

Hansard translation: Problems and issues in the
translation and editing of verbatim reports of
parliamentary proceedings

Trudy Reinhardt

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parliamentary proceedings

Trudy Reinhardt, M.A.

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Promoter : Prof A.L. Combrink

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Dedicated with love and gratitude
to my brother and sister-in-law,
Derick and Ina Reinhardt.

OPSOMMING

[**Sleutelterm:** Leser, reaksies van lesers, *Landeskunde*, taalkundige ontleding, manipulasie, herskryf, transposisie, akkulturasie; stylfigure; *verbatim*; dubbelsinnigheid; *Hansard*.]

Die doel van hierdie studie is om *Hansard*-publikasies te ontleed ten opsigte van die taal en grammatikale inhoud daarvan in 'n veeltalige Suid-Afrika.

In Hoofstuk 1 word die probleem- en doelstelling aangedui asook die navorsingsveld en omvang van die studie.

Hoofstuk 2 verskaf die agtergrond en geskiedkundige ontwikkeling van *Hansard* as 'n publikasie. Dit word gevolg deur 'n bespreking van die huidige konvensies en verwagtinge van hierdie publikasie en die politieke belangrikheid wat daaraan gekoppel word binne Suid-Afrika asook in ander lande van die wêreld. Hierdie hoofstuk verskaf ook 'n oorsig van die heersende benadering tot gelykheid van taal in die verskillende provinsies van Suid-Afrika.

Hoofstuk 3 bespreek die vertaalteorieë wat deur verskillende taalkenners geformuleer is en die toepaslikheid daarvan op *Hansard* publikasies in Suid-Afrika. Die effek van kultuur op hierdie konvensionele *verbatim* publikasie word ondersoek en vergelykings word getrek tussen vertalings van die verskillende Suid-Afrikaanse tale. Die fokus in hierdie hoofstuk is daarop gerig om die *verbatim* tradisie van *Hansard* te oorweeg as 'n praktiese en uitvoerbare benadering in 'n publikasie van hierdie aard in beide die weergee van politieke toesprake in die vloertale wat in die Nasionale

Parlement en die nege Provinsiale Wetgewers gebruik word, asook die verwagting dat *verbatim* vertalings van sodanige toesprake en debatte verskaf sal word.

Hoofstuk 4 verskaf 'n breë verskeidenheid voorbeelde en besprekings van tipiese taal- en vertaalfoute wat in die verskillende *Hansard* publikasies van Suid-Afrika gevind is.

Hoofstuk 5 ondersoek die redigerings tegnieke van die redakteurs van hierdie publikasies en die toeganklikheid van die eindproduk vir die lesers daarvan.

Hoofstuk 6 bied die gevolgtrekkings en bevindinge aan en doen voorstelle aan die hand vir 'n verandering in die konvensionele *verbatim* benadering wat in die oorgrote meerderheid van die gevalle wat bestudeer is - tot nadeel van die eindproduk - gevolg is. Hierdie hoofstuk bied ook voorstelle aan vir verdere navorsing wat tot voordeel van sodanige studierigting kan strek.

ABSTRACT

[Key terminology: Reader, reaction of readers, *Landeskunde*, grammatical analysis, manipulation, rewriting, transposition, acculturation; tropes; *verbatim*, ambiguity; *Hansard*.]

The aim of this study is to analyse *Hansard* publications with regard to the language and grammatical contents thereof in a multilingual South Africa.

Chapter 1 defines the problem and the purpose and relevance of the study as well as the field of research and the scope of the study.

Chapter 2 provides the background and historical development of *Hansard* as a publication. This is followed by a discussion of the prevailing conventions and expectations of this publication and the political importance attached to it within South Africa as well as other countries of the world.

Chapter 3 reviews translation theories formulated by various language experts and considers the viability of these in relation to *Hansard* publications in South Africa. The impact of culture on this conventional *verbatim* publication is investigated and comparisons are drawn between the translations of the different South African languages. Consideration is given to how practical and feasible the *verbatim* convention of *Hansard* is in the written reproduction of political speeches in the floor languages used in the National Parliament and the nine Provincial Legislatures, as well as the expectation of *verbatim* translations of such speeches and debates.

Chapter 4 provides an extensive number of examples and discussions of typical language and translation errors found in the different *Hansard* publications of South Africa.

Chapter 5 analyses the editing techniques of the editors of *Hansard* publications and the accessibility to the readers of the end product.

Chapter 6 provides the findings and conclusions and makes suggestions for a change in the conventional *verbatim* approach that is still followed - to the detriment of the end product - in the majority of the publications studied for this research project. This chapter also offers suggestions for further research that could be of benefit to this field of study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTUALIZATION AND OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996, states that this country has eleven official languages. It recognizes the "historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages" (1996:4) and stipulates that all official languages "must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated *equitably*" (1996:6).

Consequently, the Constitution foregrounds the necessity of interpreting and translation services in South Africa. Undoubtedly, the vast majority of South African citizens are incapable of speaking or understanding all of the official languages. In fact, in 1993, in the "old" South Africa, it was found that only 48 percent of the population of this country, understood the then two official languages (Schuring, 1996:91), namely English and Afrikaans.

The language policy as contained in the Constitution with its emphasis on the necessity of ensuring the equitability of treatment of each of the eleven official languages and the promotion of better communication, certainly more than any event prior to the Constitution, has turned translation in this country into a major growth industry. Significantly, Beukes (1993:249), three years prior to the promulgation of the Constitution, concluded that translation as a profession played a cardinal role in facilitating structural equality in a democratic society. The need and/or necessity for South Africans of all language groups to be provided with opportunities to understand

each other better through the means of translations and interpretations have undoubtedly been realised prior to it becoming a law of this country, but the Constitution has certainly contributed in a major way to more dedicated efforts being made on virtually every level of South African society to ensure that all languages are made as accessible as possible to all the citizens of this country. Against this background of a growing realisation about the importance of ensuring that communications of every nature are made as available as possible to as many people as possible, it is safe to assume that translation and interpreting services in South Africa will become increasingly important in the future.

Regular debates, workshops and public forums are presented to ensure that the essentiality of a multilingual society with equal representation for all the language groups are foregrounded. In the latter part of 1998, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology launched one such campaign to heighten South Africans' awareness of the government's policy of multilingualism. At the time of the launch of this *Hoyozela* campaign, the Minister of the Department, Mr Lionel Mtshali, said:

Understanding language is synonymous with effective communication, which is critical for industry, business and the government to function with competency (*The Star*, 11 November 1998).

The South African Government and the Provincial Legislatures cannot be faulted in their consistent efforts to ensure that languages in this country are treated on an equal and fair basis and that the aforementioned Clause 6 of Act 108 of 1996 is enforced and practised. Over the past four years, simultaneous interpreting services have become an integral part of the parliamentary sittings at the national level and in the

nine provinces of South Africa, thus enabling every politician to exercise his or her constitutional right to express him-/herself in the language of his or her choice, while contributing to the decisions that shape this country's future.

While the main objective of Government is to provide simultaneous interpreting services during legislative assemblies, in certain provinces this ideal has not yet been fully realized. Where such interpreting services are still in the process of implementation in some of the nine provincial legislatures of South Africa, it is, however, already common practice to ensure that, at least, an English translation of a speech made by a politician in his or her mother tongue during the legislative sittings of the various provinces is inserted in *Hansard*, the verbatim, that is, “exactly as spoken”, published report of such sittings.

In this study, *Hansard* as a publication and as a means of public record of parliamentary debate will play a prominent role, and there will be a strong focus on the nature and functions of this publication.

The history of this publication can be traced to the beginning of the 19th century and it is regarded as an essential document within the context of government proceedings.

Hansard is the informal title for the official printed reports of parliamentary debates. As the only complete, accurate and permanent record of the debates of Parliament ... *Hansard* contributes a necessary precision to the affairs of politics and provides an invaluable account of past parliamentary endeavours.
<http://www/parliament.vic.gov.au/hans/html>

Prior to the country's language policies being published in the Constitution, *Hansard* contained no translations. Speeches were printed in the language that was spoken during a parliamentary sitting, i.e. the "floor language" which at the time was basically Afrikaans and English, and no provision was made for those who might not have understood those two official languages.

In the new South Africa, despite the realisation and desire to accommodate all languages of the country on a fair and equitable basis, there is also an ever-increasing awareness on the side of Government and those working in the language industry within the civil service and the private sector of the enormity of the task - and of the problems surrounding the processes - of interpreting and translation, when dealing with eleven official languages. Not only are the financial implications extremely high during the actual implementation processes of language services but training facilities have to be instituted and maintained to ensure that those who are employed as language workers are, in fact, experts who will assist in better communication and understanding and not add to the confusion which so often results due to incorrect usage or understanding of another language.

An anecdote recounted during the launch of the aforementioned *Hoyozela* campaign clearly depicts that the field is wide open for misunderstanding, sometimes with serious consequences, in a multilingual society:

...an English-speaking civil servant is on his way to a conference on multilingualism. He gets stuck without petrol on a deserted country road where no one can speak a word in English.

He walks to an old petrol station where he picks up a plastic container full of what he thinks is fuel, although the writing on (the) container says clearly, *amanzi* (water in Zulu).

Thinking that his problem has been solved, he pours the liquid in his petrol tank - only to realise after his car won't start that the liquid might have been water... (*Sunday Independent*, November 1998:25).

One word not properly understood can thus have rather grave repercussions.

Understanding a language, knowing a language, translating from one language to another and using every technological innovation available, cannot be escaped if mankind truly desires communication:

... in a world that is rapidly growing smaller, international communication across cultures and even between the remotest corners of the earth is gradually being taken for granted, and that includes overcoming language barriers and cultural differences (Snell-Hornby, 1988:131).

Through the centuries the other person's knowledge has always intrigued and assisted in the education process. In fact, translation as a profession is regarded as being as old as mankind itself. Newmark (1988:79 *in* Dussé), "locates the first traces of translation in 3000BC" while Steiner (1975:336ff *in* Dussé, 1995:10), is of the opinion that "the practice and the history of translation commences with statements made by Cicero and Horace in 47 BC".

It would seem that mankind has always realised it would be worse off without translation. Were it not for translation, history - the developmental phases of *homo sapiens* - would have consisted of fragments in various foreign languages. A total picture of our development as a species is unlikely to have existed.

Translation is the one big medium that binds peoples of the earth to one another, the one major courier of cultural values across the whole universe. It is the one link which cannot be missing in the relations, the interaction and mutual influences between nations (Van Wyk, 1999:8 translated from Van der Merwe, 1958:237).

Language has always existed, has always been a necessary tool for mankind due to its need to communicate and has often led to conflict, misunderstanding and even chaos. In this respect, South Africa as a country has also known many "language wars". The Afrikaners fought to get beyond the "kombuistaal" era. When Van Riebeeck and his group of settlers first arrived in the Cape in 1652, Dutch was the "official" language. Due to the intermingling with the Khoisan group and the later arrival of the French Huguenots, dialects started developing. In the early phases of a developing Afrikaans language, it was regarded by officialdom as a language that was only fit to be spoken by slaves in kitchens and later there was insistence from the British side on the Queen's English during the Colonial era in South Africa. Such fights for the recognition of the various languages of different groups of people continue to this day.

As recently as 13 October, 1999 *Beeld* (15 October 1999:3) reported that a professor who insisted on being addressed in Afrikaans aboard a South African Airways aeroplane was instructed to disembark immediately at the airport building, after he had demanded to be addressed in Afrikaans when the flight-attendant and pilot decided to speak English only.

Several reports have been appearing in newspapers and other media on a regular basis during the past few months of a movement to make English the only official language

in South African courts of law. No decision has, as yet, been taken but the reported public reaction would seem to indicate that such a ruling would not be passed without conflict.

It is an interesting phenomenon that since the publication of the language policy in the Constitution, a new pride seems to be developing in each of the cultural groups of this country. The language wars continue but in perhaps a slightly more subtle manner than a few decades ago. Regular media reports bear witness to the fact that people of different language groups insist on having their various languages acknowledged and catered for even though, as will become apparent in this study, they do not always use it despite the availability of multilingual facilities.

In a recent study, based mainly on the situation currently prevailing in the Gauteng Legislature, it was, for example, observed that:

Members (of parliament/legislatures) ... feel strongly regarding the availability of the interpreting service ... To a certain extent the availability of the service seems to be a lip-service to multilingualism as members wanted it, but did not make use of it ... All admitted to mainly using English but felt that they should encourage the use of other languages (Pienaar & Slabbert, 1999:20).

As is evident from the *Hansard* books of the Northern Province Legislature, here too, members generally speak English. However, when one member opts to use his or her mother tongue, it often happens that the next person to take the floor will then decide to "level the playing-field" by also using his/her mother tongue.

During such debates, the interpreter of whatever one of the four official Northern Province languages other than English is spoken, provides a simultaneous interpretation into English to the assembly from the original Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Sepedi or Afrikaans. This interpretation covers the most important points of the mother tongue speech and is not a verbatim interpretation. The interpreters in this legislature are expected to relay only the gist of the original speech.

This means, in effect, that if Tshivenda is spoken, the Tshivenda interpreter listens on the ear-phones and reports in broad outline via microphones to those members who do not understand Tshivenda back to the floor in English should such members wish to listen on their earphones. Those members who are mother tongue speakers of Afrikaans, Xitsonga and Sepedi thus receive an edited version of the original Tshivenda speech in English via the interpreter. This edited verbal version of the speech is acceptable under the circumstances, since the main aim is to provide general understanding of the main points of the discussions and arguments in order to ensure continuity and the smooth flowing of the legislative proceedings. There can be little doubt that many of the finer points of the original mother-tongue speeches may be overlooked during the interpretation process.

However, in an effort to circumvent problems of misunderstanding due to the synoptic nature of the interpretations, members of the legislature normally receive a typed draft of the day's proceedings approximately forty-eight hours after a sitting. This copy contains the verbatim version of each of the original languages spoken during the particular parliamentary sitting, as well as the English verbatim translations.

It should be kept in mind that around the world the editorial policy regarding *Hansard* is that it should remain an accurate and, as far as possible, an exact report of parliamentary proceedings. This was again stressed by Gary Garrison, the Director of Public Information and Editor of the *Hansard* in Alberta, Canada, during the Sixth Triennial Conference of the Commonwealth *Hansard* Editors Association held in Ulundi from 12 to 16 July 1999.

In his presentation, Garrison stressed that "revisions shall be limited to the correction of grammar, spelling and punctuation ... but no material alterations shall be made, nor any amendments which would in any way tend to change the sense of what has been spoken" (Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Conference, 1999:57).

While the interpreters during a legislative assembly have, to quite a degree, some measure of freedom in their verbal relaying of the speech, the onus rests on the translators who transcribe the recorded speeches to perform a word-perfect and far more meticulous task during the transcription process by attempting to transmit the original message in a word-by-word written form to its readers.

Politicians set great store by these records of their speeches and debates. On 16 January 2000, an Afrikaans Sunday newspaper, *Rapport*, for example, carried an article about a R2-million court case involving the Premier of Mpumalanga. *Hansard* was at the centre of the dispute, the reason being that it had published details about a "bank account", which the leader of the Freedom Front political party in that province claimed was initially referred to as "bank accounts".

The *raison d'être* of this thesis is, firstly, an attempt to place *Hansard* with its insistence on verbatim reporting and translations under the spotlight. There can be little argument that each individual has a unique style of expression that differs to some degree from that of the next person. One aspect that is scrutinised in this study, is an attempt to establish the influence that the individual translator's insight into the topic discussed in the legislature has on his or her translated *verbatim* version of such a text. It also hopes to establish whether the constraints of the various languages themselves hamper the translator in converting the original message in verbatim manner to another language. *Hansard* regulations strictly prescribe verbatim reporting, but is such verbatim translation at all possible and if this regulation is absolutely adhered to in the fullest sense, does the translated version not obscure rather than logically convey the original intent of the speaker? What approach is the *Hansard* translator to follow in his or her decision to opt for a specific word or phrase?

To translate, to open a path through a language by using its resources, to decide upon *one* meaning, is to escape the agonizing, aporetic impasses of any translation, to make the philosophical gesture *par excellence*: the gesture of betrayal (Benjamin, 1988:9).

This insistence upon one meaning, a meaning that will convey the original intention, is the dilemma which translators constantly face. It has to be remembered that "language is the expression of a culture, many of the words in a language are inextricably bound up with that culture and therefore very hard to transfer in their totality to another language" (Lefevere, 1992:17).

This applies to translations of every kind, but when *Hansard* with its strict *verbatim* requirement is considered, the full impact of the translator's dilemma in this particular situation is realised. It is on this problem and the approaches to find workable and acceptable solutions that the focus is largely directed at in this study.

Generally speaking, the three African languages that are under the spotlight here, namely Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi, as well as Afrikaans, are rich in tropes, i.e. metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, idiom and irony, to name but the most obvious figures of speech. Tropes used in the various languages are often culture-specific and if translated directly lose their meaning for other cultural groups, revealing merely a surface structure interpretation. In some cultures there is sensitivity around certain issues which forces the translator to opt for euphemisms in order not to offend, but which often leads to misunderstanding.

Taboo is a prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment or shame. Taboo words are often replaced in ordinary usage by euphemisms (Makgopa, 1999:8).

Apart from cultural sensitivity sometimes forcing translators to couch "offensive" words or phrases in terminology that may very well cloud the original intent or meaning, there is the matter of non-availability of equivalent terms. Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi translators with whom I work in the *Hansard* and Translation division of the Legislature of the Northern Province readily admit that they quite often have to coin new phrases when translating from one language to another. They claim that equivalents frequently do not exist in their various dialects and that their cultural

fields of reference sometimes simply do not provide for the terminology used in some of the other languages of the province.

One such example that recently cropped up, is the Americanism that seems to have gained a place in, among others, the English and Afrikaans vocabularies of South Africa, namely "Mickey Mouse" or "Mickey Muis". It may serve at this juncture to briefly illustrate the type of translation problem that creates headaches for translators of the other official indigenous languages used in the Legislature of the Northern Province.

It would seem, from the reaction of the translators in question, that they felt that the Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Sepedi readers of *Hansard* would be in the dark if they made reference to this cartoon character in the context that it was used by a politician of this particular legislature who spoke of a "Mickey Mouse budget" in English. Hence, a Xitsonga translator opted for "Mpimanyeto wo Hlekula", which in English translates to "It is an inferior/insufficient budget".

A Tshivenda translator chose the following sentence in his language: "Ndi mugaganya gwama wa matambavhana". This, too, contains no reference to any cartoon character, but freely translated into English reads: "This is like a child's play budget". The reasons offered by both the Xitsonga and Tshivenda translators for the option chosen were that a verbatim translation would not make sense to Xitsonga and Tshivenda readers simply because they argued that the Disney cartoon character is an unfamiliar, if not unknown, concept to their people.

This bears out the view expressed by Snell-Hornby (1988:41) that the extent to which a text is translatable varies with the *degree* to which it is embedded in its own specific culture, also with the distance that separates the cultural background of the source text and target audience in terms of time and place.

However, there can be no denying that in the case of *Hansard*, this is exactly where problems arise. On the one hand, there is the insistence on how absolutely essential it is that *Hansard* has to be a verbatim report, yet, on the other hand, there is the undeniable responsibility of the translators to make every attempt to ensure that the cultural frames of reference of readers from different language groups are taken into account during the translation processes to make it possible for every reader to understand what his/her elected member of parliament talks about during sittings of the Legislature.

During legislative assemblies - although the main aim is to provide an impersonal and uninvolved interpretation of the spokesperson's words - the interpreter, as has been pointed out, does have quite a measure of leeway. Despite the formal circumstances, the interpreters not only have the approval of the Northern Province Legislature to provide "free" verbal interpretation, but by its very nature the spoken word, of course, provides the opportunity for nuance and intonation to assist in the process of conveying the intent of the original spokesperson.

When dealing with *Hansard* verbatim translations on paper, however, the situation is quite different and certainly more complex. Only the most glaring language errors can be corrected and then in the most circumspect manner. The translation of such

verbatim records often presents major problems to the *Hansard* translators. Word-play, to mention one interesting type of language usage, provides a particularly striking example of the dexterity required from translators in this highly-specialised field. The previously mentioned Gary Garrison of the Alberta *Hansard*, quoted one such example during his speech at Ulundi: "... the member has tried often to speak about the picket line and the bottom line, but he has yet to get a headline".

As a test-case this sentence was given to two Afrikaans translators with the following results:

- i) "...die lid het al dikwels probeer praat oor die stakingslinie en die bodemlyn, maar hy moet nog 'n koplyn (opskrif) kry".
- ii) "... die lid het al dikwels met woorde in die voorste linie probeer toyi-toyi oor stakings en eindresultate, maar hy bly sy lyne gekruis kry".

It certainly is a tricky sentence to translate into Afrikaans. After discussion, it was agreed by the translators that the witticism of the original was lost in the first translation. It was also a rather cumbersome sentence of which the meaning was unclear, but it could pass for a fairly close to verbatim translation. The second sentence, it was felt, to a certain extent, conveyed the message with a touch of the originally intended humour, but it still was not regarded as either a good translation nor an accurate or verbatim one. In the end it was felt that perhaps the solution would have been to opt for something more explanatory such as: "Die lid het homself al dikwels probeer uitlaat oor stakings en eindresultate, maar hy het nog nooit die koerante se hoofopskrifte gehaal nie". Apart from the fact that it still was not a verbatim translation and had become a rather prosaic one, at least the "meaning" might be clearer. In situations like this, the onus rests on the translator to keep in mind that:

The translation strategy lies in identifying and recreating multiple relationships in both cultural association (perspective) and language (dimension) ... (Snell-Hornby, 1988:53).

Yet, as the quoted example clearly illustrates, it is a strategy that becomes more than a little problematical when it is linked to the *Hansard* requirement of verbatim reporting and by implication, of course, verbatim translation of the original words.

Such aids or luxuries as intonation, inflection and nuance are not present when working with words on paper. Based on the assumption that the majority of politicians have a good enough grasp of the English language, interpreters in the Legislature of the Northern Province - had they been confronted with the "picket line" quote - would, in all probability, have retained the key words of the English in their interpretation to the other languages along with some explanations. This is, of course, not the ideal solution to the problem, but similar situations have occurred on the floor during legislative assemblies on occasion in the past and it has not - yet - led to complaints from the politicians.

The printed version of parliamentary proceedings due to its static and permanent nature is, however, open to more intense scrutiny and complaints. The *Hansard* book is not only referred to for the acquisition of political ammunition, but is also regarded as a record for posterity and it is, therefore, expected to be the truest possible reflection of the actual legislative proceedings. How well *Hansard* translators succeed in conveying the original intent of the politicians in verbatim format in another language when confronted with language that is culture-specific, language

that contains metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, idiom, irony and other such figures of speech is one of the issues which this study probes, based on actual examples of problems encountered in the *Hansard* working environment where language-specific figures of speech often are perhaps more troublesome than in other translation situations:

The essential problem posed by metaphor in translation is that different cultures, hence different languages, conceptualize and create symbols in varying ways, and therefore the sense of the metaphor is frequently culture-specific ... it is up to the translator to decide whether the metaphorical image is vital for the text and whether it contributes towards the general understanding of the text, and if so, in how far the image must be adapted to the target culture (Snell-Hornby, 1988:57,59).

Generally then, it is accepted that the responsibility rests with the translator to construct a case for him- or herself about the importance of supplying the reader of the translated text with tropes that have been *adapted* to make sense in the target language. Such decisions and responsibility clearly require not only knowledge of, but also sensitivity to, the frames of reference of specific language groups and the possible symbolic implications of the tropes involved:

... associative meanings are obviously very important for the emotive factors of impact and appeal. In all languages there are certain sets of words relating to more or less the same referents but which differ considerably in associative meaning. Compare, for example, the English words *guts* and *intestines*. In certain contexts *guts* would seem uncouth, low-brow, and even vulgar while *intestines* usually seems quite appropriate, though obviously not in the figurative expression, *he has lots of guts* or *they hate his guts* (Louw, 1985:16).

