



GS Committee

Chair:

Stephanie Tarling

Tel: 0335 541404

Email:

setarling2357@gmail.com

Vice Chair:

Norman Ellis

Tel: 05421 904684

Email:

norman.ellis@t-online.de

Hon Secretary:

Angela Weckler

Tel: 04174 3732

Email:

angelaweckler@t-online.de

Hon Treasurer:

Jadwiga Bobrowska

Tel: 0211 482513

Email:

J.Bobrowska@gmx.net

GS Website:

www.ciol-gs.de

Webmaster:

Norman Ellis

Editor:

Sally Lamm

Email:

sally_lamm@t-online.de

GS News

Dec.
2017

The Newsletter of the Chartered Institute of
Linguists German Society e.V.

Please note that we will be shutting down our website at the end of this year. The new website is:

www.ciol.org.uk/german-society

Letter from the Chair

Dear Members,

This will be the penultimate newsletter sent out by the German Society. As mentioned in the last newsletter, we will be dissolving our e.V. status at the next AGM. There will be a GS newsletter after the AGM in February with details of the new German Network.

Our last e.V. AGM will be on **3 February 2018** in Düsseldorf. The agenda and details of networking opportunities are on page 3. It would be wonderful if a lot of members could attend our final official German AGM. We want to plan the future of the German network, as it would be a pity if our well-established events could no longer take place.

The November Translators' Workshop in Berlin was very successful and we've had a lot of positive feedback. A full report is on page 4.

The current committee has already organised the events for 2018. It is the German Society's turn to organise the Anglophoner Tag and details are on page 9. Although Greifswald is not near a major airport, I can thoroughly recommend the area – why not combine the AT with a few days on the islands of Usedom or Rügen?

The next study weekend will be in Vienna, from 14 – 16 September. We will provide more details in the next newsletter.

All the best from me and the committee and a Happy New Year to you all.

Stephanie

GS Website – goodbye and hello

A few years ago I took over the GS website from Alf English and tried to keep it as informative as possible. We had the information page, the newsletter pages, information on upcoming events, reports from the study weekends and photographs that members had sent in, as well as an opt-in list for members to find someone from the GS quickly and easily.

We did not have a counter, but there was some feedback of members using the site, especially for details of upcoming events, use of the opt-in list and also for photos after events.

Going to the future, it has been decided that the Institute with their resources should take over the GS website and bring it properly into the 21st century, along with those from the other societies. Information has been passed to London, and now I can say that they are in control – the new website can be found at: <http://ciol.org.uk/german-society>. The current website as it has been for the last few years should, with luck, disappear from the Internet in a few days.

We still have input regarding what appears on the new website, although it has been redesigned the way the Institute thought best, and we are about to be invited to start with blogs – what ever they are – and other more modern ideas soon.

It has been decided that, rather than GS members submitting straight to the Institute, we should just have one co-ordinator in Germany, so at the moment that is me, and for your information the new email address for entries to go on the new GS page is GS.website@yahoo.com.

Regarding the opt-in list authorisation forms, as the opt-in list is not to be continued with the new website, I will be destroying all of the forms with the information I was sent.

So out with the old in with the new; I am sure we will all get used to it quickly and appreciate the new page linked in with more modern resources soon.

Norman Ellis

**German Society of the Chartered Institute of Linguists e.V.
2017 AGM
Düsseldorf, 2 p.m., 3 February 2018**

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Approval of the minutes of the 2016 AGM
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Formal approval by the membership of the committee's actions
7. Formal approval by the membership of the treasurer's actions
8. Dissolution of the German Society as an eingetragener Verein.

We meet at The International English Library, Kasernenstr. 6, 4th floor, 40213 Düsseldorf. The nearest U-Bahn stop is 'Heinrich-Heine-Allee'. The building is along from the so-called 'Wilhelm-Marx-Haus' and past the Hugo (Boss) Store. The entrance is opposite the side of the so-called 'Carsch House' which is now a 'Saks Off 5th' store.

A link to the library:

<https://international-library.de/de/>

A link to a map:

<http://www.duesseldorf.citysam.de/stadtplan-duesseldorf/stadtplan-innenstadt-2-duesseldorf.htm>

For those who wish to eat beforehand, Jadwiga will reserve a table for lunch for 12 noon at:

Cha Cha
Kasernenstr. 18
40213 Düsseldorf

The nearest U-Bahn stop is 'Benrather Straße'.

