encouraged to research for other Australian commercial advertisements using the same effect. The ads are researched, analysed and translated. They are also encouraged to read in Arabic and to collect similar ads reflecting the same technique. While it is difficult to find parallel texts in this genre the value of the exercise lies in the gradual increase of the learner's awareness of the cross-cultural difficulties in translation.

This awareness is crucial in interpreter training. Therefore the exercise is carried a little further to include interpreting drills using similar idiomatic expressions revolving around peanuts, monkeys, chicken feed, cheap as dirt, etc.

Training Community Interpreters

Our translators are also trained in community interpreting. This training capitalises on the initial training in translation transfer between typologically different languages and cross-cultural communication but excludes simultaneous interpreting. Within the Australian context I strongly believe that a firm grounding in Translation skills, appreciation of translation theory and its relevant applications to the specific language pair, basic training in the linguistics of both languages and above all an interest in community work are the essential prerequisites for the process of making a promising community interpreter.

However, psycholinguistically speaking, it is not uncommon to have brilliant learners in translation who seem unable to carry out an average interpreting assignment and therefore fail to pass the exam. Therefore, they graduate with specialisation in translation only. It must be added that academically speaking our graduates are also issued with a statement showing their specialisation in which direction they are qualified. It is not uncommon to graduate students qualified as Arabic Interpreter and Translator in both direction or with one direction only or simply as a translator only. It is also common to have learners graduate with accreditation in interpreting only.

So far the distinction between the linguistic, extra-linguistic and psycholinguistic differences between translators and interpreters has not received the attention it deserves (Henderson, 1985). Perhaps that is because the two functions are expected of the practitioner of community translating and

interpreting within the Australian context. Contrary to the wide use of the abbreviation I/T (meaning Interpreting and Translation in this order) I am very much conscious of the fact that translation skills precede those of interpreting. And that a solid training in translation skills and cross-cultural training is the stepping stone for the more advanced and indeed complex skills of interpreting: "accordingly I use t/i, purposefully".

The Pedagogic Constraints in Interpreter's training

Apart from the universal academic constraints of the hours of tuition, the engagement of full time lecturers, library upgrading, availability of funds for appropriate field work there are other non academic but equally important constraints. These include the learners themselves and the employment environment.

The learners are increasingly getting younger and younger. This presupposes a virtual lack of world experience. As most of them did not have the opportunity to study any of their language pair linguistically properly (they come fresh from high school) their linguistic sensitivity is rather underdeveloped.

To combat these two constraints one is inclined to structure the syllabus in such a way as to inject a high dose of epistemological content but without running the risk of turning the class into an exercise in terminology.

Another means available to the trainer is to conduct the whole class in situ. This would add an extra professional depth/dimension which appears to be lacking in the short hours of tuition in our universities. However, conducting classes in courts and in hospitals at an early stage, as instructive as it might be, is not always beneficial with learners who need to develop within the safety net a classroom usually provides.

Since the employment environment in Australia presupposes that the practitioner is going to work in a medico-legal context the structuring of the course appears to be the best means to meet the challenge imposed by the academic and professional constraints. The challenge being: how to produce a competent translator/interpreter trained in cross-cultural transfer and communication and with more than average competence in the medico-legal field.

Our academic training can only hope to train these graduates in how to develop professionally. Thus the sequencing of materials reflect a pedagogy based on problem sensing and problem solving. (Croft, 1985)

Interpreting Pedagogy

Community interpreting in Arabic within the Australian context necessitates an experience in the medico-legal domain as well as a good exposure to a number of regional varieties in Arabic. While 70% of the Arabic-speaking population in Australia is centred in Sydney one is expected to encounter

litigants or patients who come from a wide linguistic scope. It is not un-common to meet a Moroccon client one day, a Lebanese on another and an Egyptian on a third. While this might seem of little significance to the out-sider it is of nightmarish proportions to the interpreter.

First, Arabic is spoken today by almost 220 million people in the Middle East alone. This population is distributed over a large geographical area which exhibits not only diverse climatic patterns but also cultural political and religious differences. Socially speaking these differences find their expression in the language they speak. It is indeed the same language but dialects and varieties do exist like in any other language of international dimension.

Spanish it self, is an other good example which within the Australian context reflects not only the flavour of Iberia but also the flavours, smells and sounds of the whole of Latin America. Chinese also gives another good example. In Sydney alone, resides almost 60% of the Chinese population in Australia. The Chinese dialects spoken include Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkyn and other minor regional dialects.