Others like, for example, Dussé (1995:37), also point out that

The translator has to realise that ... a text ... not only represents something referentially in the world (semantics), but it is also concerned with form and

style (syntactics) as well as the effect of the message or text on the reader (pragmatics). In all this, however, *content* and *form* are dominated by *function*.

Seen against a background of the well-founded reasons that *Hansard* has to be a verbatim report of parliamentary proceedings, the problems with regard to finding appropriate translations of particular tropes and other language specific expressions immediately become apparent. If the translator working on *Hansard* regards his/her primary duty to be the provision of a verbatim translation of the exact words used in the original text by a speaker of another language than the one he/she is translating into and an equivalent does not exist in the target language or a direct verbatim translation would be nonsensical to the reader, what is the correct approach to follow? This is the dilemma facing translators working on *Hansard* and the main aim of this study is to investigate the problem and attempt to find a workable solution that may provide guidelines to translators working in this particular field of translation.

Hansard is produced in numerous countries around the globe, i.e. Britain, Canada, etc. In South Africa ten *Hansards* are produced for each parliamentary sitting, one at national level and nine at provincial level. At the national level *Hansard* is produced in the floor languages with translations into English of any of the other languages of the country that may have been used during a sitting. With five languages being used in the Legislature of the Northern Province, it is the province with the highest number of official languages. The number of languages catered for in the other eight Provincial Legislatures are as follows:

- Kwa-Zulu Natal - 3 : English, Zulu and Afrikaans
- Free State - 3 : Sesotho, English and Afrikaans
- Northern Cape - 4 : English, Afrikaans, Setswana and IsiXhosa

- Western Cape - 3 : IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans
- Mpumalanga - 3 : English, Afrikaans and siSwati
- Gauteng- 3 : English, Afrikaans and Sepedi
- North-West - 3 : English, Afrikaans and Setswana
- Eastern Cape - IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans

The Legislature of the Northern Province with its five official languages thus provides a wider scope of study. Most of the focus of this thesis will be on the translations and edits of this particular provincial legislature, not only because of the larger number of languages used, but also due to the fact that the Head of this Legislature's *Hansard* division is the author of this thesis and is therefore directly involved in the day to day situation of the translation processes. Examples and observations obtained from the *Hansard* books of the eight other Provincial Legislatures will, however, also be used in order to provide a broader basis of comparison and to give more substance to the research project.

LANGUAGES CATERED FOR BY PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

	ENGLISH	AFRI-KAANS	ISIZULU	SESOTHO	SETSWANA	ISIXHOSA	SISWATI	SEPEDI
KWAZULU-NATAL	X	X	X					
FREE STATE	X	X		X				
NORTHERN CAPE	X	X			X	X		
WESTERN CAPE	X	X				X		
MPUMLA-LANGA	X	X					X	
GAUTENG	X	X			X			
NORTH-WEST	X	X			X			
EASTERN CAPE	X	X				X		

The core of the problem being addressed in this study is an attempt to establish whether *Hansard* translators succeed or fail in capturing the essence of speeches made in a politician's mother tongue and whether they are able to convey the essential facts in a meaningful manner in English against the stipulated background of verbatim reporting.

Comparisons are drawn between the original speeches made in any of the other official languages which have been translated into English in the *Hansard* publications and not between the different languages, as such. This is due to the fact that, in practice, translations in *Hansard* are done mostly from any one of the other languages used into only English purely for economic reasons.

The above outline would seem to crystallize out in a number of important questions that would underpin the aims envisaged for this study.

2 QUESTIONS THAT ARISE

1. With the world-wide *Hansard* convention regarding *verbatim* reporting, is it logical and/or possible to expect that the *translations* to be provided in *Hansard* of the actual original speeches should also be *verbatim* versions of the original speeches and debates?
2. Are *verbatim* translations at all possible, especially with regard to culture-specific language usage? In other words, how effectively can figures of speech such as tropes and metaphors be translated and still have meaning to readers of other cultural groups?

3. If this *verbatim* convention is continued in multilingual South Africa, does the *Hansard* - with its “non-invasive editing policy” - succeed in providing its readers with transcribed copies of political speeches that contain a standard of language that is generally readable and fairly easy to understand?
4. Is it not apposite for the South African National Parliament and the nine Legislatures of this multilingual country to relax the convention/expectation of *verbatim* reporting in *Hansard*?
5. If the *verbatim* convention were to be relaxed and *Hansard* translators and editors are allowed more flexibility, what impact will this have on these important records of parliamentary proceedings?

3 AIMS

Deriving from the above issues, the broad aim of this study is, therefore, to contribute to the thinking about the existing translation and editing approaches to *Hansard* through the investigation of available material and to draw conclusions regarding a method that may provide a more logical and understandable end-product.

In order to arrive at this point, then, the more specific aims are:

1. to establish whether the *verbatim* convention pertaining to *Hansard* can possibly be adhered to, given the translations contained therein;
2. to prove that this is very difficult by providing versions of translated *verbatim* examples of, among others, figures of speech, tropes and everyday language that will illustrate that the unique cultural aspects of the languages in question in this

study often demand the use of non-*verbatim* language, literal language instead of figurative language, the coining of new phrases and/or omission of words or phrases;

3. to illustrate that strict adherence to *verbatim* transcriptions and translations as well as a non-invasive editing policy often result in publications that are not very user-friendly and that do not contribute to the language skills of its readers;
4. to provide a valid argument, against this background, in favour of a move away from the convention of *verbatim* publications to prove that it will result in a publication of better quality; and
5. to provide solutions that will ensure that the *true core* content of parliamentary speeches is retained.

Deriving from the above, one could say that the postulate of this research project is that while the importance of the *Hansard* convention of *verbatim* written reporting of political speeches and debates cannot be denied, **direct word-by-word or *verbatim* renditions thereof in other languages** are not only at times impossible due to cultural and other inter-language differences, but, in fact, this often creates the exact opposite of the desired effect, i.e. it leads to misunderstanding rather than understanding. It is further postulated that the combination of the extensive use of English by non-mother tongue speakers (who often have difficulty with the language) with the inevitably non-invasive editing touch emanating from the *verbatim* convention results in publications that often obscure political messages and furthermore, could confuse readers on matters such as correct grammar usage.

This research will, in the first instance, be based on observations made and notes kept of relevant language phenomenon during the period July 1997 and August 2000 as Head of the *Hansard* and Translation division of the Legislature of the Northern Province.

Thus, the method will involve the following steps:

- Various volumes of *Hansard* books of some of the nine provincial legislatures, selected on a random and availability basis will be analysed and referred to in order to elucidate the problems of *verbatim* reporting and translating.
- The above will be interspersed throughout with opinions expressed, conclusions drawn and the observations and findings of language experts. This information is derived from the extensive range of texts studied that relate to the language aspects relevant to this study.
- Information gathered at seminars and workshops on reporting, translating and editing approaches will be adequately covered and applied.
- A study of numerous theories of translation in an effort to find a practical and workable approach to *Hansard* translation.
- Comparative and in-depth analyses and discussions will be provided along with the relevant examples of actual *Hansard* texts containing translations into English from the four other languages used in the Legislature of the Northern Province, i.e. Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Afrikaans. In the case of each of these languages the permanently employed translators working in each of these

languages will be given the same text to translate. The text will then be given to the permanently employed editors of the languages in question. They will be required to provide reports on the methods and approaches used by the translators after studying and editing it and will be requested to draw conclusions regarding the agreements/differences found in the final products based on specific text-markers which will not be divulged to the translators beforehand, namely:

- i) typical parliamentary terminology;
- ii) figurative language;
- iii) language/cultural specific expressions;
- iv) tenses;
- v) prepositions;
- vi) forms of address; and
- vii) articles.

The translations done by the translators of the various different languages of the Northern Province and the edited versions thereof as done by the editors of the different languages will be provided in tabular form next to each other to facilitate “at-a-glance” comparisons of the discussion points.

5 ENVISAGED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study is regarded as highly relevant since the translating of *Hansard* into eleven official languages by the provincial legislatures in South Africa is a process that is in a fledgling state and many more changes may well follow, i.e. a decision could well

be made in the future that every province has to produce complete *Hansard* books that have been translated into each of the languages of that province or, from an economic point of view, it could be decided to explore alternative methods of capturing and preserving political speeches and debates.

It is therefore not regarded as presumptuous, at this juncture, to discuss and analyse the present problems and suggest possible solutions and improvements that could benefit not only the Legislature of the Northern Province, but also other provincial legislature of South Africa and possibly *Hansard* divisions in other parts of the world.

6 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study and discusses the language parity required by the Constitution. The language policy and approaches to it in the different provinces of the country are compared and the developments in establishing clear guidelines relating to it are compared.

Chapter 2 deals with the background and history of *Hansard*, the historic and prevailing conventions and expectations relating to this document and the importance attached to it within South Africa and also other countries of the world. The chapter also provides an overview of the current approach to language parity in the different provinces of South Africa.

Chapter 3 discusses the theories of language experts about matters relating to translation. Numerous aspects pertaining to this study are addressed, in

particular theories on issues such as the effect of culture on translation, translational relationships and translational equivalence. This chapter aims to fix the focus on the main concern of the study, namely the *Hansard* requirement of providing *verbatim* reports and moves towards considering the feasibility of such a requirement in translation. A number of these translation theories are explored in an attempt to establish the various approaches translators can use when confronted with culturally-specific figures of speech, tropes or metaphors. The effect of, for example, *Landeskunde* will be explored to establish "the specific nature of a regional group... (on) ... the usage rules of the regional language" (Landsberg, 1999:1) and how this varies from the rules observed in other languages.

Chapter 4 provides examples and discussions of the language errors found in the *Hansard* publications from various provincial legislatures and the National Parliament, as well as comparative studies undertaken in approaches to translation of parliamentary texts by translators of the official languages of the Legislature of the Northern Province. The translated versions of the same texts done by different translators of the same language groups are compared to establish the degree to which such texts are similar or different. In the case of the latter, verbal discussions with the translators provided possible explanations for discrepancies.

Chapter 5 explores the various editing processes that *Hansard* texts undergo in the production process, and the impact it has on the eventual language content, quality, readability and accessibility. Comparisons are drawn between *verbatim* texts that had

been lightly edited according to Hansard tradition and convention, and the same texts that had been more strictly edited, to establish the effect that different editorial approaches may have on the verbatim requirement of the writing of *Hansard*.

Chapter 6 concludes the study with a summary of the findings discussed in the preceding chapters and present some recommendations based on these. Suggestions for further research on these and related topics are made. The study is concluded with a bibliography.

As a closing thought for this first chapter, the following quote seems particularly apt:

Translators, too, are constrained by the times in which we live, the literary traditions they try to reconcile and the feature of the languages they work with ... Since they are at home in two cultures ... they also have the power to construct the image ... for consumption by the readers ... (Lefevere, 1992:6).

CHAPTER 2

2. HANSARD AS A PUBLICATION

2.1 Historical overview

2.2 *Hansard* production today

2.2.1 *National Parliament*

2.2.2 *Legislature of the Western Cape*

2.2.3 *Legislature of the Northern Cape*

2.2.4 *Legislature of Kwazulu Natal*

2.2.5 *Legislature of Mpumalanga*

2.2.6 *Legislature of Gauteng*

2.2.7 *Legislature of the Eastern Cape*

2.2.8 *Legislature of the Free State*

2.2.9 *Legislature of the North-West*

2.3 Legislature of the Northern Province

2.4 Some approaches to *Hansard* editing

2.5 General views on *Hansard* editing

2.6 Restrictive boundaries of *Hansard* editing

2.1 Historical overview

Hansard is the informal title for the official printed reports of parliamentary debates. *Hansard* is generally regarded as not much more than the spoken word produced in a printed format in what remains as close as possible a rendition of the actual speech. It is not expected to be language perfect, popular reading material; it is simply a booklet produced in many countries around the globe and is above all a printed record of the words uttered by politicians during official sessions of parliaments. The history of *Hansard* can be traced to the beginning of the 1800s when it was first published in Britain.

The affairs of parliament were initially regarded as sacred and secret, it would seem, since the British Parliament prohibited any reporting or publishing of its proceedings during the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Parliament believed it should deliberate in private and regarded any attempt to publicise its proceedings as a serious punishable offence (<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/hans.html>).

There was, however, dissension in the ranks of the more progressive members of Parliament by the late eighteenth century and this, linked to an awareness of the increasing importance of informing the man in the street, as well as demands for information from the "watch-dogs of society", the press, forced the British Parliament to rethink its attitude.

In 1803 the House of Commons passed a resolution giving the press the right to enter the Public Gallery. The initial publications arising from this were known as Parliamentary Debates and it appeared as a supplement in a newspaper Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, which was published by one William Cobbett. It consisted of reprints of the reports of journalists in other publications about the speeches made in parliament. At that stage, it was thus a far cry from the verbatim publication that we have today.

The name *Hansard* comes from the aforementioned Cobbett's assistant, T C Hansard, who took over the publication in 1812 and then changed the title to *Hansard's* Parliamentary Debates in 1829. It remained a publication of journalists' reports until the late 1870s when growing dissatisfaction was expressed about the accuracy of the reports.

As a result Parliament voted *Hansard* the sum of [sterling] 300 a year for shorthand assistance. The *Hansard* family continued to produce Parliamentary Debates until 1889
(<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/hans.html>)

The *Hansard* family remained involved with the Parliamentary Debates until 1889. For a period of ten years thereafter, other publishers produced it, until the House of Commons took over the production in 1909. In 1943, the British Parliament reinstated the name *Hansard* in the title of its formal records.

In South Africa, the Cape Town newspaper, Argus, initially transcribed and published the *Hansard*, or more precisely, the Victorian *Hansard*, as it was then called. A motion was carried in the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865 that the transcription

and printing of the parliamentary proceedings should be supervised by Parliament itself. This task was taken on by three reporters who were former employees of the *Argus*. They were known as the Department of Victorian Parliamentary Debates.

Their first report saw the light on 12 February 1866 with the first session of the fifth Parliament of Victoria. It is interesting to note that this was four decades prior to the passing of a similar resolution by the Parliament in Westminster. Those first transcripts were incomplete due to staff shortages, but as additional staff members were hired, the debates were gradually reported more fully.

Although the official title of the bound volumes was Victorian Parliamentary Debates, the familiar name it was always referred to throughout remained *Hansard*. This title became official in 1958 from which year it started appearing on the official title page of the transcriptions. Today, it is still generally referred to as *Hansard*, although, as will be seen later in this chapter, it has become a secondary title for these publications in many of the South African provincial legislatures.

2.2 *Hansard* production today

Since 1994 the situation regarding the production and printing of *Hansard* has changed considerably. During the era of apartheid in South Africa there was a National Government, hence one official *Hansard* was produced.

In the "new South Africa" 10 official *Hansards* are published: one series of *Hansard* is produced as a record of the sittings of the National Parliament and one each for the sittings of the Provincial Legislatures in the nine provinces of this country.

While there is no question about the necessity of keeping records of parliamentary and legislative business for reference and historic purposes, it has to be appreciated that there are ten different groups of language practitioners working in the nine different provinces and at National Parliament on the production of *Hansard* books. Since there are only some hazy, and often no, guidelines about uniformity, these publications vary considerably in many respects.

On the language issue, which is the main interest of this project, for example, there is not yet clarity.

As language legislation has not yet been passed by National Parliament, provinces are left to decide for themselves as to how the principle of multilingualism would be best accommodated within their provinces (Pienaar & Slabbert, 1999:5).

There is little doubt that this is a thorny issue in South Africa. The Head of Language Service at National Parliament, Mr Hector Tshabalala, in his address at the Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Conference, agreed that a language policy has to be put in place. But as he said quite clearly, it is not going to be an easy matter, as "... the ... Constitution says no language must be down-graded... It is extremely costly to try to accommodate all these languages ... Is our *Hansard* going to be produced in all 11 languages? Can we afford it?" (1999:20,23).

Mr Lionel Mtetwa from *Hansard* in Swaziland responded by saying that "it is unrealistic to say you will develop all the languages. I would like myself perhaps to speak my language, but I appreciate ... that I speak English because it is sort of a unifying language" (1999:26).

However, at the stage of publication of this research project, South Africa does not have a final language policy and plan in place. In the Northern Province, for example, a resolution has been passed by its legislature which stipulates that English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga are the official languages of the province. Language practitioners working on *Hansard* in this country presently work in a number of different indigenous languages as well as the former official languages, Afrikaans and English (whose status is not allowed to be diminished – in terms of Constitutional provision).

The only province that has adopted an Act on Provincial Language Policy is the Western Cape (interview with Dr. Theo du Plessis, PANSALB)... All other provinces have some or other regulatory Language Policy. The extent to which provincial language practices adhere to their Language Policy differs from province to province and varies (Pienaar & Slabbert, 1999:9).

Apart from the different languages used in these provinces, there are also considerable variations in the different approaches with regard to the treatment the languages receive in the various *Hansard* books published by the different provincial legislatures.

A Conformity Guide that was produced by the *Hansard* staff at National government level exists but this guide provides guidelines with regard to grammar usage only and furthermore has not been updated for a number of years.

At the aforementioned Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Conference, there was once again consensus that "As editors of *Hansard*, you are faced with the task of producing a rational verbatim report which leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or debate and does not add anything unnecessary" (Mdletshe, 1999:2).

The fact of the matter is, however, that the *Hansard* books differ considerably (not only in appearance) from one provincial legislature to the next, but naturally, due to the different languages being spoken in these different provinces, the content also differs considerably, as does the approach to the handling of the various official languages.

In order to provide a background about the handling of English and the indigenous languages in the various provinces, questionnaires were either sent to the editors of the different provincial legislatures for completion or they were contacted telephonically to obtain information.

This information has, however, proved rather inconclusive. In numerous instances, the production of *Hansard* is out-sourced to private companies and at times the information received from *Hansard* staff in the different provinces and that provided by the producers/publishers did not correlate on language issues.

It proved a rather difficult task to obtain copies of *Hansard* books from some of the provincial legislatures. The Legal Deposit Act (Act No 54 of 1997) provides for the preservation of the national documentary heritage through the legal deposit of published documents. According to the Act, all South African publishers are obliged to supply copies of published documents to the prescribed places of deposit. This includes provincial government departments, which also have to deposit their publications.

In a letter of complaint, dated 24 January 2000, directed to the Secretary of Parliament from the office of the Director-General of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, it is pointed out that this discontinuance of depositing such material might be due to a lack of awareness of the requirements of the Act on the part of provincial authorities.

There seems to be more than a measure of truth in this statement when one considers the contents of an article published in Rapport, a Sunday newspaper, of 12 December 1999. It refers to leather-bound copies of *Hansard* books dating back to 1912, 1913 up until 1960, which were found dumped on a rubbish heap in the cellar of Parliament by Mr Jean-Pierre Gerber, an ANC-MP. He is quoted as having said: "Dit is krimineel om sulke dokumente te verpulp ... (1999:20). (*It is criminal to pulp such documents*).

In the same article, an expert on antiques, Mr Stephan Welz, is quoted as saying that he regards the *Hansard* books in question as Africana, since they contain speeches of importance to researchers and historians.

These views are in keeping with the opinion expressed by the Speaker of the Kwa-Zulu Legislature, Inkosi B N Mdletshe, in his opening address to the Commonwealth *Hansard* Editors Conference in Ulundi on 12 May 1999:

The *Hansard* provides a record for posterity and reflects attitudes to significant issues of the day and the changing values and mores of society.

As editors of *Hansard*, you are faced with the task of producing a rational verbatim report which leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or debate and does not add anything unnecessary.

The *Hansard* makes politicians accountable (Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Conference, 1999:2).

Fortunately, a large enough number of the more recent volumes of the various provincial *Hansard* books could be obtained and studied to gain more insight into the handling of the different languages in order to find a satisfactory basis of comparison for the purposes of this study.

Following is a brief overview of the appearance and general approach to languages catered for in the *Hansard* books of the different provinces. Analyses of the translations in some of these books will be discussed in-depth in later chapters, wherever examples occur that are applicable to this research project.

2.2.1 *National Parliament*

Here the title *Hansard* seems to have diminished from its former status. It appears in brackets underneath a title, in bold capital letters: "Debates of the National Assembly" on the cover page.

On the inside front page, under the Foreword, the following message conveys the purpose of the publication and its language policy: "This publication serves as an interim record of debates until a language dispensation for Parliament has been approved. Accordingly questions and speeches are published in the original languages with English translations appearing in square brackets".

National Parliament, by its very nature, obviously caters for each of the 11 official languages of the country.

From the content of *Hansard* it is clear that the majority of politicians opt for using the English language. In discussions with language practitioners at National Parliament, it was learnt that they have an internal policy whereby politicians notify the language practitioners on the day prior to a sitting if they intend to use any language other than English during the following day's proceedings. This enables the language practitioners to have an interpreter in the House for that particular language on the required date. The interpreted version of the speech or debate is, however, not the version that eventually appears in the *Hansard*. The recorded verbatim version of the speech is translated for printing and record purposes.

2.2.2 *Legislature of the Western Cape*

In keeping with National Parliament, this legislature's published version of its provincial parliament's sittings has as its title "Debates of the Parliament of the Province of the Western Cape" in bold capitals with the *Hansard* name in brackets underneath it.

They publish two editions of each parliamentary sitting. The one is published entirely in English and where a member used isiXhosa or Afrikaans - the other two official languages of this province - this is indicated as follows: "The sign * indicates a translation. The sign †, used subsequently in the same speech, indicates the original language" (*Hansard*, Western Cape, 1999:871).

The other edition is published in Afrikaans and where a member used isiXhosa or English, as is the case with the English version, the original language appears with a translation into English immediately thereafter.

As mentioned in paragraph 2.2.1, translations and original language are indicated with the aforementioned diacritic marks.

The Western Cape Provincial Legislature reports that English is the language most often used, with Afrikaans second and only a few members occasionally speak isiXhosa. Interpreting services are provided during parliamentary debates in the Western Province Legislature.

2.2.3 *Legislature of the Northern Cape*

The title "*Hansard*" appears nowhere on the cover or on the inside of this province's published version of legislative sittings. Underneath the coat of arms, which reflects the four official languages of this province, namely English, Afrikaans, Setswana and isiXhosa, appears the title "Debates of the Legislature".

This legislature reports that English and Afrikaans are the languages most often used during sessions.

A few mother-tongue speakers of Setswana and isiXhosa occasionally use these two indigenous languages and then interpreting services are provided.

Two separate versions of the proceedings are published in English and Afrikaans and are bound in the same volume. Each of the two versions contains speeches made in Setswana and isiXhosa with translations immediately thereafter indicated as follows: "The symbol * indicates a translation. The symbol #, used subsequently, indicates the original language" (Debates of the Legislature of the Northern Cape, 38/1999).

2.2.4 *Legislature of Kwazulu Natal*

This province's printed record of proceedings does not use the *Hansard* name either.

Kwazulu-Natal has three official languages, namely English, Afrikaans and Zulu and the cover states - in these three languages - that the book contains "Debates and Proceedings" of the Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Legislature.

The *Hansard* is produced in the languages originally used by the members with English translations in brackets underneath the original words spoken in any one of the other languages. No reference is made to translations in the front of the book, but where they appear, it states "translation" in bold italics and the translated versions are also printed in italics for the sake of noticeability.

2.2.5 *Legislature of Mpumalanga*

This provincial legislature, too, no longer uses the *Hansard* title on its cover. The cover states that it is the "Debates of the Legislature of the Province of Mpumalanga". *Hansard* appears in brackets on the first page of the transcriptions.

Members use English, Afrikaans and Siswati during sittings and each of these languages appear in the publication. English is regarded as the main language of the publication and is used more often than the other two languages. Where a member used Afrikaans or Siswati, an English translation appears immediately underneath it.

The following notice appears on the first page of the transcription to alert the reader regarding translations: "The symbol * indicates a translation. The symbol # used subsequently in the same speech, indicates the original language".