A link to the restaurant:

<http://www.eatchacha.com/de/desktop/standorte/duesseldorf-kasernenstrasse.html>

Those who would like to come to the restaurant should send Jadwiga an e-mail by **no later than 25 January 2018**.

Those who plan to arrive on Friday evening and would like to meet for a networking dinner should likewise send Jadwiga an e-mail at J.Bobrowska@gmx.net by **no later than 25 January 2018**.

Please notify Jadwiga in good time if you are planning to attend, so that we have an idea of the number coming, also whether you wish to come to lunch beforehand.

GS translators' workshop in Berlin, 11 November 2017

The Germans are fond of saying “Alle Jahre wieder...”. They are, of course, referring to Christmas coming round every year, but we can say the same of the translation workshop, which has been held for many years now. The Germans are also fond of saying that “Berlin ist eine Reise wert” – and once again, we can agree that it is always worthwhile to visit Berlin.

Some 27 people had gathered to learn more about the things that interest translators. After a brief introduction from committee member Jadwiga Bobrowska, the day was kicked off by Richard Delaney, whose topic was “Making sense of legal translation”. Richard, himself a qualified barrister, talked about whether, as some people insist, only a lawyer can translate legal texts, and his view is that the translator must obviously have an understanding of the legal issues, but need not have a formal law qualification. It is vital to understand both legal systems and thus be able to avoid what he calls the “unknown unknowns”, i.e. when the translator has not only misunderstood a harmless-looking word, but is blithely unaware of his/her mistake. He also debunked the idea that translators must always translate into their native language – in legal settings it is better to have an accurate text that perhaps sounds a little odd linguistically, e.g. when written by a non-native speaker, than one that sounds polished but does not faithfully convey the meaning and intent of the original. Indeed, given the differences between legal systems there is no need for the translated text to sound like an original or be especially elegant. Many texts are supposed to be ambiguous, especially EU texts, and unless a text is still in the draft stage, the translator should avoid trying to interpret or second-guess the meaning and point out any problem to the author instead.

Richard illustrated the problem with thinking one knows the answer: “What is the German for manslaughter?” he asked. Most people said Totschlag, which is what the dictionaries say. However, this is not good enough for a court of law. The direct equivalent would be “fahrlässige Tötung”, i.e. there was no intention to kill. The German definition of Mord (murder) is so narrow, involving base motives and a totally unsuspecting victim, so that English has to call the crime “murder with aggravated circumstances.”

Still on legal topics, Christin Dallmann followed with a talk in German about the language of German law. To start with she mentioned a basic problem with legal language, namely that it is often intended for both a professional and general public, being an expression of state authority that is to be obeyed – it is not meant to sound “nice”. To this day there are very few words of foreign origin in Germany’s written laws, which aim to be clear and comprehensible. The earliest German legal texts were translated from Latin and therefore the intent was to inform the “non-academic”. Legal language is also conservative in a positive sense, in that the meaning of terms does not change. The language of administration is designed, although many may doubt it, to be clearly understandable, and the formulaic phrases are meant to ensure that the message in an official letter is the same for everyone. Academic commentaries on legal issues make no pretence of addressing the general public but are for a professional audience, and the language used is full of Latin words and technical terms. Having explained some of the quirks of legalese, Christin moved on to a quiz: she gave us ten words, not generally in everyday use, with three likely-sounding definitions each. Sometimes the audience got the right answer, but the more we thought about them, the harder it was. My personal favourite was the choice of definitions for “Gelegenheitsverkehr”.

- a) Taxis, Mietwagen und ähnliches
- b) der juristische Fachbegriff für One-Night-Stand
- c) eine nur unregelmäßig benutzte Bahnschiene

They all sound so very plausible. Answer at the end of this report.

The next speaker, **Barbara Müller-Grant**, talked about some popular English names for diseases that normally have complicated Latin/Greek names. In the Middle Ages, for example, ailments tended to be named after saints – St. Lawrence's Fire was what we now call eczema. St. Anthony's Fire was the far more serious complaint of ergotism - poisoning caused by eating bread contaminated by a fungus, although people did not know that then. In German the popular term is extremely misleading – Mutterkorn sounds very harmless, even positive. How the saint came to be associated with a painful illness remained, unfortunately, a mystery.

