<u>BOOK REVIEW</u>

## TRANSLATING – AS EASY AS ABC?

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**ABC da tradução**, Marco Neves, Lisboa, Editora Guerra & Paz, 2020, 108 pp, 12,50€, ISBN 978-989-702-524-2.

*ABC da tradução* is the latest book by Marco Neves to be published by Guerra & Paz. It is a welcome addition to published material in Portuguese available not only to translators but also to the general public. While providing information of interest to translators, it also succeeds in demystifying the professional reality of the translation profession.

It is divided into three main sections (in Portuguese): "ABC of translation", "What does a translator do?" and "Translation and other traps".

The first section chooses a representative term for each letter of the alphabet to uncover the world of translation. As an exercise in itself, it is interesting to try and translate this ABC, for example, into English. Representing "A" we have the word *arte*. Clearly this can be translated by the word "art". This is followed by *brio* ("brio"), *cliente* ("client"), *dicionário* ("dictionary"), *empresa* ("enterprise"). Perhaps the translation of the "ABC of translation" is not so difficult after all!

But then we come to "F", where the word is *ferramentas* ("tools"). Unless there is a very creative solution, which does not immediately come to mind, there is now a problem to be faced. Because, of course, if we cannot translate the "F word", we will be unable to include the section about tools. We could try and list it under "T", but the word chosen is in fact *tempo* ("time"), itself very much an essential aspect of the world of the professional translator.

Leaving this problem to one side for the moment, the second part of the book includes what translators do, the materials and tools they use.

The section on translation tools explains the activities carried out by translators when sitting in front of the computer. It includes a very clear description, not of ABC, but of CAT (Computer Assisted Translation) tools, explaining and showing how to use a tool like MemoQ, and basic concepts such as translation memory, translation unit, fuzzy matches, and another pair of letters, QA (Quality Assurance). This sounds somewhat technical, but Marco Neves illustrates these with helpful screenshots in a very user-friendly manner – that of a guide helping from the side, rather than a sage on a stage.

The section on materials for translators also considers the issue of localization, using as an example the translation of software. Once again, we can resort to the alphabet to

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provide examples. Whereas in the Portuguese version of Word, typing the key combination **CTRL-N** after selecting a word or phrase would put that text in bold, as I am writing this text in an English version of Word, (somewhat ironically) I had to type **CTRL-B** to put **CTRL-N** (and **CTRL-B**) into bold type (**CTRL-N** in English would create a "New" file). This section also uses imaginary translators to indicate the range of text types worked on and, therefore, the variety of skills and competences different translators have in working on these genres. It also introduces other individuals involved in professional translation, such as project managers.

The third section, "Translation and other traps", is a potpourri of issues and aspects to be found in the world of translation. One of the sections introduces us to the work of subtitlers and the trials and tribulations which form part of their daily working lives. There is a useful chapter on European legislation, introducing us to the importance of style guides (in this case the Interinstitutional Style Guide of the European Union) and highlighting that translation, while involving creativity, also involves being aware of the rules of style for what we are translating. There are also chapters on the illusions of translation, false friends, what to do with the Spanish *tu*, and on whether the city of Porto should be called Porto or Oporto in English (or both), etc.

As well as being a teacher at FCSH/NOVA, Marco has a translation agency and the chapter on the strange case of "*inglês à portuguesa*" certainly rings true for a Portuguese-English translator such as myself. In it he mentions that his agency deals with translations involving many language combinations, but the combination likely to receive most comments and complaints involves Portuguese-English translation. In most other language pairs, his clients do not have the linguistic skills to pass judgement on the quality of the translations, but when it comes to English their knowledge provides them with a stake in the language and a concomitant danger of using that stake more in the manner of a Van Helsing than as a client.

The final chapter in this section (that is, before a list of useful links and contacts) addresses the anxieties faced by translators, which concludes the book.

Marco Neves has a seemingly simple – but certainly not simplistic – writing style. What comes across is both his love of the Portuguese language as well as his desire to transmit his ideas clearly to his readers. Pretentiousness is certainly not part of his ABC of writing.

This book allows translators or those involved in the professional or academic worlds of translation to take a step back and be reminded of the broader community of practice of which we form part. It will therefore be of interest to those within the profession. However, perhaps even more useful, this book fills a gap in the market in terms of its ability to explain our world clearly and concisely to those not inhabiting it. The next time you are asked what you do for a living and, after replying that you are a translator, you are asked what else you do, consider handing over a copy of this book to the questioner and saying, "This should explain more fully". This book is indeed a welcome addition to the "ABC of translation".

**About the author:** David Hardisty is a *leitor* at FCSH/NOVA and a professional translator. He has taught English, Scientific and Technical Translation (Portuguese-English) and CAT Tools in Translation at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. He is the co-author of five books on educational technology published by Oxford University Press.