2.2.6 *Legislature of Gauteng*

This provincial legislature caters for what is referred to as "the four working languages of the province", namely English, Afrikaans, Sesotho and isiZulu. As is the case in the *Hansard* of the majority of the other provincial legislatures, their record of parliamentary proceedings is produced in the "floor language". This is English approximately 80% of the time. Translations into English are provided in brackets of any of the other three languages that may have been used during sittings of the House.

2.2.7 *Legislature of the Eastern Cape*

The official title of the publication of sittings of the House is "Debates of the Legislature of the Province of the Eastern Cape" with *Hansard*, as a title, in brackets underneath. The languages generally used are English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The *Hansard* is published in the floor language that is generally English and translations into English are provided whenever any of the other two languages had been used.

2.2.8 *Legislature of the Free State*

This province reports that they print complete *Hansard* books in each of the three official languages of the province, namely English, Afrikaans and Sesotho. This is undoubtedly the legislature that comes closest "to elevate the status and advance the use of (its) languages" (Constitution, 1996:4) by providing not only a complete printed record of parliamentary proceedings in each of the three provincial languages,

but also a "fully-fledged simultaneous interpreting service ... They interpret sittings of the Legislature, committees and public hearings (and).. in the public gallery" (Pienaar & Slabbert, 1999:10). Whether, of course, this is "taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of needs and preferences of the population" (Constitution, 1996:4) is open to debate, especially when it is reported that Sesotho is hardly ever used and in view of the fact that only 750 copies of *Hansard* are printed per volume.

2.2.9 Legislature of the North West

This provincial legislature outsources the entire production of its *Hansard*. They report that English is generally used during their sittings, but that members occasionally use Setswana and Afrikaans. Their *Hansard* is printed in the languages that were spoken on the floor; no translations are provided.

2.3 Legislature of the Northern Province

2.3.1 Introduction

The *Hansard* and Translation division of this Legislature is the one with which the author of this research project is directly involved. It will therefore be more closely discussed throughout. Comparisons will be drawn as far as this is possible between the processes of editing, approach to language usage and quality of translations of the *Hansard* of this province and the available material from the other legislatures in the country.

The aim is to arrive at an objective evaluation of the present standard and to establish methods for improvement, not only for the *Hansard* in the Northern Province, but it is hoped that the findings may be useful towards finding ways that will provide more clarity and uniformity among the different South African legislature regarding the entire editing process of a rather unique type of publication.

2.3.2 Background

Hansard has been produced from the first sitting of the Legislature of the Northern Province in 1994. From that date until 1997 it was outsourced to a private company who simply sent an employee with a tape-recorder to each sitting of the Legislature. The company was responsible for the transcription work, editing and eventual production of the *Hansard* book.

As far as can be established, the staff of this legislature had no input in the editing and proofreading processes and the politicians did not get an opportunity to review their own speeches in the preliminary phase. The company was entrusted with the entire production process. The onus was on them to deliver an end-product that satisfied the client, i.e. the Legislature of the Northern Province, with regard to quality and language standard, as well as content. The language practitioners of this legislature at the time, were translating Bills, Acts and Minutes for the sittings. They did not deal with the *Hansard* at all.

In the latter half of 1997, the Speaker decided that it should become an in-house production. More staff members were appointed and from the beginning of 1998 they started doing recordings. These were still transcribed by a free-lance typist until the end of 1999, while the staff underwent computer and interpreters training.

The transcribed copies were supplied in English only and staff members were responsible for transcribing and translating those parts of speeches that had been made in any of the other languages. The completed transcriptions were then firstly edited by the four sub-editors and finally by the head of the *Hansard* division before it was sent to the printers. The galley proofs once again went to the four assistant editors for checking, after which the head performed a final edit.

This process did not involve the politicians, nor did any of the editors or the head make use of the recorded cassettes to verify the information contained in the transcriptions supplied by the free-lance typist.

In the last quarter of 1999, it was decided that staff members had been trained sufficiently well to take over the transcription work. At National Parliament and at the Legislature of the Free State, staff members record five-minute "takes" and then return to their offices to transcribe. This procedure has the advantage that there are far fewer "inaudible" bits in the transcriptions due to the fact that the reporter is present in the recording-booth, physically listening and hearing the actual speech before re-listening to it on cassettes and typing/transcribing it.

In the Legislature of the Northern Province, this method is not practical due to the fact that the same staff members operate as interpreters, transcribers and translators. Since they have to provide interpretations during the sittings, they cannot do their own five or ten minute recordings and start transcriptions during that time. Therefore, the process differs slightly from that of National Parliament and the Legislature of the Free State.

In the case of the Northern Province legislature, then, two staff members do a series of ten-minute recordings on different cassettes and package these with written "in" and "out" words as well as on one "master" cassette which runs continuously. These two recorders also provide notes with any cassette that contains languages other than English. These ten-minute cassettes are distributed to the transcribers after a sitting on a rotational basis, ensuring that those cassettes that contain indigenous languages go to the translators who work in those particular languages.

The translators/transcribers provide their respective assistant editors with computer printed copies. These first transcripts are then edited manually on paper for the transcriber/translators to edit on computer. This ensures that they personally "handle" each mistake and learn in the process. The corrected versions are returned to the assistant editors for collation into the correct order and for further editing. These copies are then sent to the politicians to enable them to effect minor changes. A standard memorandum – an example of which appears below – is attached to each copy which is sent to the politicians to notify them of the number of days they have available to make such changes. This time period varies for reasons that are explicated more fully in chapter 5.

LEGISLATURE OF THE NORTHERN PROVINCE

HANSARD AND TRANSLATION DIVISION

Dear Sir/Madam

Herewith a preliminary copy of your speech as transcribed from the recording made on(date). Please edit where it is required, keeping in mind that it has to essentially remain a *verbatim* report of the day's proceedings.

Kindly return this to Office (*this will vary according to which assistant editor is responsible for the collation*) (Tel. No.....) on or before

If it is NOT received by this date, it will be assumed that you require no edits and that it can be sent to the printers.

Your friendly co-operation is appreciated.

(SIGNED) ASSISTANT EDITOR

On the pre-set date, the assistant editor effects the changes that have been requested by the politicians. Only those changes that the assistant editor deems admissible within the boundaries of the *verbatim* requirement will, however, be made. Where politicians have rewritten their speeches; made extensive alterations or substituted the transcribed words with words that may influence the meaning or understanding, the requested changes are not effected by the assistant editor, i.e. if on the audio-cassette the following words can be distinctly heard: "... they bank those monies and they don't even get profit out of it" and the politician has edited it to read: "...they, the banks, took those monies and they don't even get profit out of it", the version that was recorded on audio-cassette will be retained. The reasons for such decisions, as well as examples of actual cases, are provided in chapter 5.

The copy thus corrected is, for all intents and purposes, now ready to go to the printers. For reasons that are explicated in chapters 4 and 5, this procedure was changed some months ago at the Legislature of the Northern Province. At this juncture - in order to complete the synopsis of the production process for the purposes of this chapter - it should suffice to mention that, currently, the procedure is that this copy, however, undergoes a further edit by the head of the division. The final collation is, once again, compared to the master audio-cassette recording and any additional changes that are deemed necessary are effected, before the diskette is finally sent to the printers for typesetting. The printers' proofs go through two further edits/proof-readings by the assistant editors and the head of the division prior to their eventual publication in book-form.

2.4 Some approaches to *Hansard* editing

The editorial policies regarding the editing of what, in the first instance, is supposed to be a verbatim report can truthfully be described as a grey area. There does not seem to be much consensus among the editors of *Hansard* in the various countries that produce such publications nor in the national parliament or the nine provinces of South Africa.

Mr Ian Church from Westminster in the United Kingdom and President of the Commonwealth *Hansard* Editors Association, said at the conference that he is of the opinion that "*Hansard* ...is there to inform the people outside and to inform the Parliament ... as a working document ... It does not do anyone any good to print gobbledegook ... The question is, how far do you go? (Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Forum, 1999:107).

From an anecdote which he then recounted, it became clear that certain language practitioners may well have a problem with the Westminster policy of editing out too much of the politicians' "gobbledegook".

I offered a job to a young man who had completed one of our transcription tests, and he wrote back to me and said, "As a matter of principle, I cannot accept the job you are offering me because it makes politicians look better than they are, and I wish to have no part of that" (1999:107).

This, clearly, was one young man who firmly believed in the "cruel fidelity of verbatim!" (Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Forum, 1999:74).

Mr Church, however, felt that the young man completely missed the point, because "we are not trying to make politicians look better ... we are trying to show people what they are trying to say and no ifs or buts ..." (1999:107).

In Canada, on the other hand, there is a minimal editing policy. *The Standing Order*, on which their editorial policy is based, states that:

- (a) revisions shall be limited to the correction of grammar, spelling and punctuation, ensuring that the correct parliamentary forms are observed, and minimising superfluous repetition and redundancies, but no material alterations shall be made, nor any amendments which would in any way tend to change the sense of what has been spoken; the transcript shall remain an accurate and, as far as possible, an exact report of what was said;
- (b) a member has no right to alter the report of any speech or remarks attributed to the member in any way, and the Speaker shall determine whether or not a member's suggested correction shall be admitted (Garrison in Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Forum, 1999:57).

In contrast to this, the South African national parliament's approach is one that stipulates:

Members of Parliament may read and correct transcriptions. *Hansard* is not a verbatim report of what is said in the Chambers. Rather, it is an accurate representation of speeches and statements devoid of redundancies, obvious grammatical errors, slips of the tongue and factual errors or, as a founding member of *Hansard* ... once told a new member of Parliament, the purpose of the Parliamentary Debates is 'to preserve the idiom of Parliament, but not the idiots'. (<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/hans.html>)

Despite this statement that "*Hansard* is not a *verbatim* report", in practice it is found that members, in fact, expect to be quoted exactly, i.e. "At the end of the 1994 session, the Speaker said: 'To all members here, I wish you ...' which the reporter changed to: 'I wish all members here...' which the Speaker promptly changed back to her original words to reflect her personal style and choice of words" (*Hansard* Uniformity Guide, 1996:40-41).

During the aforementioned conference, Mr Andrew Walube from Uganda raised the question of how far a *Hansard* editor could go with corrections without affecting a member's style. He quoted a number of idioms used incorrectly by a member of parliament who mentioned, i.e. "putting the cart before the goat" instead of "putting the cart before the horse"; someone being as "slippery as a peel" instead of as "slippery as an eel" and referring to a situation that was "the kick of a dying cow" (1999:63).

The general feeling was that it would depend on the context in which the member had used such tropes and, to a degree, the member's usual style. If it could be judged from the context or the editor's knowledge of the member's normal vocabulary to have been used because the member, for example, tried to be funny, it should remain as is.

Mr Garrison (1999:63), in reply to this, cited an example of a member, who is now in the Senate in Alberta who used to do "that kind of stuff (and) ... if you changed any of it ... you would be changing his style".

Mr Ian Church (1999:121) quoted a similar situation where "...one of our conservative members, Teddy Taylor, said: 'I warn the government that the sacred cows are coming home to roost' - we left it, because Teddy Taylor speaks like that. I mean, that is his style".

In South Africa too, members of parliament have quite strong feelings about their style.

"At the end of the 1994 session, the Speaker said: 'To all members here, I wish you...' which the reporter changed to: 'I wish all members here ...' which the Speaker promptly changed back to her original words to reflect her personal style and choice of words" (*Hansard* Uniformity Guide 1996:40-41).

Hence, one of the biggest dilemmas facing any editor of a *Hansard* publication in South Africa, or elsewhere in the world where such a document is produced, is whether to edit or not to edit and if so, how much.

Every editor, whether it is of a *Hansard* or any other publication, has his or her own idea of style. With most publications, there is an editorial policy regarding editing. Usually, in-house rules exist regarding what is considered good and bad style. Thus, an end-product is published which conforms to a particular magazine or similar publication's editorial standards.

In the case of *Hansard*, however, while the final decision rests with the editor, every politician who has contributed to the content of that particular issue, has a say in the matter.

2.5 General view on *Hansard* editing

A very real problem with *Hansard* editing in the South African context is, of course, that a large majority of South African politicians, and certainly more so in the provincial legislatures, are not English mother-tongue speakers. Often, they would not recognise some of the errors which they may have made during their speeches, even when they see them in written form, for the simple reason that they are not familiar enough with some of the intricacies of the English language. They are, therefore, not in a position to edit such errors.

It must be kept in mind that politicians have the unenviable task of fighting causes on issues about which they have strong feelings or about which they often feel highly emotional. Their views and arguments have to be presented lucidly and in a convincing manner in a language with which they are not completely at ease or as *au fait* as they might wish to be.

Should they opt to speak in one of the indigenous languages, they have to rely on an interpreter who, as was mentioned earlier, provides the floor with broad outlines and not with the finer details of any speech. Thus, the core or gist of their speech may be missed or misinterpreted and for this reason they, more often than not, the politicians, opt to deliver their own message in their own way in English to ensure that everything which they wish to get across to their fellow-politicians is conveyed. This opinion was also expressed by Mr Hector Tshabalala of National Parliament when he said that:

... the best we can do is to allow people to speak freely... I have noticed a number of politicians who, when they speak English, come out as average or less than average, but let that person speak in their mother tongue (and) suddenly they come alive... That person suddenly gains the respect of the people who are listening to him or her because they are now making sense, they are not struggling with concepts that are difficult to them" (Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Forum, 1999:41).

By and large, however, politicians appreciate an opportunity to provide editorial input on the transcript, even when they spoke in English and furthermore, they expect the *Hansard* editors to ensure that what the public eventually gets to read will not prove embarrassing to them in any way.

Hansard editors around the globe, at least those who attended the now often-mentioned 1999 Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Conference, are in agreement that it is quite in order for the politicians, or for the editors personally, to effect changes to the verbatim version in instances where any of the following occur:

- a) Grammatical errors;
- b) Incorrect parliamentary form;
- c) Word-order;
- d) Prepositions and conjunctions; and
- e) Repetitions and over-use of transitional words.

Before taking a closer look at each of these aspects, however, it has to be kept in mind that these same editors also agree that when a member uses jarring word-order to express something, it must be remembered that

every speech, including any awkward passages in it, belongs to the member, not to the editor. Editors should change the word-order only if the sense of the member's remarks might be misread if the text were left as said... Grammatical error(s), editors are to correct it if they can (do so) without

changing the sense of what was said and without inserting words a member did not say" (Commonwealth Hansard Editors' Forum, 1999:62).

As can be seen in the following few examples that were randomly extracted from a number of recent *Hansard* editions of the Legislature of the Northern Province, there is often a very thin dividing line between the decision to retain, omit or insert.

a) Grammatical errors

(i) "Is there anybody who have got problems with that?"

Edited to: "Is there anybody who has problems with that?"

This edit was done because "have" was a straightforward concord error and "got" was regarded as superfluous. The edited version has not changed the meaning of the sentence and could therefore be done quite safely without fear of repercussions.

(ii) "To me it is just incredible how on earth you still find people who still possess such a rare skill of self-destruction".

Under normal editing conditions, one would probably have opted for: "I find it quite incredible that one still finds such self-destructive people".

However, in order not to change the style or turn it into a non-verbatim representation, the edited version reads:

"To me it is just incredible that on earth you still find people who possess such a rare skill for self-destruction".

Thus, the "how" was replaced with "that"; one "still" was removed and the "of" was replaced with "for".

It still remains a clumsy sentence, but the editor has to keep in mind that: a) it is the member's sentence, and b) it has to remain as close to verbatim as possible.

b) Incorrect parliamentary form

This is also known as "unparliamentary expressions" and refers to forms of address which over a number of years have been ruled as unacceptable by presiding officers. The existing list which serves as a guideline to *Hansard* editors, however, points out that "factors such as the manner and the context in which expressions are used, as well as the atmosphere that prevails in the House at a specific moment, could influence a decision as to whether an expression is unparliamentary or not" (Unparliamentary Expressions, 1996:1).

Examples of such expressions include calling a person "a liar", referring to something someone has said as "a lie", etc. The onus to keep a close check on such expressions rests with the Speaker of the House, who would normally call for retraction. The Speaker also has the authority to give instruction that highly offensive and improper language be expunged from the record, i.e the *Hansard*, prior to printing. There is, however, no record of such intervention to date at the Legislature of the Northern Province.

However, should such remarks slip through unnoticed by the Speaker during a sitting and leave the *Hansard* editor in a predicament, the wisest course of action is to send a copy to the Speaker with a note requesting guidance.

c) Word-order

"I wish to apologise to this House that 'yesterday' I was not here".

Strictly speaking, this sentence could be left as is, but by simply moving yesterday to the end of the sentence, the editor felt it was more correct grammatically and since it would not interfere with the meaning, it was, therefore, changed accordingly.

d) Prepositions and conjunctions

"Some are based in ignorance". English prepositions, commonly, create problems for foreign-language speakers. In this example, in was replaced with on, since it was clear from the context that this is what the member had in mind.

Another, more tricky, edit presented itself in the following sentence: "... there is no other compelling reason as to why it should operate at the same premise as this House".

From the context of the paragraph, it fortunately could be established that the member was referring to physical premises, i.e. the building and not an assumption, therefore the "at" was changed to "from" and an "s" added to "premise(s)" which made for more clarity.

With regard to conjunctions, there is a trend with many speakers to start sentences with "and" and "but", etc. , i.e. "And there are not facilities...", "But we hope that this measure...". More often than not, the majority of ands and buts can safely be omitted without in any way detracting from the meaning or intention of the speaker.

e) Repetitions and over-use of transitional words

"Mr Speaker" or "Madam Speaker" is undoubtedly the best example of repetition during parliamentary sessions. Generally, most *Hansard* editors will retain one, or at most two, of these forms of address in the speech of any politician. This is regarded as quite sufficient to express the respect that the member wishes to convey. "Thank you" also tends to abound and can, more often than not, be reduced without any problem. One of the members of the Legislature of the Northern Province had the habit of starting every speech with "Thank you very, very, very, very much for this opportunity, Comrade Speaker". The editor decided that such an amount of gratitude was perhaps rather superfluous and initially reduced it to only one "very".

The member soon noticed and has, of her own accord, adjusted her speech during sessions to a simple: "Thank you for this opportunity, Comrade Speaker".

Although transitional words such as "now" and "well" are common in spoken language, it becomes irksome when they appear *ad infinitum* on paper, therefore where such words occur in every line and serve no obvious purpose, these redundant occurrences are deleted.

2.5 Restrictive boundaries to *Hansard* editing

Any form of editing requires "empathy and insight" (Adrie Pillans, author and freelance editor in conversation, 2000). "One cannot simply assume that you know best and attack another person's writing with a red pen", she warns.

An editor working on any type of publication, however, generally has to adhere to the editorial policy of such a publication. Such policies are essential to ensure that the image and style of a particular publication meet with the standards that have been set and with the expectations of its readership.

In the case of *Hansard* it has to be remembered that it is not, strictly speaking, a publication. It is rather a printed rendition of speeches produced with the purpose of providing a reference work for politicians, information to the voters and a record for generations to come. It cannot, and should not, be recreated into a flawless and popular or easy piece of reading material. Yet, it has to be a publication that is reasonably user-friendly and which does not contain glaring language errors that could reflect poorly on those who provided the input for the publication.

In speaking to members of the public who have access to these printed records of debate, even journalists who are supposed to understand the limitations of editing verbatim parliamentary speeches, it is clear that many regard *Hansard* as a rather poor publication in so far as language, grammar and general content are concerned. This,

despite the fact that virtually every *Hansard* produced in this country clearly states that it is a verbatim report of parliamentary proceedings.

Unfortunately, what the readership seems to expect and what *Hansard* feels obliged to produce, in keeping with the verbatim requirement, create a dilemma. The purpose of *Hansard* dictates the editorial rules of affecting stringent changes within extremely narrow boundaries, as set out earlier in this chapter, in order to retain the original utterances of politicians.

Added to this, there is the further problematic language situation of South Africa where *Hansard* has to be accessible to readers of a large variety of different language groups. This entails providing translations of tropes and other figures of speech and often just peculiar usage of language by speakers who are unfamiliar with English, for example. Applicable and appropriate translations have to be found in the existing vocabularies of the languages in question or newly coined - always against the stipulation of verbatim.

The subsequent chapters investigate the success or failure of these unique editing and translation processes.

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSLATION THEORIES

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Linguistically-oriented theory

3.1.2 Process-oriented theory

3.1.3 Descriptive reception-oriented model

3.1.4 Functionalist models

3.1.5 Overview of theories

3.2 *Hansard* and South Africa's language policy

3.3 Influence of culture

3.4 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

Generally speaking, the man in the street does not regard translation as a particularly complex matter or specialised field. Many translators in this country will vouch to the fact that clients who contact them for translation work are horrified at the prices they are quoted for translation work and, more often than not, are told that the prospective clients' secretary, wife/husband or friend who happens to be "fully bilingual" will do it in no time and at no charge.

Beukes (1993:21) remarks that despite the fact that translation plays a key-role in modern communication, the profession paradoxically enjoys a low status and quotes

Schwarz (1985:111) as saying that translation is in a state of "limbo to which it was relegated by those in authority and by the general public".

Fortunately, for South African language practitioners, the envisaged Language Act will undoubtedly contribute to an improvement in the status and recognition of the degree of professional skills required to do justice to translation work. In a Pan South African Language Board audit on language services in legislatures during September 2000, the consultant commissioned to perform this task, Mr. Dumisani Ntshangase, a language consultant attached to the University of the Witwatersrand, for example, told the Chief Whip of the Legislature of the Northern Province and members of this legislature's management team in no uncertain terms that he "intended slating them in a harsh manner" in his report for not having done nearly enough to further the cause of multilingualism since the promulgation of the Constitution. He expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of correspondence and official forms in all five languages of the province; simultaneous interpreting services on a continuous basis during legislative assemblies; full translations into all languages in *Hansard*, and so forth. Mr Ntshangase made it quite clear that legislatures in South Africa have had six years to attend to matters related to multilingualism and that his survey had found many of them sadly lacking. Audits of this nature, conferences arranged by PANSALB and other language bodies and the fact that the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture made multilingualism the theme for the 2000 Heritage Day celebrations seem to augur well for the eleven languages of South Africa in general and, as a result, for language practitioners in particular.

The degree of language proficiency required does, however, create a certain measure of unease among certain members of the language profession, many of whom have drifted into interpreting, translation, etc. almost by default by virtue of "a natural talent for languages" or a "language teaching background". While the value of practical experience cannot be denied, there is now an increased responsibility on language practitioners in South Africa to not only avail themselves of opportunities for formal training as part of their career development plans, but also to become acquainted with the historical development of the professions in which they find themselves.

Theories about translation abound and while there is no claim made here that translation theories will necessarily guarantee a better end-product in translation, many of the theories formulated by language theorists and other experts in the field, certainly should not be disregarded since many of these theories do contribute to the corpus of useful knowledge. In fact, theories about translations have developed hand-in-hand with the translation process itself over the course of quite a number of centuries and insight into these interrelationships could enable those working in the field to make more informed decisions in the performance on their duties as part of the process of reflection on the work they do.

As was pointed out in chapter 1, converting written material from one language to another is as old as the written word itself due to mankind's need to acquire information and learn from other language and cultural groups. According to Beukes (1993:18) institutionalised service-delivery translators have been providing translation services from about 4000 years ago in Assyria, Babylonia, the Hittite Empire and

Egypt. And there, next to the translator, stood the theorist busily attempting to find a magical formula that would ensure the success of the process. Van Wyk (1999:17) makes reference to "St Augustine who already favoured an approach which was "tenax verborum", that is translation "which adheres to the words of the original text".

Yet, despite the fact that translation has been practised for so long and that a multiplicity of theories has developed alongside it, it seems that the complexities of the translation process itself have time and again right up to the present time bedevilled the pinpointing of a clear-cut theory, method and/or approach to translation.

Most of the theories [of translation] that have been produced to date are in reality little more than a prolegomena to [...] a general translation theory, [...] though they [...] may bear the designation of 'general' translation theories... Holmes, 1972:12-13).