Other terms we encounter in Shakespeare without really knowing what they are, apart from somehow unpleasant, include the ague (malaria), palsy (paralysis) and dropsy (oedema). Moving forward, Barbara spoke of diseases named for the person who discovered or first described them, e.g. Down Syndrome (trisomy 21) or for a famous sufferer, e.g. Lou Gehrig's (ALS or motor neurone disease). Sometimes the popular name for a disease, such as Mongolism for Down Syndrome, is based on racist prejudice, in that the typical face of a child with the syndrome was thought to look like that of people from Mongolia.

In keeping with Winston Churchill's famous remark about the dangers of sports, many modern ailments have names associated with physical activity; they include tennis/golfer elbow, holiday heart syndrome, jogger's hip/knee/foot/ankle/nipples and goggle migraine. Some hobby-induced diseases have gone out of fashion, such as pigeon breeder's lung.

After lunch Isabel Schwagereit spoke, in German, about Standards (in German Normen) and the question of whether they are a help or a hindrance. Although unfamiliar to many of us, this topic is set to become increasingly relevant for younger colleagues. Isabel started with a brief history of standardization, which is a perfectly logical result of globalization. If goods are to be produced all over the world, it is important to make sure that the products are of the same quality, wherever they come from. After standards for manufactured goods have been established, the obvious next step is to set up standards for processes, services and organizations. And the moment it is borne in mind that an EU-made machine may not be exported without documentation translated into the recipient country's language, the connection between standards and translators becomes apparent.

As increasing numbers of people and processes became involved in producing a translated text, calls for a standard grew. There are now standards for translators, conference interpreters, community interpreters, post-editors and for the technology involved. The ISO 17100 was originally intended for translation agencies but can be scaled to the individual free-lancer, and Isabel concentrated on this standard and her own experience in gaining ISO certification.

Having been on the committee that drafted the standard, Isabel did not approach the subject as a complete novice. Her main questions were "What will the market for technical translators be like in 5 to 10 years? Do I need to bother with certification?" Having decided that, in view of the changing nature of the market, the answer to the second question was yes, Isabel set to work. First of all it is necessary to sit down and

think long and hard about personal organization in the office. This involves not only items such as order books, customer accounts, data security and backup and how to deal with large volumes of data, but also the trickier issue of obtaining proof of the qualifications of the people with whom one collaborates. A customer may want to see what kind of people are behind the “four-eyes” principle. If a customer, having realized that this service costs more, decides to do without this second-party check, this too must be documented. However, despite the extra effort involved, customers react very well to the fact that their translator has made the effort to obtain certification, especially if they too are ISO certified in their particular field.

Isabel admitted there are drawbacks; the need to document and file everything that happens in the office is not everyone’s favourite task. Customers tend to think that a certified translator is quicker and available 24/7, and he/she has to accept responsibility for the quality of colleagues’ work.

On balance, however, certification can be a way to defend one’s own niche against machine translation and price-dumping.

Speaking in a similar vein, **Deborah Butler**, CIOL communications + marketing manager, gave a brief account of the Institute’s campaign to professionalize the industry and encourage people to become chartered. As we are all only too well aware, “translator” is not a protected title, whereas “chartered linguist” is. Chartered status is an accreditation but not a licence. Deborah told us that the process had been simplified and members pay no fee for chartership. The prerequisite, apart from qualifications, is a commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) – which should comprise at least 30 hours over a two-year period. The talk has already, so we hear, encouraged one person in the audience to apply for chartership.

Our final speaker, **Ian Hinchliffe**, had been warned that he would be last and might find the audience in slightly somnambulant state. He rose magnificently to the challenge, giving a lively presentation that was both amusing and highly informative. Ian said early on that although the talk was titled “Translation / localization for IKEA”, the Swedish company does not actually “do” localization. Everyone knows some wonderful product names that sound odd in another language – such as Fartfull and Jerker in English or Gutvik in German. However, IKEA has its own system of naming products and it is unabashedly Swedish – typically men’s names or the names of towns and villages are used. From a marketing point of view, this can bring unexpected rewards. When sales of Baräkna glass-ware went through the roof in the US it turned out that customers were buying them as drinking glasses, not as vases. It can also have downsides; for many years IKEA refused to alter the size of bed linen to suit different markets.