A study of the pattern of the Arab migration to Australia and the linguistic distribution of dialects in the Middle East helps put learners on the linguistic map of Arabics. Thus identification of the more general dialects of Arabic serves to illustrate the scope of the problem. North African (Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian), Egyptian (Egypt, Sudan, Palestine) Lebanese (Lebanon, Syria and Jordan), Gulf (Iraq, Kuwait, etc). Learners listen to themselves and learn how to recognise different dialects in Arabic. Naturally role-play is an important part of the interpreting class.

Second, Migration to Australia also brought people of various educatio-nal backgrounds which is another important factor in interpreter training. Controlling the register and the ability to understand and to transfer varying registers is a skill incorporated into the selected tasks and is strongly reflected in the large section on at sight translation, dialogue/consecutive interpreting.

As translation pedagogy focused on the training in cross-cultural transfer interpreting places the accent on the importance of cross-cultural communi-cation. Training in multi-cultural studies such as: forms of greeting, body language, nature of cultural differences, major religions, privacy and assertiveness provides an added depth to the linguistic training itself.

Third, Interpreters also work in an *inter-national* environment and inter-personal skills seem to be a much appreciated tool an interpreter would have in his or her repertoire. Thus training in conversation analysis (turn taking and leave taking) forms of greeting, small talk (when to talk about the weather and when about health). Listening to various registers and dialects in Arabic is important as I have explained but equally important is the experience in listening to different dialects of English. Memory training and note-taking form part of the over all interpreter training.

From the above, it is clear that the academic and market constraints do not lend themselves to the optimal training for the Arabic translator/interpreter in Australia. This is perhaps why there appears to be an eclectic tendency towards syllabus design and delivery. While learners are only judged by their performance in their final exam, market forces and expectations have shown that there is much to be desired in the training of our translators and interpreters in the pre-accreditation stage.

The Australian Institute for Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT)

This is why AUSIT concerns itself with the profession in the post-accreditation stage. Issues such as further training, professional ethics, scale of fees, professional contracts engaging practitioners, working conditions and professional indemnity are among the issues which appear frequently on the Institute's agenda. Since its inception in 1987, the Institute has lobbied for the profession and for practitioners rights. It also has organised functions hosting international authorities in the field of translation and interpreting. However, like any new body it still has a long way to go. The resumption of AUSIT's professional Translation Journal is in the pipeline. It is hoped that the journal will add credibility to the Institute and boost its population.

Market Forces in Australia and the Practitioner

In a multi cultural society like Australia government services as well as private institutions produce a great deal of information for translation. This creates a demand for top quality translation. Quality translation does not only refer to the linguistic stage but exceeds that to the final stage of document production.

Translators are also trained in applying technology to their world, word processes, personal computers, fax machines, answering machines, peepers and alpha numeric pagers, and increasingly mobile phones are all part of the translators tools of trade and professional set up within the Australian context.

Over the past ten years and with the increased recognition of the translator/interpreter role in society the demand for full-time staff translators has increased. Although the number is by no means large it is very competitive and at times hard to get. This means that great majority of our graduates are destined to be free-lancers. I must admit that our academic institutions have not done, to date, anything to address this fact.

No training in small business management, running an agency, the mechanics of the translation/interpreting market, dealing with the public/professional users of T/Is, issues relating to scale of fees, dealing with unpaid accounts and the real size of dad debts in the T/I business are issues our

graduates are left to face, the and way, in the real world of freelance translation and interpreting.

Also the very nature of the market makes specialisation a form of professional suicide for the free-lance. Therefore, training in an area other than Medico-legal open opportunities to the free lance practitioner. The unpredictable nature of the market necessitates multi skilling. However, the very interdisciplinary nature of translation and interpreting tends to foster an inclination towards information gathering, information analysis and information processing. The latter refers to terminological data analysed and stored in a personal computer. Training in handling this volume of increasing information leaves much to be desired.

While all our graduates start with the mundane but expected Driver's Licence, assignments develop with the professional development of the translator himself. Legal documents, contracts, personal letters, government pamphlets, are some of the complex but equally rewarding assignments. It is not uncommon to translate for international companies based in Sydney or with help of fax machines and increasingly electronic mail for those based in the Middle East or Europe.

CONCLUSION

Teaching Arabic translation/interpreting outside its natural linguistic habitat poses some challenges and constraints to the teaching pedagogy. The paper looked at the teaching of Arabic T/I in a multilingual, multicultural society. In an attempt to overcome these constraints and to meet the challenges the paper focused on the learner profile and addressed the points it revealed. The paper recognises that the training process is a lengthy one and graduates do need the *after-graduation* service which in Australia could only be provided by the National institute for Interpreters and Translators, AUSIT.

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