As research into translation approaches and translation processes has proved time and again, far too many complex factors are involved in translation to attempt to prescribe a simplistic theory of how the language practitioner should go about converting a written text from one language to the other in order to have as close to a **purpose-perfect** translation as can be hoped for. Many intricate matters dictate translation methods and procedures. Newmark (1982:81) differentiates between these two aspects, i.e. methods and procedures with his view that "translation methods relate to whole texts... (while) ... translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language". Numerous other factors such as the purpose of the source text *vis-à-vis* the purpose of the target text, the context, availability or non-availability of equivalent terminology and cultural aspects have to be considered in the on-going

attempt to establish the most suitable translation approach for each particular translation situation.

Regardless of how fluent translators are in source and target languages, it soon becomes clear when working in a translation environment that fluency and a thorough knowledge of both languages are simply not enough to guarantee a translation that will succeed in conveying the intention of the author of the source text to the reader of the text in the target group in a meaningful manner. There are many more aspects involved in the process of translation and theorists in recognising the dilemmas that often confront translators continually attempt to add that, as yet, elusive ingredient to existing translation theories. To date, however, there is no single theory that can possibly be regarded as the ultimate answer to the often problematic situations that arise in the translation processes; it is rather still a situation, as already described by Toury (1980:90), of "what we have are for the most part, definitions of translational equivalence which are *maximal* (or at best *optimal*) *normative* ones (that) serve as directives for translators..."

Like the awareness of the complexities of the translation process has in the past led to repeated attempts to formulate guidelines, approaches, processes, formulas and theories to try and provide more than mere directives, it today still prods the various theorists to persist in their attempts to produce a clearly marked map that would indicate the *culs de sac*, pot-holes, circular routes and even mine-fields that could possibly be encountered on the road to, if not a perfect, then at least a good translation. And what is a good translation? Do any of these maps indicate a safe main road? Is it at all possible to even attempt to find the ultimate translation theory?

According to Gutt (1991:2) translation theory is in a mess because translation theorists were preoccupied for too long with debating unfruitful issues, such as whether translations should be literal or free, or whether translation is possible or not (Pretorius, 1998:20).

This is similar to the view of another critic in this search for an all-encompassing clear-cut theory, Christiane Nord, who states that

... there will never be a common translation code for all cultures. What we can achieve, though, is agreement on a general theory of translation which allows for specific variations when applied to particular cultures, taking into account the culture-specific conventions of translations and expectations the members of a particular culture have of a translated text (Pretorius, 1998:22).

Others, like Steiner (1992:xvi) state outright that "there are ... no 'theories of translation'. What we do have are reasoned descriptions of processes". Dussé (1995:19) also feels that it would be more accurate to regard "theories of translation ... as different approaches".

Translators can certainly not be blamed if they become totally confused when studying these various approaches and conclude that perhaps Newmark (1993:154) was right in stating that "translation theory is mainly what you do when you can't or don't translate literally". Contradictory as some of these theories, and the views expressed about them, might be, the fact of the matter is that in studying the continuous and persistent attempts of theorists to at least offer suggestions and ideas, the translator is not only guided in his/her efforts to deal thoughtfully with and continually strive to improve on his/her translation approaches and processes, but also, hopefully, will develop an appreciation for the genuine efforts that have been made to solve the translation riddle. In many way, these theories have contributed to

an on-going attempt to provide at least "good translations", i.e. translations that provide the same understanding, and evoke the same reactions in readers, of the target text as in readers of the source text. For these reasons, among others, some of these theories need to be considered here:

3.1.1 *Linguistically-oriented theory*

This translation model was formulated by linguists like John Catford (1965) in England, Eugene Nida in the USA (Nida & Taber, 1969) and Wolfram Wills (1982) in Germany (Naudé, 1999:5). The aim was to ensure translations that were true, accurate, good and correct versions in the target language of the original source language text. Translators had to focus on equivalence between source and target text at all costs.

This theory actually provided a set of rules which included, *inter alia*, that the translated version should contain the words of the original, should read like the original (but should also read like a translation), nothing should be added or omitted by the translator (but, if necessary, the translator may make additions or omissions). This source-language oriented approach was, and is, rather confusing, to say the least, yet to a large extent this theory resembles the approach that is presently followed by *Hansard* editors, as will become clear in later discussions.

Once these structuralists realised the problems with their theory, a reformulation process started which led to two different approaches. The one approach concentrated on a move away from equivalence between source text and target text by suggesting

that the translator need no longer bind him- or herself to a word-by-word or even a sentence-by-sentence target text rendition of the source text, but should instead focus on the text in its entirety and instead strive to provide an overall translation thereof, i.e. a translation that need not be a faithful *verbatim* version but rather a general conveying of the original ideas.

The other suggested approach led to

...sociolinguistic models of translation ... Texts were no longer regarded as independent linguistic expressions, but rather as part of the socioculture to which they belonged. The focus was on language usage. The translator had to give attention to real language patterns and -phenomena and not to ideal language patterns and phenomena (Naudé, 1999:7 - own translation)

3.1.2 *Process-oriented theory*

In the 1980s the linguistically-based theories made way for yet another school of thought when theorists shifted their studies in a different direction in an effort to try and fathom the idea- or thought conversion processes that occurred in the mind of the translator during the language conversion process.

Theorists like Krings (1986) and Bell (1993) focused their research on trying to establish what exactly occurred in "the little black box of the translator's brain while he was creating a new and more or less similar text in another language and why the process occurred in the way it did" (Naude, 1999:8 - own translation). Krings, for example, tried to decode these intricate processes of the human brain by requesting translators to verbalise their thoughts as they were occurring while the participating

language practitioners were busy with the actual process of translating. These immediate "thoughts" had to be verbalised by the translators and were recorded in an effort to probe the "how" of the translation process.

Clearly, the process-oriented model did not aim to supply translators with a theory on methods of how to approach the process in order to end up with a good translation, but it was rather aimed at creating awareness by describing the putative thought processes.

3.1.3 Descriptive reception-oriented model

This practical study of texts tried to determine the norms and limitations which specific cultures and times had had on texts such as those used in these research processes. In other words, researchers and theorists such as Gentzler (1993) and Hermans (1991) tried to explain the possible influence the prevailing culture of a specific period in history may have had on the translation of texts from that era. Naudé (1999:11) points out that a further development followed when another group of theorists, the Manipulation Group or DTS, came to believe that translations are in the first instance target text oriented, i.e. the purpose which the translation serves in the target culture is the important factor.

Eventually members of this group, like José Lambert, attempted to explain translations in the light of mass communication, by regarding translations as reconceptualised rewritten versions rather than reproductions of the original text, each containing its own cultural and linguistic codes.

3.1.4 *Functionalist models*

Reiss (1984), Vermeer (1984) and Nord (1991) started a process of considering the function (*skopos*) of the target text for its recipients, i.e. the purpose that the text had to serve with its target audience should dictate the translation methods and strategies to be followed by the translator.

In this translation model, the source text is no longer regarded as the dictating or deciding principle that guides the translator in the conversion process from one language to the other, but now the translator is guided by the purpose or function that the end-product of the translation process that he/she is performing, has to serve.

On the surface, this functionalist model for translation certainly will appeal to many translators. It implies that the request for translation will be accompanied by clear-cut "translation instructions from the client...(regarding) ... the purpose, circumstances..." (Naudé, 1999:14 - own translation from the Afrikaans original). In other words, the translator will be provided with a target audience profile to guide him/her. Nord's theory (1997:27-31, in Naudé, 1999:16) is that no translation occurs in a vacuum or without a reason and once this *skopos* has been established, it serves as a guide to the translator and then there are no limitations on how far the translator can move away from the source text.

What is of particular interest for the purposes of this thesis - as will become clear in the chapters to follow - regarding Nord's views is that she adds the concepts of loyalty

and convention to the *skopos* rule and says that the onus is on the translator - not the client/initiator of the translation - to judge or decide whether the process of conveying the message, i.e. the completed translation, has been satisfactory. "To be loyal implies that translators have to consider the conventions of the specific translation situation. This means that the translator can decide to disregard existing (culture-specific) conventions" (Naudé, 1999:17 - own translation).

3.1.5 *Overview of theories*

These translation models are by no means representative of the plethora of translation theories offered to translators by language experts/theorists in the course of the past four decades. They merely serve as examples to illustrate how the concept of, and the search for, an ideal theory kept changing and to question where this leaves the translator of the early 21st century.

Van Wyk (1999:16), for example, expresses the opinion that two main orientations can be detected, one in favour of the source language and the other in favour of the target language and that "At present the target language oriented approach is the vogue" (1999:16). Many translators agree with this view but others, as in the case of this study, will be quick to point out that identification of the target audience is often rather problematic.

One of the factors hampering clear identification of the target readership is that which underlies many of these theories, described by Katan (1999:1) as the "buzz words in translating", namely "translating across cultures", something against which Mona

Baker (1996:17) warns by saying "that many scholars have now adopted a "cultural" perspective ... a dangerously fashionable word that almost substitutes for rigour and coherence".

The cultural perspective is, however, neither a current "fashion" or a "buzz word" in translation approaches, since aspects of the role and influence of culture on translations can be detected in many of the earlier theories. The recognition and awareness of the cultural influence of the people of a particular area or region on the language of their group, for example, led to the concept of *Landeskunde*, a German term meaning "regional studies", coined by Erdmenger and Istel (1973:22). "*Landeskunde* ... describes people and their different cultures...acknowledges the fact that different ways of thinking and different views represented by different cultures ... makes it crucial for the translator ...to study" (Landsberg, 1999:13).

3.2 *Hansard* and South Africa's language policy

When the information provided thus far, as well as that which is to follow in further chapters regarding the prevailing conventions of *Hansard* publications, is analysed against these various approaches it becomes clear that it can at present be categorised as a publication that favours the **source-language approach** due to its continuing adherence to the convention of providing *verbatim* translations from the source language into the target language.

This remains the favoured approach for *Hansard* transcribers/translators despite viewpoints like that of Basnett-McGuire (1980:30, in Kruger 1990:128,129) that

Equivalence in translation ... should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and TL version.

Van den Broeck and Lefevere (1979:63) also hold that identical meaning between source text and target text is impossible. The important factor is that meaningful information should be conveyed from source text to target text to complete the communication process. They further (1979:94) point out that equivalence is a variable term that depends on situation and context and therefore a generalised use of the term is undesirable. This leads Dussé (1995:27,28) to conclude that equivalence may well be "a much used and abused term in translational studies" and also that "there are many types and degrees of equivalence".

Newmark (1988:192) suggests that the translation of an informative text should convey facts acceptably, translation of a vocative text should be effective, especially in terms of reader response or receptions, and finally, the expressive text (where form is as important as content) should be faithful to the original. Thus two key aspects or parameters emerge for a successful and qualitative translation: acceptability/effectiveness and faithfulness (close and accurate).

Nida and Taber recommend a "dynamic equivalence" approach instead, i.e. the quality of the translation in which the message of the source text is conveyed in the target text should be such that the reaction of the reader of the target text is similar or the same as that of the reader of the source text.

Since the introduction of the language policy which resulted in providing translations into more languages than prior to 1994 in *Hansard*, it has become abundantly clear that staff working on this publication at the Legislature of the Northern Province, for example, believe that *verbatim* translations, i.e. the linguistically-oriented theory, are ideal for the situation. While in practice it is in many instances very difficult to provide equivalent translations, in part due to the inherent differences in the grammatical structures and figures of speech of the five languages used in the province, *verbatim* is the dictating factor. Cultural issues, too, at times cloud the dictates of the prevailing approach. Yet, while *Hansard* staff strive for, and believe in, *verbatim* translations, there is acknowledgement of the fact that some of the languages sometimes do not lend themselves to absolute *verbatim* translations and that, at times, such rigidity could obscure the true meaning for readers of the target text. Under such circumstances the translators will, therefore, dispense with *verbatim* to some degree, albeit not quite willingly and the general opinion is that, in fact, *Hansard* circumstances and purpose demand that the transcriptions and translations provided in the publication should at all times remain exact renditions of parliamentary procedures.

This opinion is substantiated by occurrences like the parliamentary sitting of the Legislature of the Northern Province legislature of 19 September 2000 during which a member was requested to retract his words and apologise to the House. The member refused and after lengthy discussions the deputy speaker who presided asked the member whether he would "then allow that the transcripts of this Legislature be reread by members of the Disciplinary Committee to ascertain as to whether it would

not have been required of you to withdraw?" (*Hansard*, Northern Province Legislature, September 2000).

While this particular example relates to transcription and not to translation, it serves to illustrate the reasoning behind the strict adherence to providing a *verbatim* publication. The *Hansard* transcribers/translators were adamant that they would not change a single word due to the fact that the transcription had to serve as evidence in a disciplinary hearing and therefore had to be an absolutely *verbatim* report. Even the "uhms" and "aahs" were transcribed since it was felt that it may well play a decisive role in the verdict of the disciplinary committee.

This is one of the aspects against which evaluations about *Hansard* are to be made in later chapters. Another equally interesting factor that requires consideration is the undeniably important cultural issues relating to it and how these are handled.

3.3 The influence of culture

Many of the translated versions of speeches and debates indicate that in the attempts of providing literal or *verbatim* translations meaning is often lost or obscured in the target language, or worse could offend certain cultural groups or even members of different gender groups. Although extensive analyses of such problems are provided in the following chapter, it is regarded as necessary to mention a few examples at this point in an attempt to explain the situation, for example:

<u>Source language</u>	<u>Target language</u>
1) Gona bjale re lebelela batho go bonthsha gore ruri ba tswile tseleng. A diphoofolo tse ka gore ke kgale re di ruile, naa dipudi tse di swanetse di ye kae? A ke yona taba ya gore banna ba rena ba swanetse ba tsene ka masakeng a dipudi naa? Ba be ba bolaise pudi bolwetsi bja pelo.	Nowadays, some men no longer behave like humans. Where are we supposed to take our goats if men rape them? Is it right that our men should go into the kraals and rape our goats to such an extent that they experience heart attacks? Goats never used to have heart attacks.
2) A re botseng bana ba rena gore Bokoko ba ba 70 years, ruri ge o reipa motho wa 70 years ga le tsebe gore menagano ya batho e a swana. Ke ipotsisa gore ge o reipa motho wa 70 years go swana le ge re bolaile kgomo yela kgalekgale e lema masemo, e otile ga e sa na le madi, re a e bolaya, re a e hlaba re a e apea. E hlwa e bela mosegare ka moka, besego re re re a seba re tshetse ditamati, dicurry le eng e no swana. Ke moradu o a goga o a kakatlela o dire eng. A re tswela ka mo ntle.	Raping a 70 year old woman is like when you slaughter an old lean cow. You slaughter it and cook it for the whole day. When it is ready to be served, it is tasteless despite the fact that some tomatoes and spices were added. It does not taste like meat. It is, of course, the meat of an old animal and too tough to be chewed.

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In both instances, literal translations were done in a *verbatim* manner of the figurative or metaphoric language used by the speakers of the source text, bound by the prevailing convention that not only should the transcriptions reflect the exact words of everything uttered in the legislature as far as possible, but by implication the translated version, i.e. the target text should also be a "true, accurate, good and correct version" of the source text, i.e. in keeping with the prescriptions of the linguistically-oriented theory.

When confronted with this particular text the translators felt that the comparisons were crude and while it may well have been used in the legislature to bring the realities home and shock listeners into taking action against rapists, the direct English translations thereof would be culturally unacceptable to English readers. The question asked by some of them was whether it would not have been better to simply capture the gist of the original message and attempt to convey it to readers of the target English text quite succinctly and to the point by, for example:

- a) Bestiality is on the increase to the extent that goats nowadays suffer heart-attacks and people feel obliged to hide their goats.
- b) Men cannot possibly enjoy intercourse with 70-year old women. Physically, older women cannot provide the same pleasure as a younger woman.

This was, however, vetoed in a group discussion based on the opinion that translators cannot be so paternalistic towards their target language readers on the basis of an assumption that English readers would find the concepts offensive because such concepts possibly do not form part of their cultural frames of reference.

There was agreement in this group discussion that insight and understanding of the cultural aspects of the language groups who provide their source text and those for whom the target text are produced are required. However, it was felt that in the *Hansard* situation, the texts must be translated directly, not only because of the purpose it serves as a record of parliamentary proceedings but also because it serves as a vehicle to familiarise South Africans of various language groups with each

other's cultures. In this way, *Hansard* translators regard themselves as "cultural mediators" in the sense that they provide direct translations of cultural concepts to readers of other language groups in an effort to remove the cultural boundaries that still exist due to the previous lack of exposure to each other's cultures which is the result of past segregation and the disregard of some of the languages of this country.

The concept of translator as cultural mediator is not a new one and was first introduced by Steiner (1975:45) who felt that "The translator is a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities". Taft (1981:53) describes it well by saying

A cultural mediator is a person who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture. The role of the mediator is performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is, by establishing and balancing the communication between them. In order to serve as a link in this sense, the mediator must be able to participate to some extent in both cultures. Thus a mediator must be to a certain extent bicultural.

Clearly, however, the *Hansard* translators in question do not perceive their roles as cultural mediators as requiring them to have "two skills in one skull" or that it is necessary for them to be involved in "switching (his) cultural orientation" (Taft 1981:53). Instead, by providing *verbatim* translations of cultural concepts they feel that they are helping different cultural groups to develop more understanding of each others' heritage. In most cases, it is felt, it would be incorrect to couch source text terminology, that could possibly be offensive to readers of the target texts, in language that is less direct than that used in the source language, because that would neither contribute to a better understanding nor serve the processes of cross-cultural

pollination. In fact, on this issue Makgopa (2000:2), on the matter of Sepedi culture and language, says that "a translation which places cultural norms above accuracy ... is likely to annihilate the Rainbow Nation".

In his M.A. study on the language used in Aids awareness campaigns Makgopa, who is a Sepedi translator on the staff of the *Hansard* division of the Legislature of the Northern Province, makes out a strong case for the cultural taboos existing in Sepedi on matters pertaining to body parts, functions, sex, for example, forces users of the language to "resort to circumlocution and euphemisms ... words (that) are unlikely to carry the message and meaning accurately (and) the audience, for whose use (it is) intended, let alone mother-tongue speakers, therefore misconceives them".

In similar vein, Newmark (1981:6) says that "No language, no culture is so 'primitive' that it cannot embrace the terms of, say, computer technology".

3.4 Conclusion

In considering existing theories and approaches formulated over the years by various language practitioners, it becomes clear that many of them have contributed to a greater or lesser degree certain guidelines that have, and still do, direct translators in their efforts to build bridges of better understanding between different language groups. Language also obviously includes culture and many theorists focus on this important aspect which should act as a filter in the translation process.

What has, however, become clear in analysing the various theories and the *Hansard* situation is that this unique publication has definite rules that dictate the translation and editing approach to be adopted. It now remains to consider the validity and feasibility of the latter against practical examples drawn from these publications and to consider whether *Hansard* in adhering to the *verbatim* approach, in transcription, translation and editing, serves the purposes of accurate reporting as well as user-friendly, and in many instances educational, reading material.

CHAPTER FOUR

LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION AND DISCUSSION OF CONTENT IN *HANSARD* PUBLICATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Language division in National Parliament and the nine legislatures of the Republic of South Africa

4.3 Language usage in the Legislature of the Northern Province

4.4 Examples of general language errors

4.4.1 *Spelling*

4.4.2 *Transcriptions*

4.4.3 *Translations*

4.5 Comparisons of translations of same texts

4.5.1 *Sepedi*

4.5.2 *Xitsonga*

4.5.3 *Tshivenda*

4.5.4 *Afrikaans*

4.6 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

... language is the expression of a culture, many of the words in a language are inextricably bound up with that culture and therefore very hard to transfer in their totality to another language (Lefevere, 1992:17).

Language, as a uniquely human means of communication, is certainly not a clear and straightforward tool for conveying the exact idea of the sender to the receiver of a message. In an ordinary conversation between only two individuals, who share the same mother-tongue, even when both are equally intent and keen on expressing themselves clearly, familiar with the medium/language of communication, adept at expressing themselves and eager to understand and be understood as fully as possible, many misunderstandings often still occur. Communication experts agree that human communication is a process fraught with possibilities for misunderstandings that are compounded by factors such as language usage, dialects, cultural influence, frames of reference, to name merely a few.

In the aspect under discussion here, i.e. political language, a multitude of additional factors further contribute to the communication problems experienced by the various participants. In focusing on *Hansard* as the final product of a communication process that is initiated verbally, captured mechanically and then converted manually by means of five processes, i.e. transcription, translation, collation, first and final editing, it becomes clear that this particular communication process leaves the field wide open for miscommunication. The processes mentioned can naturally be compared to that of any other magazine, newspaper or book, except that in the case of *Hansard*, the *verbatim* convention plays a decisive role that complicates the issue.

It is against this *verbatim* convention that *Hansard* is studied and analysed in this chapter. The onus rests on the various language practitioners involved in the production processes of *Hansard* to ensure that as few barriers as possible are created between the original communicator, i.e. the politician, and the eventual recipient of the message, i.e. the reader of *Hansard*.

Politicians expect every effort to be made by *Hansard* staff members to get their original messages to the voting public as clearly and *verbatim* as possible. Yet the politicians themselves often create the first barrier to clear communication for reasons that have been touched upon in preceding chapters and a factor that is discussed in more detail in this chapter, i.e. the making of grammatical and other language mistakes while using English when in the majority of cases they are not mother-tongue speakers of the language.

While it is then expected of *Hansard* staff to produce a *verbatim* version of what was said by politicians during their debates and speeches, these language practitioners are also expected to produce a printed end-product that does not shame the politicians due to its sub-standard grammatical content.

Such expectations and requirements are perfectly valid and make sense when it is considered that *Hansard* transcriptions are

- in the first instance, done to provide records for future reference purposes,

- secondly, that the politicians have the right and privilege to convey their political messages to their voters and opponents in terminology that they deem fit to particular situations and
- thirdly, it is a logical expectation that each word and each sentence have to be handled with the utmost care since it can be called on to provide decisive evidence in legal disputes.

However, if the recorded message does not measure up to the generally accepted grammatical and linguistic requirements of the particular language used by a politician, i.e. if in printed format the message is not easily understandable or intelligible, the *Hansard* transcribers, translators and editors are faced with a dilemma.

Do they edit to make sense? Or do they produce verbatim texts because:

- This is what was said, and
- it may be referred to in later court or disciplinary hearings?

In analysing political speeches in the *Hansard* books used for this study, it became clear that politicians, by and large, apart from experiencing problems with their preferred language medium, English, also have a predilection for

- (i) **verbosity**, i.e. "The detractors of the provincial government has (*sic*) deliberately forgotten, or they've got short memories and they fail to look at the statistics, concrete statistics. They have reduced statistics to promises..." (*Hansard* Vol 38/99:63);

- (ii) **ambiguity**, i.e. "... he should not think if he has turned his back against the people, the people are necessarily behind him. (*Hansard* Vol 38/99:69);
- (iii) **metaphors**, i.e. "die bedanking was nie om dowe neuter nie" translated to "the resignation was not a whim" (*Hansard* Vol 38/99:63);
- (iv) **misapprehension**, i.e. Politician 1 said: "So, I think people that live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones"... Politician 2 replied: "Hulle is met pangas geja"; etc.

It is generally acknowledged that politicians rely on such language aids as their "tools of trade" in order to imprint their messages with the utmost conviction and earnestness on those who voted them into power, as well as their political opponents. The politicians themselves admit to this tendency by, for example, accusing each other of resorting to such language usage, that is, "It was clear from the response and negative body language of the audience at the Provincial Legislature's opening that they found the Premier's address uninspiring and unconvincing and a repetition of speeches of previous years **full of rhetoric** ..."(*Hansard* Volume 38/1999:33 - my emphasis).

It is these predilections that place added responsibilities on the transcribers and translators of parliamentary debates and speeches because, apart from the surface or denotative meanings, the translator in addition also has to be alert to, and try to decipher, these allusions, connotations and implied or hidden meanings, that politicians weave into their speeches for added effect.

