

# Discourses of Translation

**Festschrift in Honour of Christina Schäffner**

Edited by Beverly Adab, Peter A. Schmitt  
and Gregory Shreve

**12**

Leipziger Studien zur  
angewandten Linguistik und Translatologie

Beverley Adab / Albrecht Neubert  
*Birmingham, Hartenstein*  
**Preface**

To many of her colleagues in Translation Studies, Christina Schäffner is a paragon of scholarship, erudition, versatility and collegiality. To me, she is a role model as well. Whenever I waver before venturing into yet another project or taking on yet another professional task, I think of Christina's indefatigable efforts on behalf of Translation Studies, of her diverse interests and of the painstaking attention she devotes to every commitment—and realize how humble my own efforts are. Christina has left an imprint on so many different areas of TS—as a researcher, an author, an editor, a teacher, an organizer, an EST leader and so much more. But above all, over the years, she has been a wonderful colleague, generously sharing both ideas and resources, enriching us and fostering the sense of harmony and wellbeing that enables us to thrive as discipline.

**Albrecht Neubert: The Leipzig Chapter**

Friends and admirers of Christina Schäffner have come together to offer her this volume as a gift of honour, prompted by the occasion of a special birthday. It is a tribute to her remarkable scholarly achievements, her brilliance as a teacher, her morale as an untiring worker and, last but not least, to her charming personality. It is and has been a pleasure to know and to work with her.

Christina was a highly gifted student at Leipzig University where she graduated in 1972 with an MA in English and Russian and a Degree in Foreign Language Teaching for Adults. Besides teaching language classes for students of various subjects in the university as well as translation and interpreting, she was doing research in lexicology and translation. In 1977 she was awarded her PhD. Her thesis dealt with the adequate rendering of German Democratic Republic economic and socio-cultural terms into English. This work was an early example of her foresight in attempting to integrate from the outset lexis and lexical concerns into the translation of text and discourse. This was the splendid beginning of a promising career that was to focus on the use and application of language, especially words, in a close socio-cultural setting, a determining background of any translation process. For her, both translation practice and translation studies are utterly dependent on the situated use of language. This profound insight helped her to escape the shackles of structuralist and formalist positions that prevent a realistic assessment of practical translation situations and their solutions.

To a decisive extent, her academic outlook and development may be seen as a striking parallel of the recent growth of translation studies as it liberates itself from traditional philology to enter a broad realm centered on the international scope of bilingually mediated communication. It is significant that her students as well as her international audiences have been enthusiastic about her

great concern with the multifaceted and unique role of translation across the globe. She has often engaged in practical assignments as translator and interpreter, excelling as a versatile representative of her craft as well as enriching her theoretical insights.

To deepen her experience in the study of words and phrases in political and socio-cultural contexts in 1983 Christina Schäffner, accepted the offer of the President of the Saxon Academy of Arts and Sciences to join that institution. She was to chair a team of young scholars eager to focus on the lexical peculiarities of diverse political texts. The publications she produced with his group under her guidance are proof of the intense interaction of lexis, politics, text science, and translation. They tread new theoretical ground in a new field: translation studies.

During her Leipzig years she became acquainted with an exchange professor from Kent State University in America, Gregory M. Shreve. Beginning in 1985, these two worked together on various projects, culminating in Christina's extended visit to Kent State in 1988. Christina, along with Klaus Gommlich, Willi Scherf, and Uwe Wiesemann, among others, was instrumental in setting up a translation program, the Institute for Applied Linguistics, at Kent State University. The Institute, now in its twenty-third year, still retains the curricular and theoretical influences imparted by Christina and her Leipzig colleagues.

In 1992, Christina Schäffner, always eager to explore new shores and widen her remarkable horizons, moved to Great Britain. Arriving in Birmingham, she started an entirely new chapter of her successful career, wanting to deepen her linguistic skills and her creative experience.

### **Beverly Adab: The Aston Chapter**

Christina's work in Leipzig in the 1980s was originally in the field of Text Linguistics (PhD 1977 in English for Specific Purposes), but moved increasingly to that of Discourse Analysis. Her international contributions grew during this decade, publishing in leading journals, before being invited to join the School of Languages and European Studies (as it was then called) at Aston University in Birmingham, United Kingdom, in 1992.