Sometimes a Swedish word is so untranslatable that it migrates into other languages. The closest that English comes to *övertag* is “mastery” or “getting the upper hand”. *Övertag* is now a business studies concept for unbeatable affordability and quality.

Translating IKEA’s Swedish into English brings some of the same challenges all translators face. A suggested strapline of “More møbler for you money” (nice alliteration) was rejected on the grounds that English people would not understand what møbler were – despite the fact that everyone knows IKEA is a furniture company. In the same year (1987) a famous German car company advertised in the UK with “Vorsprung durch Technik”.

Ian asked the question, “Are metaphors a translator’s nightmare?” The answer would seem to be in whether the marketing department will let you get away with it. “You’ll think you’ve died and gone to kitchen” was not accepted for a new line of kitchen furniture. However, localized advertising can work, such as “IKEA, the light brigade that doesn’t charge as much”. The photo is of lamps and light fittings, but the charge of the light brigade is still a concept to British readers, many of whom read the eponymous poem at school, and the line works. In a similar way, Swedes associate Småland with many positive ideas; forests and the countryside, honest, thrifty and industrious folk, back-to-the roots etc. Therefore, when IKEA tells customers to sleep Småland style, all these ideas of cosy innocence and fresh air resonate too. The English version cannot hope to do the same, but how about “Just lie back and think of Sweden”? This is a perfect example of what the translator should aim to do. He/she should deconstruct the message, analyse it and create equivalence. This goes far beyond getting the words out of one language into another.

A huge thank-you to all our speakers, without whom such events cannot exist. If you are sorry to have missed it this year, reserve some time in November 2018, when the next Translation Workshop will be held.

Answer a) is correct

Angela Weckler

Thanks to Valerie Ashe of the BDÜ for the following report on a recent congress in Hanover on an important and complex topic:

**BDÜ Fachkonferenz Sprache und Recht
(Language and Law Congress organized by the Professional
Association of Interpreters and Translators in Germany),
October 14-15, 2017 in Hanover**

The German BDÜ could not have planned a better weekend in October for the congress “Fachkonferenz Sprache und Recht 2017” at the Congress Centre in Hanover. A glance at the programme showed just how vast and complex this area of translation and interpreting is. On offer were more than 60 presentations, workshops and open discussions, mainly in the area of legal translation and interpreting. In addition, translators could catch up on technical advances and possibly take home one or two new technical ideas.

The conference was officially opened by Stefanie Otte, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony, who couldn’t emphasize enough the importance of having qualified translators and interpreters at court in Germany. She also made clear that there is little hope of improving the financial squeeze courts face regarding improved remuneration in future. The 450 delegates had two intense days to update their knowledge in the field of legal translation and interpreting in Germany. On the first day for example, delegates were informed of the challenges facing harmonization of standards for translators and interpreters at German courts. Delegates also heard of the disruption for translators and interpreters in Denmark where a previous approach of swearing an oath before the court once to then become a “sworn translator”, similar to the current German procedure, has been scrapped altogether. Also in the programme was the interesting topic of “leichte Sprache” (plain language) regarding legal documents, making them easier to understand for people with minor disabilities.

After the first full day, the delegates could chat about the day's impressions and network with other translators or interpreters in a relaxed atmosphere. The second day continued with peculiar examples of English legal terminology. Also, the different terms used (in English) for the same concept in different English-speaking countries were highlighted. In panel discussions there was debate on how to protect professional translators against non-qualified "colleagues" and in this context whether a certification system for a "Fachübersetzer" in crucial areas such as medicine, technology and law would be viable. All in all, the conference provided a wonderful opportunity for those delegates who had not managed to attend continued education in the field throughout the year.

The conference closed by highlighting the efforts of the German BDÜ to ensure that the valuable work carried out by qualified legal translators and interpreters receives due recognition, both professionally and financially, especially from German courts.