4.1.1 Transcription and resultant translation problems

The spoken messages which are captured on audio-cassettes are more often than not in the English language - as percentages supplied later in this chapter will show - and these messages spoken by non-mother tongue speakers of English - then have to be converted into typed copy by transcribers, none of whom - in the case of the Legislature of the Northern Province - are mother-tongue speakers of English.

- Mispronunciation, e.g. "pool" instead of "pull";
- the influences of dialect, for example, "When we say: "Affirmative action" we are saying that "Can't those who have been deprived for so long of gaining experience and knowledge get the necessary preference. We are saying that those who have been bound hands and feet for such a long time, let them go to the gym first, for them to be able to compete fairly on the sports ground."
- speech patterns, for example "Yesterday we were eating the whole loaf alone, if not, we were eating cake. Today we say that there is not enough flour to cater for the masses, therefore we'll no longer have cake anywhere – we'll have brown bread";
- incorrect usage of words, for example "physical policy" instead of "fiscal policy";
- Latin/legal terminology like *sine die*, *domicilium citandi et executandi*, *locus standi*, *missionis impossibilis*, and;
- metaphors that were confused by politicians in the heat of debates, i.e. "... the closer we draw to local government elections, the more we see that this buck is

being passed very speedily from pillar to post, because people do not want to take on responsibility... we are finding a lot of ethical standards that seem to be passed by a buck under the table" (Vol 4/2000:24) often confront the transcribers with recorded speeches that contain language phenomena that they cannot decipher.

Due to time constraints, an inability to fathom that which they hear or unfamiliarity with the terminology, the transcribers often either simply type a close approximation of what they think they hear, for example

- "This is a way cup call" instead of
- "This is a wake-up call" or leave a gap and type (inaudible).

If, furthermore, it happens that a sentence has been transcribed in, for example, Sepedi as "Ba bangwe ba ja matlametlo kua gabo bona" and this sentence has to be converted into *verbatim* English, it would read: "Some people may not be eating crabs. Others eat crabs at their homes".

If in the translator's judgement, however, such a direct translation appears nonsensical or confusing, he/she is confronted with yet another problematic situation: does he/she satisfy the requirements of *verbatim* or opt for an improvement of language in the translated version thereof, i.e. "Some people may eat crabs, while others do not"?

In its most basic sense, it is accepted that

Translation is a craft consisting of the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in

another language. Each exercise involves some kind of loss of meaning, due to a number of factors (Newmark, 1988:7).

Apart from some of the above-mentioned factors, as well as those discussed in earlier chapters that contribute to a loss of meaning are obviously also the undeniable and ever-present unique cultural frames of reference of the individual translators that serve as filters to a greater or lesser extent in each phase of the *Hansard* process.

On this aspect, again, the eventual end-product depends largely on the initial approach of the individual translator and his/her view of the role to be played as cultural mediator, i.e. "Ag gooi! Gooi! Gooi! Antie Lou, gooi! ... Gooi, gooi nat! ... Gooi nat! ... Gooi hulle uit! ... Wat het Antie Lou gemaak? Want hy is so hans." This was translated into "Oh, pour! Pour! Pour, Auntie Lou, pour! ... Pour, pour water! ... Pour water! ... Throw them out! What did Auntie Lou do? Because he is so forward" (Vol.38/99:26).

The word-play throughout this entire example on the Afrikaans word "gooi" is lost towards the end in the English translation where "pour" changes to "throw". The translator could, of course, have opted for "Pour them down the drain" instead of the "Throw them out" in order to have retained a similar word-play and effect throughout, but clearly it was judged that this would perhaps move a little too far away from the intent of the original Afrikaans.

The last sentence of this example, "Want hy is so hans" which was translated to "Because he is so forward" provides an example of cultural influence. In Afrikaans the word "hans", as it is used here, refers to an orphan lamb or bottle-reared lamb

and Afrikaners, especially those with farming backgrounds, know that such lambs often are cheeky and pushy and difficult to control while being bottle-fed. There is, however, not an exact English equivalent, hence the translator opted for "forward" which conveys the general idea, but loses the cultural connotation which the Afrikaans reader would, in all probability, attach to the word "hans".

Each of the aforementioned aspects, to some degree, has an effect on the end-product, but what has become apparent from the material analysed in the *Hansard* books that were used as research material for this thesis, is that major discrepancies do not occur only in the eventual translation process, but often in the first instance due to an apparent lack of knowledge of the source language on the part of both the spokespersons and/or the transcribers.

This deduction is based, in the first instance, on the elementary language errors made by politicians. These were detected by listening to the audio-cassettes of the original recordings of assemblies of the Legislature of the Northern Province. Secondly, numerous language and grammatical errors were found when the initial transcriptions of these recordings were compared to the speeches contained on the audio-cassettes.

These two aspects, of which extensive examples are provided in section 4.4, provide definite indications that both politicians and transcribers - who in the case of the Legislature of the Northern Province often are also the eventual translators of their own and their colleagues' transcriptions - sometimes find themselves out of their depth with not only some of the subtleties of the English language, e.g. "probably" instead of "properly", "had" instead of "heard", "briefing come training workshop"

instead of "briefing *cum* training workshop"; but at times also with terminology that scholars, or mother tongue speakers of this language may regard as fairly common place, but which may well be expressions that do not form part of the vocabulary of some of the politicians or transcribers, e.g. one politician said "...but that is a germane point" which was transcribed as "...but that is a German point."

As explained previously, the problem is compounded when a politician uses a word or phrase incorrectly, for example:

- "I am not an impressionist." From the context it became clear that he wanted to convey the idea that it was not in his nature to try and impress people; or
- "I thank you very much for the debate. It was robust, honest, and that is why you had an emotional element, because you are dealing with a fundamental question to our society"; or
- "The first thing we do at the accident of the scene is to seclude the scene and to ascertain that people do not come there and create opportunities for secondary accidents."

In many of these cases, the transcriber opts for what he/she hears even when the context clearly indicates otherwise. In some instances, the politicians use terminology that cannot be faulted, but the transcriber may not be familiar with it and in such situations will often type what he/she guesses might be the correct word/s, e.g. the abbreviation "FAWU" used in a speech was transcribed as "firework." These oddities could be indicative of either a lack of knowledge or carelessness.

Both these possibilities are explored and tested against extensive examples that are listed in section 4.4. The conclusions drawn on these aspects of the problems experienced in the production process of *Hansard* are discussed in section 4.6.

Upon completion of the transcriptions the texts are then handed over to translators who proceed to translate the typed material as best he/she can.

In the case of the Legislature of the Northern Province, the next step in the production process is that the transcriptions of the various transcribers and translators are collated by one of four assistant editors, who are mother tongue speakers of either Afrikaans, Sepedi, Tshivenda or Xitsonga. The four assistant editors of these different languages have dual tasks:

- a) In the first instance, they are expected to collate the various transcriptions and translations into the correct order, by comparing them to the master audio cassette recording of that particular day's parliamentary session.
- b) Thereafter, the assistant editor does the first edit of the collated product, before
- c) sending this preliminary copy of *Hansard* to the various politicians, who had participated in the debates and delivered speeches on that particular day, for checking. The copy is sent out with a note requesting each of the politicians in question, to effect changes and return it to the *Hansard* assistant editor, who had done the collation, within the pre-determined number of working days.
- d) The assistant editor effects changes requested by politicians - if these are regarded as valid requests - and finalises the copy for the printers.

If the copy for any particular issue is not returned to the collating editor by the politicians within the allowed and clearly stipulated period of time, it is regarded as an indicator that the copy was found to be in order by the politician.

Over a period of six months, it was found that these copies were returned 53% of the time with a few corrections made by the politicians. However, in 67% of these copies that were returned, some fairly obvious errors were then still found by the final editor, e.g. "...I do not understand how procedures of this Legislature work (or) unless (if) I do not understand English" where clearly the words in brackets could have been removed; or "You can shelf that idea" which should have been changed to "shelve".

This aspect serves as a further indicator that the politicians possibly do not detect certain errors due to an inadequate knowledge of the English. These observations are borne out by further examples cited later in this chapter as well as in chapter 5.

4.2 Language division in the National Parliament and nine legislatures of the Republic of South Africa

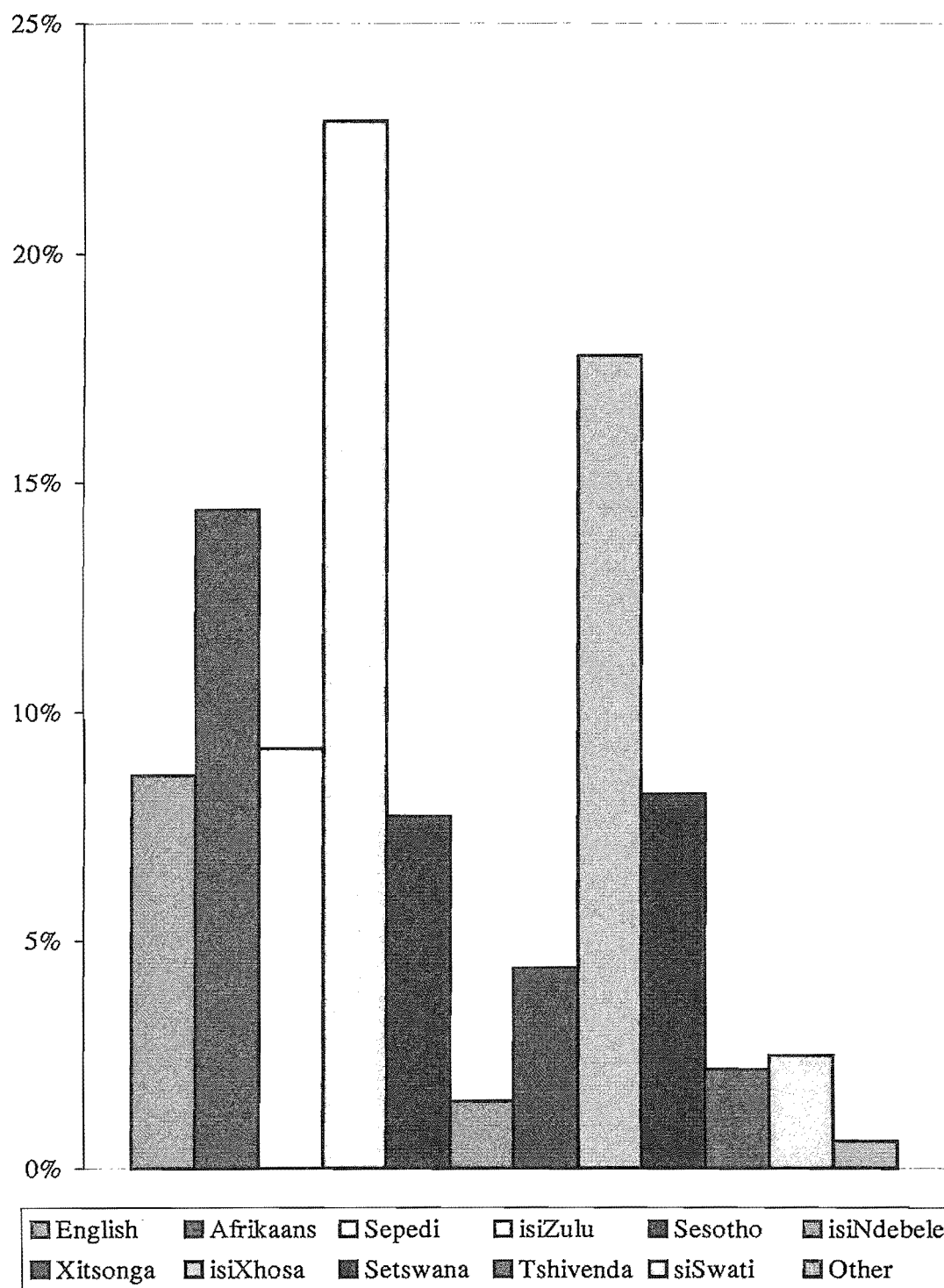
With the fact established in preceding chapters that English is the language spoken most often in National Parliament and in the nine legislatures of South Africa, the question that now needs to be answered is to what extent the other languages feature in the South African legislative and parliamentary political arenas. It is interesting to note that while only a very small percentage of politicians actually use Afrikaans during speeches and debates, it is the only other one of the country's eleven official

languages which is listed along with English as one of the "official" languages of the National Parliament and all of the nine legislatures.

Other than English and Afrikaans, isiXhosa is the language most represented in the nine provincial legislatures of South Africa - three of these legislatures translate and/or interpret into isiXhosa. This is followed by Setswana that is catered for by two legislatures, while the rest of the legislatures translate and/or interpret into only one of each of the indigenous languages in addition to English and Afrikaans.

In earlier chapters, various sources were quoted who claim that English is generally regarded as the common denominator in parliamentary circles. This preference for using English is apparently based on the incorrect assumptions that the majority of politicians are conversant with the language and that most of the electorate can, in fact, be reached through the medium of English. As has also been pointed out, the reality of the situation is that market research indicates that 50% of the citizens of this country struggle to understand English (*Rapport*, 8 September 2000 - own translation). A research project done in 1994 reflects the home language division in South Africa as follows:

SOUTH AFRICAN HOME LANGUAGE USAGE : 1996



<http://www.stat.sa.gov.za>

While it cannot be claimed that home language/mother tongue is a barometer of anyone's understanding, knowledge or ability to speak other languages, it seems highly unlikely that English is the language that can reach the highest percentage of the populace of South Africa if it is only spoken in the homes of 9% of the citizens of this country.

In a radio interview (*Radiosondergreense*: 13 October 2000) the leader of the Democratic Alliance, Mr Tony Leon, stated that South Africa has an advantage over countries like Taiwan, in international trade, due to the fact that a large percentage of the South African business community understand and can express themselves in English. The logic of this statement about the necessity to communicate in a mutually understood language in order to succeed economically in the world market cannot be denied.

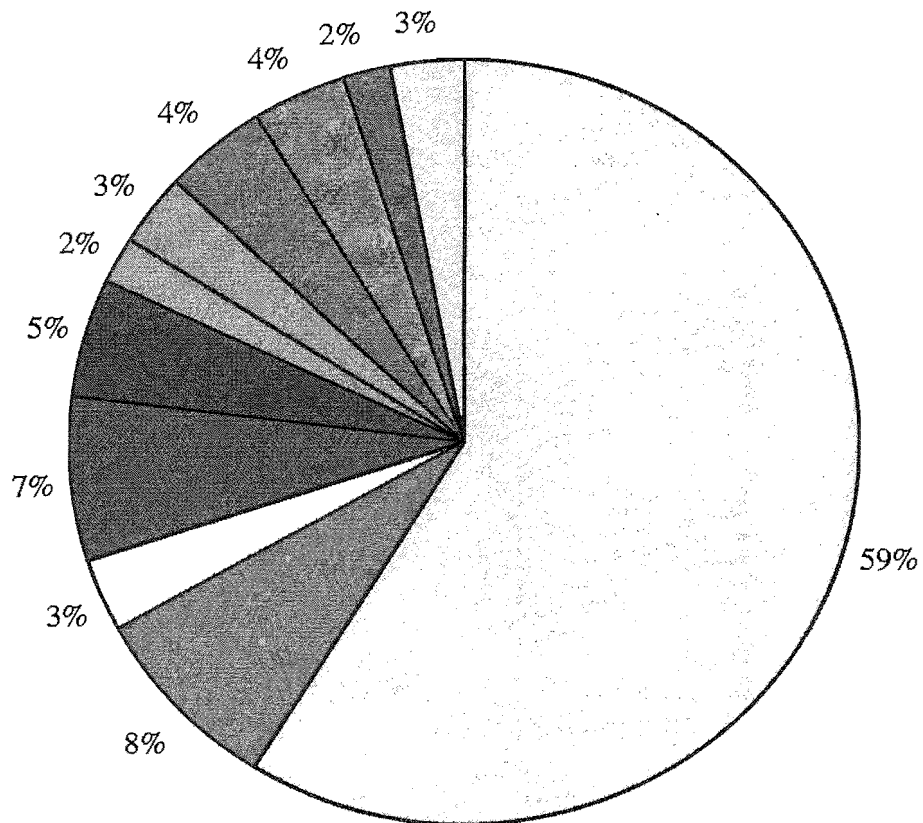
The preference for English in the South African parliament and the nine legislatures can, in all probability, rather be ascribed to the fact that English is regarded as a world language. It certainly makes the content of political debates and speeches more accessible to, for example, members of the foreign media who act as monitors of the South African political climate for the rest of the world. However, within South Africa's boundaries, as has been stated in preceding chapters, many citizens cannot follow what is happening in the parliament or legislatures of this country when the politicians speak English.

It is equally difficult to understand why Afrikaans is the only other language that is listed by National Parliament and each of the nine legislatures of South Africa as an

official language along with English, when only 15% of the residents of this country state that Afrikaans is their home language. The fact that Afrikaans enjoys this 100% representation as an official language in each of the nine provincial legislature could probably rather be ascribed to the fact that it is yet another of the numerous legacies of the apartheid era when it was one of the two official languages of this country.

However, in speaking to the *Hansard* staff at National Parliament and at various of the nine provincial legislatures, it is quite clear that although Afrikaans is regarded as one of the official languages by all of these political institutions and that varying forms of provision are made for it, for example in some instances interpreting services are provided during parliamentary or legislative sittings; translations are done from Afrikaans into English in the *Hansard* books of some of the provinces, it certainly is not a language that is used extensively. Neither are any of the other nine official languages used nearly as often as English as is borne out by the following graphs from data obtained from randomly selected copies of *Hansard* books of the National Parliament and the nine legislatures.

LANGUAGE USAGE MEASURED IN THE HANSARD BOOKS USED FOR THIS STUDY



☐ English	☒ Afrikaans	☐ Sepedi	☒ isiZulu	☒ Sesotho	☒ isiNdebele
☒ Xitsonga	☒ isiXhosa	☒ Setswana	☒ Tshivenda	☐ siSwati	

4.3 Language usage in the legislature of the Northern Province

The number of times and the length of time that languages other than English are used, fluctuate considerably from one sitting to the next in the Legislature of the Northern Province. Close observation and keeping of statistics in the months preceding the writing of this thesis indicated that while members generally opt for English, they tend to, on occasion, resort to their individual mother tongues, when another member sets the ball rolling by using his or her home language instead of English or under certain circumstances such as those discussed in the following paragraphs.

By their own admission it has, for example, become clear that some of the politicians of this Legislature, at times, feel awkward with the English language and their inability to express themselves adequately in this language, i.e. "Mr Speaker, I did (notice) but you know English is another language, it is a foreign language to me but I thought maybe it meant to provide for that which followed ... (Volume 12 Part 4:63,1998).

Another situation that occasionally prompts politicians to code-switch in midstream, is when they wish to express an idea that might be culture-related, i.e. "that the National Party should not have loopholes in its policies - ke gore ga ke tsebe gore ka Sekgowa mabinagosolwa ke go reng empa ke wena mabinagosolwa (*In English, I do not know what you call those who are dancing for food on the table, but they are the ones dancing for food on the table*) (Volume 6 Part 2:9, 2000); or politicians will acknowledge the fact that members of their target audience might not understand if

they speak English and will therefore revert to their mother tongues for part of their speeches for that reason, i.e. "Leswi ndzi lava ku ta swi vula hi ririmi leri van'wana lava va nga le handle va nga ta ri twisisa (*I want to say this in a language that some who are out there can understand*) (Volume 5 Part 1:26, 1999).

However, despite such minor occurrences, the majority of the politicians of the Legislature of the Northern Province, like the rest of the South African politicians, persist in speaking English and this obviously leads to numerous problems for *Hansard* production teams. Some of the problems have been touched on earlier in this chapter; the questions that arose as a result thereof are, however, regarded as more relevant for the purposes of this particular study.

These are matters that are directly related to the language quality of the published end-product, *Hansard*, and require in-depth consideration in order to try these are considered here in order to try and establish whether:

- i) the politicians are simply not familiar enough with their language of choice, English, because it is not their mother-tongue;
- ii) the transcriber of the text was careless, or not a mother-tongue speaker of the language and simply accepted that whatever he/she thought he/she heard was correct or due to unfamiliarity of that which he/she heard substituted it with what was judged to be a close approximation thereof;
- iii) the politician did not pick up the mistakes in checking this typed preliminary script, once again possibly, due to a lack of knowledge of English.

The most important part of the *Hansard* production process, as with any publication, is undoubtedly the various editing and proofreading phases. Despite the possible contributory factors mentioned above and the varying degrees of lack of knowledge and/or incompetencies that may contribute to these problems, in the end the onus rests on the various editors of *Hansard* to set a certain standard for these publications and to ensure that this is met. This aspect is regarded as important enough to be analysed in a separate chapter below.

However, in order to obtain a better understanding of as many of the preceding and underlying problems that arise prior to the different editing phases, it is necessary to consider, first of all, each of possible contributory factors listed above. Some of these suggested possibilities may seem like harsh criticism, but when regarded against a background of some of the examples of language errors found in *Hansard* books produced by the various legislatures in the course of the past few years, no alternative, more redeeming, explanations can be readily found for the high volume of language errors.

Many *Hansard* language practitioners may perhaps try to ascribe the sub-standard quality of the language and grammatical content of many of these printed end-products to the fact that it is conventionally expected to be a *verbatim* report - for reasons already explicated - and that they can therefore not interfere too much with the texts.

This is, certainly, not a consideration when the type and nature of the mistakes are placed under scrutiny, i.e. it is hard to ascribe anything other than ignorance and/or

carelessness to a sentence that reads: "We have to vigorously expose those who are clinging tenaciously, **with** the skin of their teeth, to the **iniquities policies** of the past... (Vol.39/1999:17). Fact is, with minor edits this sentence, such as **by** the skin... to the iniquities **and** policies..., like many of the language errors found in the samples of the *Hansard* books of National Parliament and the different legislatures studied for the purposes of this thesis, could have considerably improved the final publications while they would still have remained substantially *verbatim*. The underlying reasons, therefore, have to be dissected methodically in an attempt to fathom the reasons why the publications contain so many language errors and to find possible solutions to improve the standard. A better end-product is essential since *Hansard* cannot only be regarded as a record of parliamentary debates, but should also be seen as a publication that has a social/educational purpose in view of the fact that it is distributed to the general public, schools, colleges and universities.

It should, therefore, not only contain speeches and debates in a language that is both understandable and logical to its wider readership, but the quality of the language contained therein should be such that it does not confuse younger readers and/or learners of the language, i.e. university students of political studies, for example, who refer to *Hansard* books for research and study purposes.

Furthermore, if blatant language errors are not edited, there is the risk that politicians could come across as incompetent communicators, i.e. "Some **seeks** to inhibit the development... We are harping too much **about** crime, **but** we need to check the balance, or **the fact** where this type of **a** thing comes from". The *verbatim* content would hardly have been affected if the sentence had simply been edited to read:

"Some **seek** to inhibit development ... We are harping too much **on** crime **when** we need to check the balance or where this type of thing comes from".

Even worse, a threat to the life of a politician could be read into: "Your time is running out", when it is not edited to instead convey what was clearly intended to be a warning about the number of minutes allowed for a speech/debate, i.e. "You are running out of time" (*Hansard* Vol 5/1999:53).

The following randomly selected examples should elucidate the reasons for these observations. In order not to cause upset or embarrassment, no direct reference is made to specific publications; the *Hansard* books from which the examples were obtained are, however, listed in the bibliography.

4.4 Examples of general language errors

4.4.1 Spelling

What appears in print	Correct spelling
...'n versigting en 'n smag na mense regte	'n versugting en smagting na menseregte
Ontdraaglik	Ondraaglik
Kan ek net ... vra verduidelikeheid	... vir duidelikheid
Vryheids Front	Vryheidsfront
Navrag	Navraag
Eiesoortegheid	Eiesoortigheid

Raad lid	Raadslid
Ek het die voor reg gehad	Ek het die voorreg gehad
Bedeeling	Bedeling
Werkloosheids syfer	Werkloosheidsyfer
Regeering	Regering
Lands probleem	Landsprobleem
Kospote en veesfieringe	Kospotte en feesvieringe
aspkete	aspekte
'n daadwerklike poging te loots	'n daadwerklike poging te loods
idiaal	ideaal
rakkende	rakende

4.4.2 Transcribing

Original: They must get the opportunity to **get out of the cage** that is there; the economic **cage**.