Since joining Aston University, Christina Schäffner has continued to develop an outstanding international name for herself in the field of Translation Studies. Invited as plenary speaker, contributor to countless volumes, journals and proceedings, she is also a leader in the strategic development of pan-European standards for postgraduate taught programmes, as well as having contributed to the personal development of a number of PhD students, who have then taken their experience under her supervision back to their home countries to benefit a growing cohort of new researchers in the discipline. On her Aston web page, Christina lists her main research interests as:<sup>1</sup>

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1 <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/staff/schaffner/>

- Translation Studies
- Text Linguistics
- Critical discourse analysis and political discourse analysis
- Metaphor research (esp. in political texts and from a translational perspective)
- Translation didactics

Her interest and expertise in critical discourse analysis and analysis of political discourse stem from her own PhD research in Leipzig, under the supervision of Emeritus Professor Albrecht Neubert (see his contribution in this volume). Christina's many publications and collaborative ventures attest to her leading role in this field, with a focus on the integration of themes and concepts from Translation Studies research with these two disciplines, coupled with an interest in a cognitive approach to metaphor in translation (of political texts). Christina extends her integrating approach to demonstrate the relevance of Translation Studies as a discipline within the humanities and social sciences, with interdependencies and synergies across a range of disciplines. She continues to promote a view of language as a communicative tool embedded in social interaction, and her research projects seek to link textual features to social, ideological and institutional conditions for and constraints on text production. She has given special consideration to the interaction between political discourse, translation and the media, including participation in an AHRC project, with the University of Warwick, on this subject and a co-authored volume, with Paul Chilton (2002), on *Politics as Text and Talk. Analytic Approaches to Political Discourse*.

Christina has organised a significant number of research seminars, workshops and scholarly debates, as well as two major international conferences. She organised, very recently, a conference for Critical Links Interpreting and in 1997, with Beverly Adab, organised an Aston University conference on the subject of "Developing Translation Competence." This latter conference was to celebrate the launch of undergraduate and masters programmes in Translation Studies at Aston. From this conference came an edited volume of the same title (Schäffner and Adab 2000). It remains a widely- and frequently- cited reference for translator training research. A contribution to the EST conference in 1995 led to a key paper in a special edition of *Across Languages and Cultures*, on the subject of hybrid texts and translation (Schäffner and Adab 2001:167-180), another key reference work for researchers. Christina and Beverly Adab also edited this special issue.

As Head of the Institute for Language and Society at Aston for more than a decade, Christina has welcomed visiting experts in Translation Studies and other relevant fields for informing her own research and that of Aston staff and students, creating a highly active community and leading to many joint projects

with these scholars. Since 2001, Christina has been a member of the staff for the international Translation Studies research summer school, CETRA, lecturing on norms and translation (see Schäffner 1999) and offering advice and support to early-career researchers. She will be the CETRA Chair professor in 2011.<sup>2</sup>

She is a member of international editorial boards for key journals such as: *Target*; *The Translator*; *Discourse and Society*; *Perspectives*; *Journal of Specialised Translation* (online); *ESP Across Cultures*; and also for the John Benjamins book series, *Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture*.

In addition, through her leadership in the areas of translator training and translation research supervision, Christina has developed links with universities within Europe, for student and staff exchange. She was a founding member of the European Society for Translation Studies, and was its Secretary General for six years. She was a founding member of the European Masters in Translation Expert group, set up by the DGT of the European Commission with the aim of implementing a European Masters in Translation (EMT) across the EU. She has published on the design of doctoral and masters training programmes, on benchmarking for translator training, and, of course, on political discourse and translation, and metaphor and translation. Her contribution to the Annotated Texts series, with Uwe Wiesemann, exemplifies how all of these issues can be identified and dealt with in the translation process. She has supervised and examined a considerable number of PhD theses.

Christina's expertise has also been recognised nationally, through countless invitations to give guest and plenary talks, as well as with the invitation to join the college of reviewers of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council.

As her friends and colleagues watch her career trajectory climb, we continue to admire Christina's seemingly inexhaustible energy and commitment to furthering the cause of Translation Studies, insisting on the professional expertise of the translator as intercultural mediator, training new generations of translators to carry on the cause, and continuing to share her research and wide-reaching expertise with colleagues in the world of Translation Studies. Invitations continue to flood in, students continue to be amazed at what they can learn from such an eminent scholar, and colleagues wish they had half her energy. She is a hard act to follow, but one we are all privileged to have enjoyed.

### Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express their heartfelt thanks to Andrey Kononov, Graduate Student at Kent State University, for his thorough proofreading and diligent copy-editing of this volume. Thanks to Brian Baer and Françoise Massardier-Kenney at Kent's Institute for Applied Linguistics for granting us the use of his time.

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2 <http://www.kuleuven.be/cetra/index/>

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