The Joys of being a returning Expat

(Editor's comment: you couldn't make it up)

It has been an interesting experience re-establishing myself in the UK, and I must admit I didn't realise how complicated some things can be. The biggest problem is proving your identity and your address. Germany may be very bureaucratic but at least the framework is very organised.

In the UK there are three main ways to prove who you are and where you live: a driving licence, a utilities bill or a bank statement. I have a driving licence (took my test in the UK at the age of 17 but have held a German licence since 1987) but it has my German town on it and I am not allowed to trade it in until I have lived in the UK for six months. I don't actually have to change it, at least as long as the UK remains in the EU. A utilities bill is not possible for me at the moment as I am living with my mother. There remains the third option – a bank statement, not of course a downloaded one but one sent from the bank. This is fine in theory but would not be accepted by my HSBC bank as they need a statement from a different bank. The fact that I have banked with them for over 40 years does not count. Luckily the sympathetic bank lady closed several eyes.

The next problem is that I don't have a credit rating. Having had a cheap and cheerful mobile in Germany I decided to bite the bullet and buy a smart phone to make life easier. I chose my phone and decided to have a two-year contract nothing doing. I have had a UK credit card for almost 40 years and have always paid my debts on time, but since I don't have a credit rating I can't buy anything on credit. I ended up buying the phone outright. How to get a credit rating is apparently one of the great mysteries of UK life and nobody seems to know how you get one. Theories range from having to live in the UK for at least 3 years, getting a credit card and using it (I have and I do) to getting on the Electoral Roll. To register with the latter seems absurdly easy as you can do it online with no proof of address. I am now entitled to vote at a General Election, for the first time in 30 years!

My next goal was to buy a car. At least I knew I would have to buy it outright as I would not be able to get it on credit. However, the insurance proved to be a problem. It is not possible to get a quote for car insurance in the UK unless you actually have a car number plate. I did ask one helpful call centre employee whether I should just type in random number plates as seen in car parks but she didn't think this was a good idea.

Apparently, every single UK car has a different insurance value and you can't generalise and find out the premium for a Ford Fiesta, VW Golf or whatever.

Since my younger daughter is only 24 and I wanted to include her on my insurance, the premiums are sky high. Never mind the German no-claims bonus and the fact that my daughter also had a car in Germany, the first quotes were all about £2,500. However, we found a cheaper quote for £1,200 and managed to get another £300 off by including my sister as a third named driver (-£100) and by having a "black box" in the car which tells us how we drive (-£200). It is actually quite entertaining seeing your score for individual journeys, though the points system seems to be rather random. I got a low score for taking my mother to church at 7pm, the reason being that I shouldn't drive late at night when I'm tired! We also get marked down for excessive braking and accelerating. Living in the Cotswolds where steep hills are the norm and there are cows all over the road, you don't have much choice.

Compared with the foregoing, joining the NHS was a doddle – not sure what the service will be like, but I'm now on their books and have been included in various cancer screening programmes. I also joined my local library – even without proof of my address. At first it seemed I would need one of the three aforementioned proofs, but the librarian suggested sending me a postcard for me to bring to the library as proof. Luckily it turned out he knew my mother so I didn't even have to take up that option. Vitamin B rules!

Life is certainly not boring and will be even more so when I attempt to buy a house. On the plus side, I can now apply for my free bus pass!

Stephanie Tarling

The German Society will be hosting the 2018 Anglophoner Tag

Date: 16 June 2018 (please note that the date in *The Linguist* is wrong)
Place: Greifswald – a university and Hanseatic city in the Baltic Sea region
Venue: Sozio-Kulturelles Zentrum St. Spiritus in Greifswald's city centre
Theme: Translating the Arts – The Art of Translation

Greifswald and the surrounding area were immortalised in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, one of its most famous sons. The 2018 Anglophoner Tag will include an exploration of the visual art of Caspar David Friedrich as well as translation in a selection of the other arts.