Correction: They must get the opportunity to **share of the cake** that is there; the economic **cake**.

Original: **Key phrase... clearly shows...stirred...the plight cause...decolonian.**

Correction: **Cliché... clichés...stood...the applied course ...draconian.**

Original: **Farmer tax...enlighteningly**

Correction: **Farm attacks...latently**

Original: **post excellence...sister**

Correction: **The Boers were excellent...sinister**

Original: Pluralism takes **the front** forms.

Correction: Pluralism takes **different** forms.

Original: South African sportspeople are **scars** in the hearts of millions of South Africans.

Correction: South African sports people are **stars** in the hearts of millions of South Africans.

Original: The senator is insinuating that the Minister is **visible in** the Senate.

Correction: The senator is insinuating that the Minister is **misleading** the Senate.

Original: There are certain art forms, such as jazz, music and **uproar**.

Correction: There are certain art forms, such as jazz, music and **opera**.

Original: The budget is presented by people with **far-off** brows.

Correction: The budget is presented by people with **furrowed** brows.

Original: The reason the rand was **deeply shaking** against a number of currencies.

Correction: The reason the rand was **depreciating** against a number of currencies.

Original: The US constitution is held up by liberal democrats as one of the **germs** in the crown of liberal-bourgeois democracy.

Correction: The US constitution is held up by liberal democrats as one of the **gems** in the crown of liberal-bourgeois democracy.

Original: To them it is a case of the chickens coming home to **roast**.

Correction: To them it is a case of the chickens coming home to **roost**.

Original: What **pisses me** off most about this legislation...

Correction: What **pleases me** most about this legislation...

Original: Afrikaners are an **inexplicable** part of our rainbow nation.

Correction: Afrikaners are an **inextricable** part of our rainbow nation.

Original: We are also preparing **dug holes and** coastal management.

Correction: We are also preparing **draft Bills on** coastal management.

Original: This is an **absolute dusty** conduct on the part of males...

Correction: This is **absolutely dastardly** conduct on the part of males...

Original: Dankie Meneer die Speaker, is net 'n kort vraag. Ek wil net by die Agbare LUR verneem, soos wat die bevinding het dit uit gewys het was daar opgetreë.

Correction: Dankie Meneer die Speaker, dit is net 'n kort vraag. Ek wil net by die Agbare LUR verneem, soos wat die bevinding uitgewys het, was daar opgetree.

Original: ... ek is nie seker of die Agbare Lid wil sê dat sekere raadslede en sekere oortredings die wet **betrokke** soos die van korrupsie.

Correction: ... ek is nie seker of die Agbare Lid wil sê dat sekere raadslede en sekere oortredings **van** die wet **betrokke is** soos die van korrupsie.

Original: Toe ek die agbare lid ... skakel **toe** het ek half 'n **afjag** gekry. Mnr ek wou 'n **ophangsel gekry het** vir die gemeenskap **wat wat is** die probleem in Stilfontein.

Correction: Toe ek die agbare lid ... skakel het ek half 'n **afjak** gekry. Mnr ek wou 'n **oplossing kry** vir die gemeenskap **oor** wat die probleem in Stilfontein **is**.

Original: 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is dan om **te hand vas** van **mense regte** soos vervat **en** hoofstuk twee van ons **Grontwet**

Correction: 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is **die handves van mensregte** soos vervat **in** hoofstuk twee van ons **Grondwet**.

Original: Van hierdie woorde skreeu net soos die **kospote** daarbuite ook ten hemele **van daar** buite in Suid-Afrika aangaan ten **opsigtigte** van **mense regte**.

Correction: Van hierdie woorde skreeu net soos die **kospotte** daarbuite ook ten hemele **van wat** daar buite in Suid-Afrika ten **opsigte** van **menseregte aangaan**.

4.4.3 Translation

original transcription

+ original translation

* discussion and suggested correction

EXAMPLE 1

Modulasetulo wa Chamber, o ka lemoga gore molao wo o ile wa phasiwa mo nageng ya gaborena, wo e lego gore re ile ra feleletša bathobaso ba tšeešwe lefase la gabo bona gomme ba šetše ka 13%, 87% e tšerwe ke batho ba bašweu. O a lemoga gore makgahlo gore e hlolege ka mo gare ga naga.

+ **The** Chairperson of the Chamber, you may be aware that ~~the~~ law had been passed in our country where the Blacks ended with 13% of the land whilst 87% was given to their white counterparts.

* Chairperson of the Chamber, you may be aware that **a** law had been passed in our country **through which** Blacks ended **up** with 13% of the land, whilst 87% was given to their **White** counterparts.

Articles generally create problems for non-mother tongue speakers of English. They tend to confuse "a", "an" and "the".

It often happens, when colour is used to indicate race, that Black is typed with a capital "B", while white will be typed with a lower case "w". For the sake of uniformity, the *Hansard* staff attached to the Legislature of the Northern Province have recently agreed to capitalise these words when they are used as nouns and to use lower case when they are used as adjectives.

EXAMPLE 2

... is 'n mens verbaas dat werkspanne vir vyf maande **in hul base** gesit het en nie kon uitgaan nie.

+ ... is it nog surprising **dat** work teams have sat **on their bases** for five months, unable to go out.

*The preposition "in" should have been "op" in #. The "dat" in + points at careless transcribing and editing - it should have been "that". From the context it is clear that reference was made to work teams sitting on their "behinds/backsides" and that the Afrikaans colloquial term "basse" was used, in which case the English slang/informal word "butts" would have worked well in the translation.

EXAMPLE 3

... as dreigemente gebruik moet word, **in Afrikaans, ek kan sê soos 'n kind van ou Greenpoint, moet ek beittjie gedreig het en sê: "As jy nie ja of nee nie, ek gaan na die President toe en ek gaan jou piemp as ek daarso kom."** Dis al wat ek moes gedoen het. **Dis 'n goeie werk. As piemperry so werk, dan werk hy baie goed."**

+ "... if threats must be used, in Afrikaans, I can say as a child from old Greenpoint, I had to threaten a little and say: "If you do not say yes or no, I am going to the President and I am going to tell on you when I get there." That's all I had to do. It's a good job. If "squealing" works like that, then it works very well."

* The meaning of the original Afrikaans version is unclear. Fortunately, for its readers, an English translation is provided which sheds some light on this paragraph.

The Afrikaans, even though difficult to understand, could at least have been improved somewhat, had it read: "...as dreigemente gebruik **moes word, kon ek in Afrikaans soos 'n kind wat in ou Greenpoint grootgeword het**, gedreig het met: "...As jy nie ja of nee **sê** nie, **gaan ek** na die President toe en ...". The word **piemp** should have been in inverted commas to indicate that it is a colloquial term that may well be unfamiliar or unknown to readers. It is only in the English translation that it can be gathered that it means "tell on you" and "squealing." It is not clear what either the "**Dis 'n goeie werk**" or its translation "**It's a good job**" refers to. The **hy** should have been substituted with **dit**.

4.5 Comparisons of translations of the same texts

In an effort to establish the approaches followed by translators working in the same language, a number of original texts - without the original translations thereof - that had already appeared in printed format in *Hansard* publications, were given to translators with the request that these texts be translated. Since, there has not been a change of staff in the period of time from which the samples were drawn, the translations would have been done by one or the other of the same language practitioners initially. The texts are reproduced here in sentence-by-sentence format in order to ease the discussion thereof. Observations are made after each example, while an overall conclusion is supplied under 4.6 after all the examples have been discussed individually.

4.5.1 *Sepedi*

The original transcription as it appears in print reads as follows:

1. Nka bolela ke le gona mo.
2. A ke re ga se kgapeletšo go ya kua pele?
3. Ke a leboga Morena Speaker le maloko a Legotlapeamelao, go tšwa dikarolong tša ga bolena.
4. Ke leboga kudu ge ke humane sebaka se sa go tla go bolela ka polelo ya maabane sa MEC wa Health.
5. Ke leboga le Balekgotlaphethišo ba rena Mna Thaba le Mna Chabane le ba bangwe bao ba sego gona.
6. Ntle le go senya sebaka, re ka se bušetše dilo tše ntšhi tšeo di boletšwego.
7. Ka lentšu le ke tla no e be ka Sejahlapi ka mokgwaga wo ke bego ke e gopoše ka gona.

The original translation thereof reads as follows:

1. I may speak from here.
2. Is it not compulsory to go to the front?
3. I thank you Mr Speaker and honourable members of this Legislature, for coming from your constituencies.
4. I thank you very much for affording me this opportunity to speak about the speech made by the MEC of Health yesterday.

5. I also thank our MECs, Mr Thaba and Mr Chabane as well as those who are not present.
6. Without any waste of time, we are not going to repeat many of the things that were spoken.
7. With these few word I shall speak in English the way I prepared it.

The second translations done some months later, for the purposes of this research project, read as follows:

Example 1:

1. Can I speak from here?
2. I guess is not compulsory to go to the front?
3. Thank you Mr Speaker and members of the Legislature from your different constituencies.
4. I am very happy for this opportunity to come and speak about what the MEC for Health said yesterday.
5. I thank also our Executive Council, Messrs Thaba and Chabane and those not present.
6. Without waste of time, we would not repeat things already mentioned.
7. I'll just put it in English, the way I have planned.

Example 2:

1. I could speak whilst here.
2. Is it compulsory for me to go to the front?
3. I thank you Mr Speaker and members of the Legislature from your respective constituencies.
4. I am very grateful for this opportunity to comment on the address by the MEC of Health yesterday.
5. I also thank our MECs Messrs Thaba and Chabane and others in absentia.
6. We shall not waste time by repeating things that have already been emphasised.
7. I shall make use of English to express my opinions and understanding of the address.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The original translation makes a statement; the second translation asks a question and the third has a tentative ring to it.
2. While each of the three versions query the position from where the speaker should address the other members of the legislature, there are again differences in the tone, i.e. "Is it not..." versus "I guess is (*sic*) not..." versus "Is it not compulsory for me ...".
3. The original translation refers to "honourable members of this Legislature, for coming from your constituencies"; the second to "members of the Legislature from your different constituencies" and the third to "members of the Legislature from your respective constituencies". Only the original translation contains a comma.

4. The original is a rather cumbersome sentence, i.e. "I thank you *very much for affording me this opportunity to speak about the speech*"; the second is less formal, i.e. "I am very happy...", while there is a sense of humility in the third translation, i.e. "I am very grateful...". In examples 1 and 2 "speak about" is used whereas in example 3 the verb "comment" is used.
5. The first and third examples thank the "MECs" whilst the second thanks the "Executive Council". Although the abbreviation "MECs" refers to "Members of the Executive Council", these different translated versions are confusing since it cannot be established if all the MECs are thanked or only the two mentioned by name. Version 3 opts for "*in absentia*" while the other two examples refer to "those who are not present" and "those not present".
6. By opting for "without" both the original translation and example 2 contain contradictions which is improved upon by example 3: "We shall not waste time..." The three different versions of a verb used in the examples, i.e. "spoken", "mentioned" and "emphasised" convey considerably different meanings.
7. While example 3 makes reference to "express my opinions and understanding of the address" there is no mention thereof in examples 1 and 2. In the latter two instances the translations indicate that the speaker had a prepared speech, while example 3 leaves the impression that what is to follow is an extempore speech.

4.5.2 Tshivenda

The original transcription as it appears in print reads as follows:

1. Muhulisei Tshipikara ndi livhuwa.
2. Muvhoso wa vhathu, Muvhuso wo nangiwa ho nga vhathu, Muvhuso une wa vha wa African National Congress, wo ri musi u tshi nangiwa wa ri "ri do shumela vhathu", wa ri "ri do fha vhathu maanda" wa ri "ri do khakhulula zwe zwa vha zwo khakhea".
3. Namusi ri tshi amba zwino nga riwaha hoyu wa gidi-da-tahe-futahe-tahe (1000), MEC wa Public Works a vha na maanda, arali vhathu vha tshi lila, vha shila nga ha Shango le vha li dzhieliwa zwi so ngo tea kana vha tshi lili nga ha shango line vha vhona uri arali muvhoso wa nga vha fha kana wa vha rengisela lone, vha nga kona u dibveledza zwa sia hu na uri na u shaea ha mishumo hu a fhungudzea.

The original translation thereof, as it appears in print, reads as follows:

1. Honourable Speaker, thank you.
2. The people's Government, the Government elected by people, the government of the African National Congress, when it was elected said "we shall work for the people", we hall (*sic*) empower the people", and "we shall redress that has been wrong".
3. Today, as we are talking during this year (1999), the MEC for Public Works have no power, when people are complaining about the Land which has been unlawfully acquired from them or complaining about the Land which they think if the Government could give or sell it to them, they could develop themselves and as such lack of employment could deteriorate.

- 4 So, I am appealing that this House adopt this Bill so that, things could run smoothly when the MEC is empowered.

The second translations done some months later, for the purposes of this research project, read as follows:

Example 1:

1. Thank you honourable Speaker.
- 2 The African National Congress Government, which is the government for the people and the government elected by the people, promised the following when it was voted into power: "We shall serve the people. We shall empower the people and we shall redress the wrongs of the past.
- 3 Today in 1999, as we are debating, the MEC for Public Works is powerless when people compliant, complaining about the land taken from them illegally or about the land which if the government could hand over or sell it to them, they can develop themselves and as such reducing the joblessness.
- 4 Therefore, I am appealing to this House to adopt this Bill for the MEC to be granted the powers, so that, things could run smoothly.

Example 2:

1. I thank you honourable Speaker.
2. The government of the people, the government elected by the people, the government of the African National Congress when it was elected said, "We will work for the people, we will give people power, it said it will rectify the wrongs that has (*sic*) been made.

3. Now as we are speaking in the year 1999, MEC for Public Works has power. If people cry about the land which has been confiscated from them unwillingly or complaining about the land that they think if the government could sell or give to them, they can reproduce, and at the end scarcity of jobs could be reduced.
4. In that sense I am requesting this Legislature to accept this Bill, so that when this MEC is given power, things should run smoothly.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Each of the three translations has a different version in the address line.
2. The word order differs; Example 1 makes reference to "voted into power" which is not found in the original or Example 2. The original and Example 1 uses "shall" and "redress" as opposed to Example 2's "will" and "rectify". In the original "we shall redress **that** has been wrong" should have been "**what**".
3. This sentence presents a major problem. Does the MEC have power or not? According to the original and example one, he "**have** no power", "is powerless", whereas example 3 says he "has power".
4. In the original reference is made to "Land which **have** been unlawfully acquired from", in example 1 "land taken from them illegally" and in example 2 "confiscated from them unwillingly". Example 2 is confusing due to the number of errors, i.e. are the people going to "reproduce" and the original version's "lack of employment could deteriorate" also leaves the reader wondering about the message.
5. The original and example 1 are "appealing" for the "adoption" of the Bill, while example 2 is "requesting...accept(ance)" of the Bill.

4.5.3 *Xitsonga*

The original transcription as it appears in print reads as follows:

1. Leswi ndzi lava ku ta swi vula hi ririmi leri van'wana lava va nga le handle va nga ta ri twisisa.
2. Leswi a nga vula Premier wa hina la eka xipichi xa yena, i ku sungula laha tikweni ra South Africa ku twa rito leri va nge I project.
- 3 A hi nga ri tivi, masiku lava rito ra project ri common eka switandi hinkwaswo hikuva ARDC yi pfunetile vanhu va ka hina lava a nga kumi nchumu ku endla swilo swo tihanyisa hi swona.
- 4 Ndzi ta nyika xikombiso, eka ntirho lowu wu nga tshama wu va kona leMariveni laha vanhu va ka hina lava a va nga ri na nchumu va nga nyikiwa misava va panderiw swiprasana, futhi va tlhela van phakeriwa na timbewu ku fana na swimilana swa milamula leswaku va ya va ya tityalela, a hi yona nhluvuko eka Agriculture yoleyo na?

The original translation, as it appeared in print, read as follows:

1. I want to say this in a language that some who are out there can understand.
2. What was said by our Premier here in his speech, marks the beginning in this country South Africa of the word "project".
3. We did not know it, but nowadays the word project is very common in all villages because the ARDC has helped our people who did not have anything to make a living.

4. I will give an example, with the project in Mariveni where our people who did not have anything, were given land and got farms, moreover they were given seeds and orange plants so they could go and plant for themselves, so is that not civilization in Agriculture?

The second translation done some months later for the purposes of this research project read as follows:

Example 1:

1. I want to say this in a layman's language.
2. What our Premier said in his speech was for the first time we heard the word "project".
3. We didn't know it, but of late the word "project" is commonly known at all our communities, because ARDC played an important role amongst our people who were idling and not knowing what to do for their living.
4. I will give an example. At the project which has been once established at Mariveni, where our people were not allowed to own plots and have nothing, they were given plots and seeds and seedlings like oranges to plant, is that not development?

Example 2:

1. I want to say this in a language that will be understood by those who are outside.
2. It was for the first time in this country to hear the word "project" in the Premier's speech.

3. We knew nothing about this word, but nowadays it is a common word in all our communities.
4. Our people we assisted by ARDC to enrich themselves by doing things that will earn them a living. Giving an example where people at Mariveni were given a project. They were given land, small farms to plough on and crops especially orange seeds. Is that not development in Agriculture?

Observations:

1. The original refers to "some who are out there"; Example 1 to "a layman's language" and Example 2 to "language that will be understood by those who are outside".
2. The original refers to "South Africa", Example 1 contains no such reference and Example 2 opts for "this country". Example 2, in total, is grammatically unacceptable, i.e. "It was **for** the first time... "**to** hear", etc.
3. Here reference made to "villages" in the original and "communities" in the other two examples. In the original the ARDC "helped", in Example 1 it "played an important role" and in Example 2 "people ~~we~~(re) assisted".
4. In the original version "people ... did not have anything", in Example 1 "people were not allowed to own plots and have **nothing**" and in Example 2 they have neither anything or nothing.
5. In the original "they were given seeds and orange plants (which led to) civilization"; in Example 1 "they were given plots and seeds and seedlings (which led to) development" and in Example 2 "They were given land, small farms to plough on especially orange seeds (which led to) development".

4.5.4 *Afrikaans*

The original transcription as it appears in print reads as follows:

1. Meneer die Speaker, wanneer 'n sport liggaam die regering hof toe vat en die regering die saak verloor, word die regter gekritiseer en die regstelsel onder verdenking geplaas.
2. Die ANC regering is egter nie bereid om te erken dat hy 'n fout begaan het nie.
3. Meneer die Speaker, as 'n mens kyk na die aanhef van hierdie wetsontwerp is dit jammer dat die regering dit weereens nodig vind om die beleid van rasse diskriminasie en apartheid by die horings in te sleep in die aanhef van die wetsontwerp.
4. Hoe lank gaan die regering nog apartheid die skuld gee vir mislukkings?

The original translation thereof as it appeared in print reads as follows:

1. Mr Speaker, when a sports body takes the government to court and the government loses the case, the judge is criticised and the legal system is doubted.
2. The ANC government is, however, not prepared to acknowledge its mistakes.
3. Mr Speaker, when one looks at the preamble to this bill, it is a pity that government once again finds it necessary to drag the policy of racial discrimination and apartheid in by the horns in the preamble to the bill.
4. For how much longer will the government still blame apartheid for its failures?

The second translations done some months later for the purposes of this research project reads as follows:

Example 1:

1. Mr Speaker, when a sports body takes the government to court and the government loses the case, the judge is disapproved of and suspicion is cast on the legal system as such.
2. The ANC government is not prepared to admit its mistakes.
3. Mr Speaker, if one looks at the preamble to this Act, it is a pity that the government once again finds it necessary to drag the policy on racial discrimination and apartheid into the preamble.
4. Until when will the government accuse apartheid for failures?

Example 2:

1. still going to blame apartheid for failures? Mr Speaker, when a sports organisation takes the government to court and the government loses the case, the judge is criticised and the system of law is compromised.
2. The ANC-government, however, is not willing to admit the fact that they have made a mistake!
3. Mr Speaker, viewing the preamble to this Bill - it is a pity that the government, once again, found it necessary to drag the policy of racial discrimination and apartheid, by the horns, into the preamble of this Bill.
4. For how much longer, is the government

Observations:

1. The original and example 1 refer to "sports body, whereas example 2 opts for "sports organisation"; in the original and Example 2 the judge is "criticised", but in Example 1 he is "disapproved of". In the original the legal system is "doubted", in Example 1 "suspicion is cast on" it and in Example 2 it is "compromised".
2. The original and Example 1 refer to "mistakes"; Example 2 to "mistake".
3. There are not too many differences between the original and Example 2, other than word order and both versions retain the "horns" of the original Afrikaans, whereas this is omitted in Example 1.
4. The original and Example 2 use "For how much longer" while Example 1 uses "Until when".

4.6 Conclusion

It is unlikely that any translator, for reasons that have already been discussed at length, will produce two completely corresponding translations of the same text, even if such translations are done on the same day. Minor discrepancies can be expected. However, what the above examples illustrate amply, is that there are too many differences in the various translations for it to qualify as the supposed *verbatim* versions prescribed by *Hansard* conventions.

Not only the foregoing examples, but the extensive variety of samples provided throughout this chapter, serve to indicate that the language content of the *Hansard* publications of South Africa that have been printed and distributed during the period under review, in the first instance, contain an unacceptably large numbers of basic

errors. Punctuation marks used incorrectly or, in many cases, the lack thereof are disturbing.

The types of mistakes detected - typing, i.e. "hall" instead of "shall"; spelling, i.e. "gront wet" instead of "grondwet" and grammatical errors, i.e. "rectify the wrongs that has been made" - are indicative of shocking carelessness in many of the transcriptions. There is no other explanation when one considers the nature of some of these mistakes; many of which could quite easily have been prevented through the use of spell-checks on computers; the consulting of dictionaries; the careful listening to audio-cassettes for pauses or raised voices that help to identify the need for a comma or exclamation mark, etc.

There is a glaring lack of knowledge of the target language, English, on the part of many of the translators. The nature of the mistakes encountered would indicate that in many instances not even the most basic grammatical structures are properly grasped, which unfortunately - once again - raises the question of the South African education system of the past decades. This assumption is further borne out by the comparisons done between transcriptions and audio-cassette recordings, where it was found that transcribers either totally misheard or misunderstood certain words and therefore transcribed incorrectly, because they were clearly not familiar with the terminology used by politicians, i.e. "laughing stork" instead of "laughing stock".

Added to these problems, the transcribers are generally, for reasons amplified earlier on, i.e. evidence in disciplinary hearings or court cases, extremely wary of effecting changes due to the *verbatim* convention of *Hansard* publications, even on the rare

occasions that they suspect that a politician might have expressed him- or herself incorrectly.

As has been pointed out in numerous of the examples provided in this chapter, the politicians do at times use terminology and tenses incorrectly, possibly due to an unfamiliarity on their part with especially the English language which is not their mother-tongue but which, in the present parliamentary and legislative assemblies of South Africa, is the language of preference.

It has to be acknowledged, however, that in some instances such language errors could be ascribed to the fact that in the heat of the moment, it is perfectly natural to stumble over one's own words or use incorrect words. However, there can also be no denial that many of these mistakes are often overlooked by the politicians when preliminary copies of transcriptions are sent to them for correction. This reinforces the theory that the politicians, in many cases, are not knowledgeable enough about the English language to recognise some of the errors, whether these are of their own making or due to transcription errors.

Discrepancies found in the various translations, and more particularly between the different versions of supposedly *verbatim* translations, in turn, raise doubts regarding the validity of claims by transcribers and translators that the fact that they are bound by convention to render *verbatim* transcriptions and translations is often the reason for some of the language errors.