Our speakers will include:

Alexandra Jones (CIOL) - Translating poetry
Nick Tanner (ITI) – Translating Harry Potter
Prof Harry Walter (Greifswald University) – Translating proverbs
plus others yet to be confirmed

Accompanying events:

- Friday 15 June An optional guided tour of Greifswald University, one of the oldest in Germany with its historic *Aula* and *Karzer*.
- Networking dinner in Greifswald
- Saturday 16 June Networking dinner at a fish restaurant in the charming fishing village of Wieck (a 15-minute bus ride from the centre of Greifswald) followed by an optional walk to see the ruins of Eldena Abbey and/or the landscape around the pier at the mouth of the river Ryck, which all feature in Caspar David Friedrich's paintings.
- Sunday 17 June Guided tour of Greifswald city centre with a history professor from Greifswald University
- Networking lunch in Greifswald

Accommodation:

You will be able to book reasonably priced accommodation within walking distance of the Anglophoner Tag venue or in the village of Wieck through Greifswald Marketing.

Registration for the 2018 Anglophoner Tag will open in January 2018. If you would definitely like to come to this event then please let Jadwiga know asap (by e-mail: J.Bobrowska@gmx.net). A place will then be reserved for you and you will have to transfer the registration fee in January. We expect that the fee for the day (including lunch) as well as the tours throughout the weekend will be approx. € 80.

Flirting with languages: A proposal for the revaluation of minority languages

Until now I have kept to my precept of only flirting with those languages belonging to countries that I have visited. However, given the need to think and act globally, it is time to depart from that precept and take a stronger interest in the so-called "minority" languages of a great many countries on all continents.

This year, as a newborn pensioner, I have revived my active membership of the Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (GfbV) (www.gfbv.de) the UK equivalent is The Society for Threatened Peoples. Originally founded in 1968 by Tilman Zülch during the Biafra tragedy, the main purpose of the society is to raise public awareness of the threats to human rights, culture and environment posed by the "majority" political and economic interests which afford no space to the culture, language or economic systems of minority, indigenous peoples. Given the vast range of topics involved here, the remit of the GfbV is extremely wide, and most members therefore try to concentrate on those aspects that interest them most. In my case: "threatened languages" and the struggles of indigenous peoples, such as in the Amazon and other parts of Latin America, to preserve their linguistic, cultural and economic survival. In most European countries, minority rights are largely protected by laws and social contracts, whereas in many, possibly most, regions of Africa, Latin America and Asia (including Siberia, i.e. Russia) such rights are ignored, even

where they exist on the statute books, forcibly suppressed or subverted, e.g. by the influence of multinational companies on the respective governments.

On 1 May this year, as part of a festival of NGOs hosted by the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) in Düsseldorf, the GfbV stand exhibited a world map showing a representative number of 50 or so threatened languages and language groups, ranging from Inuit and Aleut in North America and Siberia, to Navajo, Nahuatl and Maya languages in other parts of North and Central America; Quechua, Aymara, Mapudungun, Guaraní and Tupí in South America; Nubian, Fulani, Khoisan (South African “click” languages) and Oromo in Africa; in Asia several Indian languages such as Gondi and Mundari, Siberian and Central Asian languages such as Khanty-Mansi, Tungusic, Manchu, Itelmen and Uighur (actively repressed by China); and in Australasia Ternate and others of the approx. 750 Papua languages, Hawaiian, Tongan, Maori and the Australian Aboriginal peoples’ languages (150 of which are now just about hanging on, whereas around the year 1800 about 300 were spoken throughout the continent). And then there are the European minority languages, e.g. Sami (Lapp), the Celtic languages, Basque, Romani (Sinti and Roma), Aromunian in Northern Greece, and Caucasian languages such as Cirkassian and (our old friend) Ossetian. The European tongues are in most cases not existentially threatened but they still may eventually die out due to lack of interest among their native speakers and others in their respective counties. On each sticker pasted onto the map, naming a language or group, we added “Alle zwei Wochen stirbt eine Sprache”. In spite of the poor May Day weather, quite a lot of people visited our stand and wanted to know more about the languages, so I was happy to enlighten them. Had I had more time, and done more research, I could have supported my explanations with information from a highly authoritative article I have since found on Endangered Languages from the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), including some essential statistics, see website: <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what-endangered-language>