With regard to the transcription part of the process, factors such as interjections and general noises certainly, on occasion, have an effect on the sound-levels and quality of the recordings. Furthermore, the audio-cassettes used for this purpose have a limited life-span and if these are not regularly replaced, parts of the tapes become stretched which also leads to sound distortions. Added to this are the accents, speech patterns and pronunciations of the various politicians, which at times affect audibility.

In addition, as has been indicated, none of the transcribers attached to the Legislature of the Northern Province, for example, are mother-tongue speakers of English, which means that their knowledge of this language in which they have to work most often is, in many instances, not extensive enough to recognise or make sense of some of the terminology used by the politicians. From the mistakes found in the *Hansards* of some of the other legislatures and the National Government, it would seem that similar problems are experienced at some of these institutions.

It is virtually impossible to single out an overall reason for the poor quality of the language found in the publications studied. It is much rather a conglomeration of the various factors discussed thus far which each in its own manner contributes in some measure, during the various steps of the production process of *Hansard*, to publications that do not meet with what can be regarded as an acceptable standard, either as a mouth-piece of the highest political offices of the country or as reading material that contributes to the improvement of the grammar and/or vocabulary of its readers.

In the subsequent chapter the various editing phases which the *Hansard* publications undergo are analysed in an attempt to gauge the role of this part of the production process in an attempt to find solutions to improve the standard of this *verbatim* report of legislative deliberations and debates.

CHAPTER 5

HANSARD EDITING PROCESSES

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Examples of the most common editing errors found in final collations

5.2.1 Concord

5.2.2 Idiomatic expressions

5.2.3 Tenses

5.2.4 Word order

5.2.5 Singular and plural

5.2.6 Gender

5.2.7 General grammatical structure

5.2.8 Spelling

5.2.9 Articles

5.2.10 Prepositions

5.2.11 Conjunctions

5.2.12 Punctuation

5.2.13 Paragraphs

5.3 Final editing

5.4 General remarks about editing

5.5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The Legislature of the Northern Province does not at present have an editor in the sole charge of its *Hansard* publication. Provision has been made in the envisaged new staff structure for the appointment of someone in this position after May 2001. Currently, this publication undergoes several editing processes at the hands of various staff members:

- The assistant editors for the four official languages of the province - Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Afrikaans - receive computer-printed copies of transcriptions from those transcribers/translators that report to them. The assistant editors then make corrections directly on these printed copies and return it to the transcribers/translators who have to correct it on computer diskettes.
- These corrected diskettes are not returned to their individual editors by the transcribers, but go directly to the collating editor - who is one of the four assistant editors that performs this task on a rotational basis.¹
- Once the various transcriptions - which by now have been transferred to computer diskettes - reach the collating editor, his first task is to sort the different transcriptions, which are numbered in order of the recordings, in the correct sequence.

¹ In analysing the work procedures of *Hansard* at the Legislature of the Northern Province for the purposes of this study, this has now been identified as a possible problem area. If an extra step is built into the process, it may well contribute towards an end-product with fewer mistakes. In other words, instead of assuming that the transcribers will have made the suggested corrections prior to submitting their transcriptions to the collating editor, the corrected transcriptions will from now on have to be returned from the transcribers to their various editors to verify that the necessary changes have indeed been effected prior to the collation of the transcriptions.

- Due to the possibility of numbering errors, the collator is expected to listen to the master recording, i.e. a continuous audio-cassette recording, as opposed to the individual ten-minute recordings used by the transcribers, to ensure that the transcriptions follow on each other in the correct sequence.²
- Once the collation process has been completed, the assistant editor is responsible for making the aforementioned printouts and ensuring that these preliminary copies of the *Hansard*³ reach the various politicians who had participated in the debates and speeches on that particular date. These printouts are accompanied by the covering note - an example of which appears in Chapter 2 - to inform the politicians of the expected return date.
- If these copies are not received back from the politicians by the due date, the *Hansard* assistant editor assumes that the politicians had received the copies and had found them in order. A review of this approach might be required, i.e. phone-calls could be made to the politicians to establish whether they had, indeed, received their copies and to enquire whether they require changes. In view of the earlier statements, regarding the grammatical knowledge of many of the politicians and the errors that are often overlooked by them, it is debatable

² It should be pointed out that each of the transcriptions has to bear the name of the transcriber. This arrangement was introduced some months ago in an attempt to instil a higher sense of responsibility in the individual transcribers, i.e. this is based on the assumption that if the politicians can identify the transcriber by name, the transcriber might take more care. Their names remain on the preliminary copies that are sent by the assistant editor on duty to the politicians for correction and the transcribers'/translators' names are only removed prior to the copy being sent to the printers.

³ Ideally, these preliminary *Hansard* copies should be sent to politicians via computersied electronic mail to ensure that they receive them without delays, especially during periods of recess or when politicians are doing constituency work and do not get to their offices to collect inter-office mail on a regular basis. Unfortunately, as far as could be established, only six of the members of the Legislature of the Northern Province presently have this facility available. The internal manual mail distribution system is used and complaints are regularly received from politicians who claim that they have not received copies of their speeches for correction.

whether the building-in of this additional safety measure would prove effective in the effort of minimising the number of errors that occur in the end-product.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that it is a basic right of the politicians to review their speeches. Regardless of language knowledge, or lack thereof, this step of the process has to be retained. Indeed, in analysing the prevailing situation at the Legislature of the Northern Province, it has been established that - despite the time and cost involved in the making of follow-up telephone calls - this is an additional step that will, henceforth, have to form part of the editorial procedure.

- These preliminary copies, with requests for changes and alterations, which are received back from politicians are then studied by the collating editor and the requested edits are effected, if it is judged to be within the acceptable *verbatim* boundaries. In certain instances, though, politicians appear to have a rethink on certain matters when they see it in print. Some of them tend to rewrite their speeches to such a degree that many of their suggestions cannot be incorporated in keeping with the *verbatim* convention, as can be seen from the following example:

- A Transcription received back from politician
- B Final version as it appears in print:

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(HANSARD)
OF THE SITTING OF
THE LEGISLATURE OF THE NORTHERN PROVINCE
OF 3 AUGUST 2000

Go na le dilo tse dintsi tseo re ka bua ka tsona gore re batla basadi le bona ba swane le banna. Basadi le bona ba ikgone, ba ba le bokgoni bo rileng. Basadi le bona ge go buiwa gore go na le bahumi ba mo motseng kgotsa go na le bahumi mo lefaseng la South Africa, e be e le gore go buiwa ka gore basadi le bona ba badiwa. Basadi ba bantsi janka re lebelela Legislature ya Northern Province, re ka bala gore mo management wa Legislature ke basadi ba bakae. Re ka bala gore mo diposong tse di swerwego jana, ke banna ba bakae, ke banna ba felago ka mo go Legislature yona ye, janka re bua gore equality for women and men.

Ga re buwe gore re swanetse gore maybe re swarane ka matsogo re bontshe partnership ye. Re bua ka tswaragano gore ga re considareng ge re adbethaesa diposo, kgotsa go na le ditiro tse dingwe, re considare gore basadi ga ba fiwa tetla ye e swanago le ya banna. Bijale re swanetse gore rena janka badiramelao re thuse gore basadi ba nne le tetla ye, ya gore le bona ka tsatsi le lengwe ba nke ba badiwe mo dipalong tsa batho hao e le gore ba na le bokgoni bo rileng, ba na le bohumi bo rileng. Se ke batlaga re feleletsa ka sona, ke re the African Renaissance ga re bua re swanetse go bua ka African Renaissance, tsosoloso ya Afrika, re ntse re gopola gore basadi le bona ba swanetse gore banna ba tsosolosiwe mo moboyeng, ba tsosolosiwe mo gohle nas. Dilo tse tshig tse re ntse re bua ka tsona, di ka se kgonege go diragala ge basadi ba sa swarana.

Janong ke dira boipileiso go basadi mo basading ba South Africa, particularly mo go basadi ba Northern Province, gore ga re swaraganeng. Se sengwe se se ka diragalaga, ge re sa swaragana, ga se kitla se kgona go diragala. Ja ka ngata ya dikgong, ge lekgong le leng le eme mma le leng le eme mma, go bo toka and go bonolo gore o ka diroba dikgong tse, mma ge le ngata e tshwaragane ga kitla o kgona gore o e robe. Ke dira boipuelo le boikuelo mo banneng ba rona gore ga re reng ge re dira tse re gupolago gore re tshwanetse gore re dire e le tota go make sure gore re tshwaraganya basadi ba rona. Ka gore dilo tse dintsi tse di diragalang ke tse o fihlelang, le gore rena basadi re amologane, na re kgone go tlhaglogana gore ntwa ye re e lwaga ya lokologo ya basadi, re swanetse gore re e swaraganele.

Mo khanseleng ya rina ya ANC re buile gore re swanetse gore re nne le mkgahlo wo e lego gore o tla tsa basadi, go sa kgathelege gore mosadi wa teng o tswa kae, go sa kgathelege gore mosadi wa teng o tsena kereke e biana, kgotsa o bina malopo, kgotsa o dira eng, re swanetse gore mkgahlo wo e be mkgahlo wa basadi. Re sa kgathelege gore lebaka la gago le ntse jang, mma e nne mkgahlo wo e lego o tla tsa basadi ba bohle. Re buile gore re na le Women Coalition ye e seleng re tlhoma janka basadi ba ANC kgale ko tshimologong ya 1990. Re re gona janong rena basadi ba ANC re swanetse go dira ka bojohle bo bo kgonegago.

Re buile gore re nne le mkgahlo wo e lego gore o tla tsa basadi, go sa kgathelege gore mosadi wa teng o tswa kae, go sa kgathelege gore mosadi wa teng o tsena kereke e biana, kgotsa o bina malopo, kgotsa o dira eng, re swanetse gore mkgahlo wo e be mkgahlo wa basadi. Re sa kgathelege gore lebaka la gago le ntse jang, mma e nne mkgahlo wo e lego o tla tsa basadi ba bohle. Re buile gore re na le Women Coalition ye e seleng re tlhoma janka basadi ba ANC kgale ko tshimologong ya 1990. Re re gona janong rena basadi ba ANC re swanetse go dira ka bojohle bo bo kgonegago.

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[There are so many things we can talk about that we want women to be like men. Women must be independent and also be skilled. When talking about rich people in a community or in South Africa, women should also be included. Most women as we are looking at the Legislature of the Northern Province, we can count on how many women are there in the management posts. We can count posts which are occupied now, how many men are cleaners in this Legislature as we are talking about equality for men and women? We are not talking about joining hands and practise this partnership. We are talking about partnership that whenever we are advertising posts or there are other jobs, we should consider that women should also be given chance like men. So, as lawmakers we must assist women to have that chance that one day they must also be counted with skilled and rich people. I want to conclude by saying that when we talk about African Renaissance, we must always think that women also need to be spiritually rehabilitated and also be rehabilitated all over. All these things we always talk about, will never be overcame if women do not join hands.]

Now, I am making an appeal to South African women, particularly to the Northern Province women, that we should join hands. Whatever happens, if we are not working together, nothing will succeed. Just like a bundle of woods, if one log is there and the other one is there, it is so easy to break the logs but if it is a bundle together, no one can break them. I am making an appeal to our men that whenever you think of doing things, you should make it a point that you join our women together. This means that many things, which happen you find that women are not together, and one cannot understand when fighting for freedom of women, we should fight together.

In our ANC Council we talked about the establishment of an organisation that will cater for women, irrespective of where that woman comes from, or whether she is from a certain denomination or driven by the spirits or doing whatever, we must just make this organisation to belong to women. Not even discriminative because of race but it should be an organisation that will cater for all women. We mentioned that we have Women Coalition, which was long established by ANC the beginning of 1990. We are now saying that ANC women we must do by all means... together with our counterparts, gore Women Coalition e tokafadiwe, Women Coalition e kgone go tsaya Women's Charter e tšwetšetse pele. Ka mantšu ao, ke a leboga [that Women Coalition should be improved so that it can be able to promote the Women's Charter. With those words, I thank you].

PRESIDING OFFICER

Thank you honourable Magadzi. Before I go directly into the speakers' list before me here, can I get a seconder because in the main here we are dealing with the motion for a snap debate on this issue. So if I can please get a seconder to this motion. Honourable Sophie Mogotlane.

B Final version as it appears in print:

Go na le dilo tše dintši tše re ka bua ka tsona gore re batla basadi le bona ba swane le banna. Basadi le bona ba ikgone, ba ba le bokgoni bo rileng. Basadi le bona ge go buiwa gore go na le bahumi ba mo motseng kgotsa go na le bahumi

mo lefaseng la South Africa, e be e le gore go buiwa ka gore basadi le bona ba badiwa. Basadi ba bantši ja ka re lebelela Legislature ya Northern Province, re ka bala gore mo management wa Legislature ke basadi ba bakae. Re ka bala gore mo diposong tše di swerwego jana, ke banna ba bakae ke banna ba fielago ka mo go Legislature yona ye, ja ka re bua gore equality for women and men.

Ga re buwe gore re swanetše gore maybe re swarane ka matsogo re bontšhe partnership yeo. Re bua ka tswaragano gore ga re considareng ge re adbethaesa diposo, kgotsa go na le ditiro tše dingwe, re considare gore basadi ga ba fiwa tetla ye e swanago le ya banna. Bjale re swanetše gore rena ja ka badiramelao re thuse gore basadi ba nne le tetla yeo, ya gore le bona ka tšatši le lengwe ba nke ba badiwe mo dipalong tša batho bao e lego gore ba na le bokgoni bjo bo rileng, ba na le bohumi bjo bo rileng. Se ke batlago re feleletša ka sona, ke re the African Renaissance ga re bua, re swanetše go bua ka African Renaissance, tsosoloso ya Afrika, re ntse re gopola gore basadi le bona ba swanetse gore banne ba tsošološwe mo moboyeng, ba tsošološwe mo gohle mo. Dilo tse tsohle tše re ntse re bua ka tsona, di ka se kgonege go diragala ge basadi ba sa swarana.

Jaanong ke dira boipiletšo go basadi mo basading ba South Africa, particularly mo go basadi ba Northern Province, gore ga re swaraganeng. Se sengwe le se sengwe se se ka diragalago, ge re sa swaragana, ga se kitla se kgona go diragala. Ja ka ngata ya dikgong, ge lekgong le leng le eme mola le leng le eme mola, go bo toka and go bonolo gore o ka diroba dikgong tše, mara ga e le ngata e tshwaragane ga ikitla o kgona gore o e robe. Ke dira boipuelo le boikuelo mo banneng ba rona gore ga re reng ge re dira tše re gopolago gore, re tshwanetse gore re dire e le tota go make sure gore re tshwaraganya basadi ba rona. Ka gore dilo tše dintši tše di diragalang ke tše o fihlelago le gore rena basadi re amologane, ha re kgone go tlhaologana gore ntwaga ye re e lwago ya tokologo ya basadi, re swanetše gore re e swaraganele.

Mo khanseleng ya rena ya ANC re buile gore re swanetše gore re nne le mokgahlo wo e lego gore o tla tšea basadi, go sa kgathelege gore mosadi wa teng o tswa kae, go sa kgathelege gore mosadi wa teng o tsena kereke e bjang, kgotsa o bina malopo, kgotsa o dira eng, re swanetše gore mokgahlo woo e be mokgahlo wa basadi. Re sa kgathelege gore lebala la gago le ntse jang, mara e nne mokgahlo wo e lego o tla tšea basadi ba bohle. Re buile gore re na le Women Coalition ye e seleng re tlhoma ja ka basadi ba ANC kgale ko tshimologong ya 1990. Re re gona janong rena basadi ba ANC re swanetše go dira ka bojohle bjo bo kgonegago...

[There are so many things we can talk about that we want women to be like men. Women must be independent and also be skilled. When talking about rich people in a community or in South Africa, women should also be included. When looking at the Legislature of the Northern Province, we can count how many women there are in management posts. We can count posts which are occupied now - how many men are cleaners in this Legislature while we are talking about equality for men and women? We are not talking about joining hands and practising this partnership. We are talking about the kind of partnership that, whenever we are advertising posts or there are other jobs, we should consider that women should also be given chances like men. So, as lawmakers we must assist women to have that chance that one day they must also be counted as skilled and rich people. I want to conclude by saying that when we talk about African Renaissance, we must always remember that women also need to be spiritually rehabilitated and also be rehabilitated all over. All these things we always talk about, will never be overcome if women do not join hands.]

Now, I am making an appeal to South African women, particularly to the Northern Province women, that we should join hands. Whatever happens, if we are not working together, nothing will succeed. Just like a bundle of wood, if one stick is here and the other one is there, it is very easy to break the sticks, but if it is a bundle together, no one can break them. I am making an appeal to our men that whenever you think of doing things, you should make it a point that you include our women. This means that in many things that happen you find that women are not together. When fighting for freedom for women, we should fight together. In our ANC Council we talked about the establishment of an organisation that will cater for women, irrespective of where that woman comes from, or whether she is from a certain denomination or driven by the spirits or doing whatever - we must just make this organisation belong to women. Not discriminate because of race; it should be an organisation that will cater for all women. We mentioned that we have the Women's Coalition, which was long ago established by the ANC - at the beginning of 1990. We are now saying that ANC women must do everything in their means...] together with our counterparts, gore Women Coalition e tokafadiwe, Women Coalition e kgone go tsaya Women's Charter e tšwetše pele. Ka mantsu ao, ke a leboga. [that Women's Coalition should be improved so that it can promote the Women's Charter. With those words, I thank you.]

In a discussion with the language practitioners who worked on this particular extract, the following transpired:

Question: Can you please explain why so many of the changes, made by the politician, were not incorporated in the final product?

Answer: The politician in question is not a mother tongue speaker of Sepedi, but a Setswana speaker. The two languages are closely related and the politician did a lot of code-switching. What you have to understand here, is that Setswana is held in higher regard than Sepedi and the speaking of Setswana is seen to indicate a better education. So when the politician received the transcription, she clearly had a rethink and decided to replace some of the Sepedi words she had used in her actual speech with Setswana.

Question: There is something else that I find puzzling. The politician made numerous changes to the Sepedi/Setswana transcription. Yet, no changes were made to the English translation thereof. Surely, if the Sepedi/Setswana version was changed, this had an effect on the English version thereof? Can you comment on that?

Answer: Even though the spelling and pronunciation of words differ in Sepedi and Setswana, the meaning basically remains the same. Hence, these changes did not have much of an impact on the English translation of the original text.

Question: Would you describe the English translation as a *verbatim* translation of the original Sepedi/Setswana or a fairly free translation thereof and could you provide reasons for your answers by referring to some examples in the text?

Answer: This is a word-by-word translation of the original. If you look at the very first sentence, the English translation does not make the meaning quite clear. This is because the word "Ka maemo" were omitted by the politician in speech and she only added it later in the correction process. If, as editor, I had incorporated the change suggested by the politician in the Setswana transcription, I would have then opted for a free English translation thereof, i.e. "There are so many things we can mention that will make women more equal with men". However, I decided to retain the word-by-word English translation of the original transcription since this is a *verbatim* version of it."

This type of informal analytical discussion often takes place between the head of the *Hansard* division and staff members of the various language clusters in attempts to clarify language issues. The degree of knowledge of the five official languages of the Northern Province varies among the staff members of the *Hansard* and Translation division of this legislature, but none of them is equally fluent in all five of the languages. It is, therefore, essential to discuss issues like that mentioned in the above example to try and gain some understanding before making judgements about the language or grammatical content of the transcriptions done in the various languages. What appears to be obvious language or grammatical errors - that appear in the English translations of such transcriptions - also have to be verified with the assistant editors of these three languages before changes can be effected.

As the extract clearly indicates, this type of discussion can be quite illuminating. In the practical situation, there is often no time for final consultations with editors or

translators. On occasion, it does happen, for example, that the head of the division decides to override the *verbatim* convention and to make certain changes which she regards as essential to improve the English translations. She then proceeds to edit accordingly to improve the grammatical structure, when such changes may well change the intended meaning or context of the mother tongue speaker, for example, the final edit of a transcription and its translation read as follows: "... when they were in the bed room a ri u ndzi langutisa yini? Wa ndzi navela? Va kona lavo antswa lava ndzi nga hlanganaka na vona hayi wena." (*why do look at me? Do you envy me? There are better women than you that I can go out with*).

The head of the division read the preceding paragraphs and, apart from correcting the obvious grammatical errors, decided from the context of the surrounding text to edit the English translation of this to read as follows: "*Why do you look at me like that? Are you jealous because I can date more attractive women than you?*"

The Sepedi assistant editor subsequently explained that the "better women" used by the speaker implied a good housewife and mother, a subordinate woman who is obedient to her husband and that, in fact, appearance played no role. The replacement of "better" with "attractive" was therefore incorrect and the assistant editor in question was annoyed that this change could reflect badly on his editorial skills.

The above example illustrates that there are often strong feelings about retaining the original words and, at times, good reason to do so.

On the other hand, there are situations where politicians will effect minor changes which editors allow even when, in comparing such changes to the recorded audio-cassettes, the changes do not exactly tally. If a politician had left a sentence incomplete in speech and then provides the missing words on the preliminary printed copy of the speech when it is sent to him/her and such a change is judged to:

- i) make the meaning of the sentence clearer; and
- ii) not add words that could lead to disputes,

the requested changes are allowed, as in the following example:

Transcription sent to politician:

"...we wish you a very long stay here but... (inaudible)"

None of the staff who listened to the audio-cassette recording could detect what had been said.

The politician sent it back with the following addition:

"...we wish you a very long stay here, but not too long!"

The assistant editor felt that it made sense in the context and it went through for printing in the latter format.

In another situation the transcription sent to a politician read as follows:

"... we are still trying to do one thing and that is to have governance in this province."

The politician changed this to read:

"... we are still trying to do one thing and that is to have better governance in this province."

The editor listened to the original recording and "better" did not appear on the cassette. The editor decided against this addition for the following reason: "The politician's original words contain a certain harshness. It sort of indicates that there is no governance in the province. This kind of statement from a member of an opposition party will certainly annoy the ruling party. If I now allow this politician to 'soften' the harshness of the original speech, by adding 'better' and the leading party's members decide to take him to task for attacking the way in which they run this province, I could get into trouble."

From the latter example it becomes clear that if the allowance of the requested changes - that differ from the recorded speech - means that the printed record of proceedings, even though it may be regarded as an improvement, means that it will no longer be a *verbatim* version, the editors sometimes baulk at incorporating such changes for fear of repercussions.

Remarks made by politicians about the reliability of *Hansard* as an esteemed record of proceedings, contribute to the unease of the editorial staff of this publication regarding the editorial licence they have, for example:

- "... and I refer members of this honourable house to the *Hansard* of September last year when I first brought the details of this issue to your attention!";

- " ... (do) the members of the House have chicken memories to forget that this issue is actually appearing in the *Hansard*?"
- "I also wish to refer the member to his own speech, read that very same day, as a response to what I have said. I think it appears in the *Hansard*."

There are also incidents, such as the one referred to in Chapter 4, where a *Hansard* publication is called on to provide evidence in disciplinary hearings of politicians.

The other side of the coin, as has hopefully been demonstrated convincingly by the extensive examples provided in chapter 4, is that the language skills and abilities of the various individuals that contribute to this publication - whether as a spokesperson, transcriber, translator or, as can be seen in this chapter, an assistant editor - absolutely necessitate a fairly high degree of editorial intervention to produce an intelligible record of the proceedings of legislature.

- Once these these final edits have been performed by the collating editor, the transcribers' names are removed and the *Hansard* is delivered to the printing company. The collating editor is responsible for checking and correcting the first proofs when these are received from the printing company. He is expected to perform this editing task along with the three editors of the other language groups to ensure that as few errors as possible slip through undetected. The same procedure is followed with the second set of proofs received from the printers.

This laborious combined editing process by the full team of *Hansard* assistant editors was implemented upon the suggestion of the top management structure of the Legislature of the Northern Province at the instigation of politicians who expressed the opinion that the *Hansard* books had contained too many errors when they passed through the hands of just one individual. It was argued that if the product were to be scrutinised by more pairs of eyes, more mistakes would be picked up and fewer complaints received about the poor language quality of this publication.