At the AGM of the GfbV in early November in Göttingen, we had some fascinating talks and seminars from representatives of two indigenous peoples in Brazil: Benki Piyäko, from the Ashaninka people on the border between Brazil and Peru, and David Popygua from the Guaraní-Mbiya in the south-east of Brazil. They both gave their talks in Portuguese, with excellent interpretation into German by a Brazilian-German linguist. They explained the dynamic efforts being made by their respective communities not only to preserve their languages and cultures but also to reinforce them proactively and dynamically for succeeding generations and to ensure their own economic prosperity through ecologically sustainable agriculture. In spite of the initiatives of the Ashaninka in the latter field proving so successful that they are also being adopted by non-indigenous inhabitants of the region, the forest on which they depend is severely threatened by the actions of Peruvian timber firms. Since the accession of the retrograde Temer government, the Guaraní-Mbiya are now in danger of suffering complete destruction of their communities in the Atlantic Rainforest region, a highly extensive territory of immense bio-diversity that is likely to disappear completely, thanks to government-sponsored mega-agricultural projects. The people are fighting tooth and nail to defend their farms and villages because they know that once they have been forced to move to the cities, their culture and language will disappear, along with all hope of a prosperous and self-determined way of life.

When I heard this, it occurred to me that one part of a possible solution would be to find a way to restore the value of the “minority” languages of indigenous peoples within the consciousness of mainstream societies, i.e. to give them greater publicity and acceptance within national media, education and culture. Obviously, in the face of the megalithically

repressive political and economic forces now afflicting the entire world, such an aspiration may well be based on “pious hope”, but at least it would be valid for the whole globe since, as mentioned at the beginning, every continent has its contingent of endangered, indigenous languages.

Why don't we, those who are interested in languages, make an effort to learn at least one of these languages? The reasons for us learning mainstream languages are manifold, whereas to take an active interest in a minority language presupposes a strong degree of idealism, a “labour of linguistic love” even that is unlikely to bring the learner any economic benefits, and probably not even any academic recognition. But, as we know, learning any language improves the brain and also opens the doors to new fields of intellectual interest. A great many indigenous peoples are making strong efforts to revitalize their languages, so why don't we support them by revaluating the status of these languages within society as a whole? Among the positive features of digitalization and the ever-deepening Internet are the widespread availability of language-learning apps and the internationalization of journalism. Thus, nowadays, you can get hold of newspaper articles and reports from most countries in most national languages, and in a great many of the more widespread minority languages. Such potential can be harnessed to revitalize and reevaluate those hundreds of other languages spoken by people who may have little or no political and economic impact but whose ways of life would actually contribute to ensuring a sustainable world for future generations. In my case I'll be looking more closely at one of the South American languages, e.g. Guaraní or Quechua, and at one of the various Maya languages of Yucatan in Mexico (going back to dealing with a language of a place I've been to).

An interest in learning lesser-known languages could also be extended to include the national languages of smaller countries that are not major players on the “world scene”. For example, I intend to improve my knowledge of Slovenian, the language of a mountainous country that is not only excellent to hike in but which also has fantastic literature. And really, I should be learning my grandfather's language, Irish.

Mike Harrington

The editor's rag bag

What's in a name??

Former GS Chairwoman Heidi English, who is German, recently found herself corresponding with a company in Cambridge, with a Ms German, who turned out to be English.

Those menus again!

We're familiar with 'gefühlte Temperatur', but a friend was startled to see 'gefühlte Paprika' on the menu in a Frankfurt Italian restaurant. It was served with 'Offenkartoffel'. When she tactfully pointed out the mistakes to the boss, he thanked her but asked her to point out any future errors to him alone, because the proud chef insists on writing his own menus, and wouldn't take any corrections from anyone else!

In a hotel that belongs to a large international chain, I was alarmed to read the suggestion that guests 'pimp your breakfast', 'pimp your coffee' and so on (by adding various items). Worse though was the sign just past each item saying rudely 'You've been pimped'.

It was a joy, though, to see on a menu in Tübingen a lethal-sounding drink called a Pangalaktischer Donnergurgler. For the uninitiated, this is a tribute to the late Douglas Adams' wonderful *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and the pan-galactic gargle blaster that had such terrible effects.

GS Diary

2018

3 February

AGM in Düsseldorf
See page 3 for full details.

15 - 17 June

Anglophoner Tag in Greifswald
Topic: "Translating the Arts, the Art of Translating". For preliminary details please see page 9.

14 - 16 September

2018 study weekend in Vienna. Further details in due course.

10 - 14 October

Frankfurt am Main book fair. Special guest Georgia.