This instruction was followed for some months, after which the head of the *Hansard* division decided to become involved in the final editing task since it was felt that despite the above expectations on the part of the politicians and top management, too many errors still appeared in printed format. This unofficial and unapproved decision, taken by the head of the *Hansard* division, was also in part due to the acknowledgement by some of the assistant editors that they did not feel confident enough of their English language skills to perform a thorough and professional edit in this language which makes up the bulk of the publication.

- Of late, therefore, what was previously regarded as a final edit, that was performed by the assistant editors, has now been relegated to a "pre-final" version that undergoes an additional final editing process by the head of the division - during the temporary absence of an editor - prior to it being sent to the printers.

- The final editing of the galley-proofs received from the printers is also done by the head of the division for this interim period.⁴

5.2 Examples of the most common editing errors found in "final" collations

The types of problems experienced by assistant editors who are not mother-tongue speakers of English are plentiful. The following examples found after the assistant editors had done the final editing are indicative of the different kinds of mistakes that slip through undetected. The correct versions are supplied either in brackets or are discussed directly underneath the examples:

5.2.1 *Concord*

- "We support what honourable R have (has) said. According to this Act, there have (has) been an increase in our revenue that we collect...We can qualify for this (these) grants.
- "I will not speak for long about this (these) matters".
- "... if followed properly, we would not be having these (this) kind of problems today".

5.2.2 *Idiomatic expressions*

⁴ The uncertainty about their English language expertise, as expressed by some of the assistant editors in question, is regarded as a valid enough reason for this interference against the background of the following examples of "final" products received from the said assistant editors.

Such expressions are more often than not culture-bound and therefore sometimes provide problems, i.e.

- "... the common thread that runs throughout what I am presenting here today..."

From the context, it would seem that the intention of the speaker was, in all probability, to say "... the golden thread that runs through..."

- "...if God adds some more life to my years..."

It was probably meant to be "... if God adds some more years to my life..."

5.2.3 *Tenses*

There is a noticeable tendency with some politicians in this particular legislature to use the present/past continuous tense instead of present/past perfect. The editors often let this pass, even when the context indicates that changing it would aid the intended meaning:

i) "There are cases in this province which are involving (involve) women raping boy-children".

ii) "We have made many laws, which if being followed properly, we would not be having (have) these kind(s) of problems today".

The "being" could also have been deleted.

iii) "...the House does not provide for such a motion that is coming (comes) for the second time..."

Tenses, in general, present problems, for example:

- i) "... this process of changing...must not only be direct (directed) against men, it must also be directed against women."
- ii) "... a society that does not only places (place) individuals ..."
- iii) "When he returns (returned) with the results, he told the man that he is (was) six months pregnant."

5.2.4 *Word-order*

- "Women must not also (must 'also not) see themselves as objects of entertainment".
- "... yes, the Rules doesn't make clearly provision (don't clearly make provision) for ..."

5.2.5 *Singular and plural*

- "A new man who will change in terms of thinking; a new men (man) who will..."
- "The banks does (do) not lend money ..."
- "Many women and children has (have) suffered as a result."

5.2.6 *Gender*

- "... a new man who will take every child as his or her child..."
- "You see the mother carrying his (her) child on its (her) back while balancing a bucket of water on her head."

5.2.7 General grammatical structure

If, in the following examples, the words in brackets had been omitted and the underlined words added, these sentences could have been improved considerably, without detracting from the conventional *verbatim* requirement:

- "I think we need to educate women to (see to it that they) regard themselves as equal to men and (have) to play an equal role in developing this country rather than (to) render only entertainment..."
- "I will not speak for (a) long (time regarding) on these matters, but Aids and HIV (matters) are very important".
- "... women should be seen to (be) play(ing) a central role..."
- "And you ask yourself (as to) whether they really mean what they (are) say(ing)."
- "(To add to say) by agreeing to go back into debates on this issue, we will be setting a very wrong ...
- "... there is no point why we must entertain the motion further, unless (if) we want to take democracy too far..."

5.2.8 Spelling

- "... we should set firm precedence (a firm precedent) for generations to come".
- "...so that we can end this Aids epidemy (epidemic).
- "...in the midst of retrogressive believes, (beliefs) the on-going practise (practice) of virginity testing..."

5.2.9 Articles

- "The 21st century demands of us to build a new and vibrant society - the (a) society that does not only ..."
- "... we hold hands and give the lead and we ended up saying that's the (-) unity."

5.2.10 Prepositions

- "The struggle we are talking about is not targeted to (at) real men. Our struggle is directed to (at) animals dressed in men's clothing".
- "We know that in (on) many occasions when they call ..."
- "And therefore request on (-) you to say that this motion offends the Rules of this House..."
- "I just want to respond on (to) the arguments ..."

5.2.11 Conjunctions

It is fairly general, in speech, to start sentences with conjunctions. There is, however, very little reason to retain these in the edited transcriptions. It is not clear whether this is so often retained by the assistant editors due to lack of grammatical knowledge or an over-cautiousness instilled by the *verbatim* convention, i.e.

- "And you ask yourself... And unfortunately or fortunately... But this Legislature cannot be drawn into a debate..."
- "But the Christians of this country..."
- "Then you say that you are lowering your standards."

5.2.12 Punctuation

- "...those women become more and more impoverished because they the banks took those monies..."

Corrected to: "...those women become more and more impoverished, because they - the banks - took those monies..."

- "The other thing that I want to bring to the attention of the House is that when matters are tabled here it is the responsibility of those who want to speak to approach the Whippers not the other way round."

Corrected to: "The other thing that I want to bring to the attention of the House, is that when matters are tabled here, it is the responsibility of those who want to speak to approach the Whippers, not the other way round."

5.2.13 Paragraphs

There is a tendency to produce each politician's speech in a single lengthy paragraph:

"One might ask why I am making a point of this particular thing. I do believe that the request from farming communities who live there who experienced a lot of these problems that speed traps should be put there and traffic control measures are insufficient on that to control the number of people overtaking on white lines in particular over stretches on that road in their haste to either get to Louis Trichardt or Pietersburg. On a number of occasions government vehicles are seen overtaking on white lines without due regard for the traffic in that area. It is a specific case but it is on the increase as is evident by the number of deaths. One can see that quite clearly and we feel at the request from the community who live on that road is that they do

not feel safe because of the traffic flow. So it is requested that the MEC needs to take and make attention of that particular road in question. Mr Speaker I thank you."

This was changed into the following format:

"One might ask why I am making a point of this particular issue. It is at the request of farming communities who live there and who experience a lot of these problems. They feel that more speed-traps should be put there. Traffic control measures are insufficient to control the number of people overtaking on white lines, in particular on stretches of that road, in their haste to either get to Louis Trichardt or Pietersburg.

On a number of occasions, government vehicles have been seen, overtaking on white lines, without due regard for the traffic in that area. It was a specific case, but it is on the increase, as is evident from the number of deaths.

This is a request from the community who live near that road. They do not feel safe, because of the traffic flow."

It will be apparent, when these two versions of the above paragraphs are compared, that in the case of the second it was not only split into three paragraphs, but a number of other editorial changes were made in an effort to make it a little clearer. This meant that it was no longer a *verbatim* rendition.

5.3 Final editing

Apart from the grammatical errors discussed above, it was also disturbing to find -in the checking process - that either the assistant editors did not compare the final collated product to the recorded master copy of the audio-cassette, or they did not detect the errors, because they did not recognise them as such. This observation is based on the following types of mistakes which were found in the final edited versions that were submitted to the head of the unit as text that was ready for printing:

- A comparison of the audio-cassette and the final collation revealed that "The kind of practice, Homeopaths and Allied Health Services Second Amendment Bill" should, in fact, have been "The Chiropractors, Homeopaths ...". Although this mistake occurred several times in the same speech, it was also at times found in its correct form, which reflects an absence of mindfulness to detail.

Furthermore, a copy of the Amendment Bill, that was under discussion here, had been circulated during the legislative sitting and the correct title also appeared on the Order List for that particular day. Such documents are always supplied to the recorders/transcribers by the chamber messengers. Clearly, these documents were not consulted by the staff who did the transcriptions or the editing. This would, therefore, seem to indicate carelessness rather than unfamiliarity with the language.

- The same could be said about Allied Home Service Act which, in places, were substituted for the correct Allied Health Services Professions Act, in this same final copy.
- When the sensitivity currently prevailing around the issues of traditional healers and traditional leaders is considered, it can rightfully be expected that editors would be extremely careful in not getting these two groups confused. The two groups were, however, interchanged four times in the same text. In comparing it to the audio-cassette, it transpired that it should have been traditional leaders throughout.
- "... I want to announce to my threatened colleague here ...", as it appeared in the final edit should - as the recording clearly revealed - have been "...my friend and colleague..."
- The transcribed text of a speech made by a non-English speaking politician, in an attempt to convey the sympathy of his political party, almost led one to believe that certain politicians will always get in more than just the proverbial last word! The politician stated that "...we share those condolences that have been offered by the member that have passed away" . This error was neither noticed by the politician nor rectified by the assistant editors. When it was, fortunately, detected prior to the printing process, it was altered to read "...we share the condolences offered to the family of the member who has passed away."

- The idiosyncratic speech form of one of the presiding officers of this legislature includes the expression "for sure" which appeared umpteen times in the same transcription. This kind of idiosyncrasy serves little, if any, purpose and the fact that it was left in the text, once again, underlined the effect that the *verbatim* convention has on some of the assistant editors.

What was more confusing – on the brink of being disturbing - is that despite the numerous repetitions of these two words, it suddenly changed to "For show we should stand up and observe a moment of silence in memory of the people or persons whose death have been announced". Had this gone through undetected, the next-of-kin of the deceased would, undoubtedly, have felt rather upset if they had interpreted the moment of silence to have been little more than something done merely for the sake of keeping up appearances, i.e. "for show"! It was edited to read: "Let us stand to observe a moment of silence in memory of the persons whose deaths have been announced".

5.4 General remarks about editing

The examples cited in this chapter are representative of the errors that regularly appear in the final edited versions that are judged to be ready for printing by the assistant editors of the *Hansard* of the Legislature of the Northern Province. However, the problem is not unique to this legislature as was clearly illustrated by the numerous similar mistakes found in the *Hansard* publications of the other provincial

legislatures. Extensive examples were provided in chapters 2 and 4 to substantiate this statement.

5.5 Conclusion

It is clear that, in general, the language and grammatical quality of *Hansard* publications can be, and indeed should be, improved drastically. The following chapter explores possible solutions and offers suggestions that could be implemented by each of the legislatures of the Republic of South Africa in order to produce a publication that is of a higher standard than is available at present.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study aimed at providing a critical evaluation of the language content of the parliamentary publication, *Hansard*, in South Africa against the background of the present language dispensation in this country.

In several instances, the discussions of the problems, which the author identified as specific to this type of publication, centred on examples extracted from the *Hansard* books of the Legislature of the Northern Province. This is mainly due to the author's direct work involvement. It should not be seen as an indication that the language and grammatical standards of the language practitioners in the employ of this particular legislature are in any way inferior to those of their colleagues at other legislatures. In fact, the examples provided in chapters 2, 4 and 5 were in many instances obtained from the *Hansard* publications of various other provincial legislatures. It is, therefore, regarded as a fair and honest observation that the language and grammatical content of these publications produced by each and every legislature in the Republic of South Africa can be considerably improved upon.

The introductory chapter placed the development and reasons for the publication of this record of parliamentary debates and speeches under the spotlight. In studying the history and development thereof, it was established that *Hansard* has, since its inception in Britain in 1803, undergone numerous changes in format and purpose.

Where, at its inception, it served to inform its reading public of parliamentary information in the form of journalistic reports or items in a newspaper style, this initially perceived role and function of the publication gradually changed. In the late 1870s it became a *verbatim* record due to complaints and dissatisfaction about inaccurate reporting.

Statements made by *Hansard* editors - representing a large number of countries from around the globe - when they attended the 1999 Commonwealth *Hansard* Editors forum - referred to in chapter 2 - made it quite clear that today it is still generally expected, on a worldwide scale, that this publication should supply the **closest possible version** of the **exact utterances** made by politicians during parliamentary and legislative assemblies.

This convention is based on the fact that *Hansard* is not regarded as only a historical record, but also as a document which can be called on to provide proof of political speeches, arguments and accusations, as well as exact and detailed evidence in cases of political disputes, for example, like those referred to in Chapter 5.

On these bases, this publication continues to play a key-role as a vehicle that conveys:

- a) not only political information; but
- b) also provides a reliable record for historical purposes of parliamentary and legislative proceedings.

This study found these two main requirements to be contradictory. On the one hand, there is the demand to produce a publication that provides true and accurate versions of the spoken words of politicians, while on the other it is expected to be a publication of high linguistic standards that reflect positively and favourably on the politicians of the day.

Despite the recognition of such apparently opposing expectations, this study found that regardless of the hurdles and pitfalls created by the eleven official languages in the South African situation, the continued publication of *Hansard* is both essential and justified, due to exactly these two contradictory purposes. A record of any country's political history is required for future generations and such a record should simultaneously serve as a reference manual for politicians and a record of information for members of the voting public.

The content analyses - of *Hansard* publications produced in South Africa - that were done for the purposes of this study and which are discussed in chapters 4 and 5 of this study raised doubts about the validity and desirability of a too stringent adherence to the still generally prevailing convention of providing *verbatim* - or then the closest possible version of *verbatim* - *Hansard* reports in the present South African context.

These concerns are based on the language errors that appear in print in these publications. Although reference is made in chapters 4 and 5 to other official languages, English language errors received most of the focus of attention in this study. This is due to the fact that - as indicated by statistics provided in chapters 1 and

4 - South African politicians have a proven preference for this language although the majority of them are not mother-tongue speakers of English, yet they prefer to use this language, despite market research - provided in chapter 4 - which indicates that the largest sector of the South African populace cannot be reached by this language.

The extracts from political speeches supplied in chapters 4 and 5 provide ample proof that this preference - in many instances - leads to an incomprehensible printed version of speeches that obscures the intended meaning.

In fact, on this aspect, the contention of the author is that this continuing tendency of politicians to use English not only undermines the development of the language equity advocated by the Constitution, but in reproducing such speeches in *verbatim* format *Hansard* as a publication detracts from the underlying implication envisaged by the Constitution. It is suggested here that the status of no language is elevated, nor is the use thereof advanced, when the accepted grammatical structures inherent to a language are not adhered to.

This aspect is particularly important in view of the fact that *Hansard* publications are distributed to libraries and are read by students and the general public who, it is argued here, do not only read to obtain information, but in all probability, in many cases also to develop their grasp and knowledge of the English language.

6.2 Possible explanations for some of these findings

In considering these aspects, efforts were made to establish the possible reasons for this undeniable preference for English - a preference amply substantiated by actual measurements of *Hansard* books published by the national parliament and the nine legislatures of the Republic of South Africa - by the politicians of this country despite the provision of extensive interpreting services. In fact, it was found that this prevalence of English has impacted negatively on the expected increase in interpreting and translation work for language practitioners in this country. The anticipated volume of work - an expectation created by the promulgation of Act 108 of 1996 - in this field has not materialised to date.

Various possible reasons for this language preference were explored, i.e.

- an inheritance from the past when English was one of this country's two official languages;
- it is understood by more South Africans; and
- it is regarded as an international language, etc.

In the exploration of these possibilities, it was however, concluded that such assumptions are incorrect due to a number of factors:

- South Africa no longer has only two official languages and with the provisions of the Constitution this adherence to a legacy of the past is, in fact, a disparagement of the equality of all the other official South African languages;

- English is the mother-tongue of a mere 9% of the citizens of this country and more than 50% admitted in a survey that they find it difficult to follow English speeches;
- Interpreting services are provided and therefore politicians are assured that their messages will be made accessible to those members of their target audiences who do not understand the source language.

On this latter aspect, it has been pointed out that while this study did not aim to investigate the level of proficiency and reliability of the available interpreting services, it was established through the observation of this part of the language services provided, that in the case of the Legislature of the Northern Province there is not the same expectation of *verbatim* verbal conversions of political speeches and debates, i.e. *verbatim* interpretations. It was found, among others, that on some occasions when other languages were used in this particular legislature, interpreters had more leeway in the language conversion process with, for example, culture-specific tropes and expressions that do not at present have existing equivalents in some of the target languages.

The deduction was made that paraphrasing and the retention of the source language figures of speech were acceptable in the interpreting situation. This assumption is based on the fact that, to date, no complaints have been received from the politicians in cases where interpreters, when at a loss for the correct terminology in the target language, either

- slipped in the odd word or expression in the source language, for example "Re a bereka kua magaeng, ga re patelwe. Partnership yela..." or
- opted for paraphrasing, e.g. the politician said: "Struggle se sa rena re se lebišitše godimo ga diphoofolo tšeo di aparago marokgo tša ipitša banna gomme ka mo gare ga bona e le ditau tše di gagolago".

In the eventual translation this read:

- "Our struggle is directed at animals dressed in men's clothing and calling themselves men, when deep inside they are devouring lions." In the interpretation, however, it was conveyed as: "We struggle against animals who dress like men and think of themselves as men, but they are, in fact, lions **roaming around searching for food.**"

In the translation processes it was found, on the other hand, that language- and/or culture-specific tropes and expressions present problems due to the *verbatim* convention of this publication. Politicians not only expect exact reports of their utterances **in print**, but also *verbatim* translations thereof. This expectation is not unique to the politicians, but it was also established that *Hansard* transcribers, translators and assistant editors themselves feel a strong obligation to render *verbatim* scripts to prevent misunderstandings in, for example, disciplinary hearings of politicians or legal disputes that may draw on these printed records for evidence. Certain examples of such instances were cited to illustrate the valid concerns of these language practitioners.

Another aspect that presented itself as a problem during this research project, was that the resultant minimal editing policy - implicit to the *verbatim* convention of *Hansard* - in turn, also has a negative impact on the public image of the politicians who may be regarded as incompetent speakers as well as on the role of the publication as an educational aid to language learners.

In order to give substance to the observations, concerns and, in some instances, allegations, regarding the language quality of these publications, which are made in this study, content analyses were undertaken of *Hansard* books printed by National Parliament and the nine legislatures of South Africa. Numerous examples were cited from these sources to substantiate the initial hypothesis that the language content can, in the case of most of these publications, be considerably improved upon.

In an attempt to find a translation theory that might shed light on the most applicable approach to follow with a conventionally *verbatim* publication, it was regarded as necessary to review the development of some of the more important translation theories formulated to date, while also paying specific attention to aspects relating to translating across cultures, since this aspect plays an important role in this country. It was found that *Hansard* language practitioners in South Africa generally appear to opt for the more linguistically-oriented approach in translation.

Based on the large variety and the extent of the numerous examples of glaring language errors found, the deduction was made that in many instances the *verbatim* convention and linguistic oriented translation approach overruled the translation

process to such a notable degree that the translated version became nonsensical or clumsy, for example:

"Die fout wat ons kan maak vandag, die groot fout wat ons kan maak vandag, is wanneer die regerende party homself so postuleer dat die verdeling polities, weer op rassegrondslag geskied. Met ander woorde, swart mense sit in die regerende party en wit mense sit aan die anderkant, met hier en daar 'n uitsondering."

A *verbatim* translation reads:

"The mistake that we can make today, the big mistake that we can make today, is when the ruling party postulates itself so that the division politically, again will take place on a racial basis. In other words, black people sit in the ruling party and white people sit on the other side, with an exception here and there".

A dynamic-equivalent ("freer") translation, that captures the gist of the message, on the other hand reads:

"The most serious mistake that we could make today, is when the ruling party postulates itself in such a manner that the political division is, once again, performed on a racial basis with Blacks in the ruling party and Whites on the other side, with minor exceptions."

Examples were also provided in chapter 3 of culture-specific and/or idiomatic expressions that cause translation problems of yet another kind. In discussions with some of the translators attached to the *Hansard* division of the Legislature of the

Northern Province, it was established that, in the first instance, they do not regard their role as that of supplying their target audiences with culture-specific target equivalents of, for example, tropes used in the source language. Instead they expressed the opinion that in providing literal translations of such figures of speech, they serve the purposes of familiarising the various groups of indigenous people with each others' cultures and that this creates more effective means of understanding than searching for equivalent terminology that might be more familiar to the target text reader. From the examples found in *Hansard* publications of some of the other South African provincial legislatures, the conclusion was reached that in the case of idiomatic language, *verbatim* translations also generally triumph over culture-specific equivalents, e.g. "ke gore ga ke tsebe gore ka Sekgowa mabinagosolwa ke go reng empa ke wena mabinagosolwa (*In English, I do not know what you call those who are dancing for food on the table, but they are the ones dancing for food on the table*)".

The English translation, as it appears here, is a direct translation of the Sepedi. Yet, as the translator in question pointed out, it is debatable that a reader of the English translation, who cannot read/does not understand Sepedi, would really understand what this "dancing on the table" refers to. He explained that it is a familiar Sepedi idiomatic expression that refers to someone who arrives late and then pretends to have been present all along, for example, a late arrival at a wedding-feast who mingles with the guests as if he/she had been at the church ceremony, etc.

A step-by-step dissection process of South African *Hansard* publications was undertaken to establish the representation of the various languages of this country. In

analysing the standard of the language that appears in printed form as well as translations into English from any of the other ten languages of this country, the conclusion was drawn that various factors could be responsible for final publications that not only contain what is regarded as far too high a percentage of blatant language errors, but also translations that obscure meaning.

The editing process was then scrutinised and it was concluded that editors appear to be so intent on providing *verbatim* printed records that in many instances the final products can be described as sub-standard. Based on numerous examples of specific types of language errors it was, however, also inevitable to conclude that, in many instances, these errors indicate both a lack of proper editorial skill and care and an insufficient knowledge of some of the finer details of the languages in which *Hansard* books are printed in this country. Due to the high representation of English in these publications, the study naturally abounds with examples found in this language.

6.2 Synopsis of observations regarding problems identified

The overall impression gained from this study is that if the citizens of this country are serious about multilingualism, major efforts will have to be made by those in the language professions as well as public figures, e.g. politicians to give urgent attention to the languages in which they work and speak. One can only echo the words of Dr Neville Alexander, a well-known figure in language circles in South Africa, that it is essential to launch "a large-scale national literacy campaign" (*Beeld*, 21 October 2000:

own translation from the Afrikaans) to promote the development of all of the indigenous languages of the Republic of South Africa.

6.4 Recommendations

It has to be kept in mind that provincial *Hansard* publications represent a new concept in South Africa. No clear guidelines have been issued regarding these books of proceedings that have been produced and printed in the various provinces since 1994. Small groups of language practitioners are labouring away in the different provinces with only a very general idea as to how to achieve the desired result (and then often they do not really know what the desired result is supposed to be). This is neither conducive to the image of the provincial legislatures nor to the professional pride of language practitioners. It is essential that every aspect of the *Hansard* production process should be scrutinised if the prevailing hit or miss approach is to be rectified. In the final analysis, it is therefore suggested that:

- *Hansard* editors in South Africa should start editing these publications in accordance with generally accepted language and grammar rules and that they should not be swayed into allowing errors or sub-standard language because of the *verbatim* convention that still prevails;
- *Hansard* language practitioners, that is, transcribers, translators and assistant editors, should undergo extensive training in order to enable them to produce transcriptions, translations and edits that are of a higher grammatical standard than found in the books studied for this project;

- With regard to translations, serious consideration will have to be given to translate the various provincial *Hansards* in their totality into each of the official languages of the various provinces. Presently, this is done only by the Legislature of the Free State. Partial translations of parliamentary speeches and debates, such as those provided by the other eight provincial legislatures, render the *Hansard* inaccessible to a large sector of the voting public of any particular province who cannot read all of the provincial languages;
- In the case of the National Parliament, it is strongly recommended that *Hansard* should be translated into each of the eleven official languages of the country. Such complete translations of the *Hansard* books of the provincial legislatures and National Government, are regarded as essential in order to make political decisions, discussion of Acts, Bills and other matters that have an impact on the life of every citizen of this country, accessible to all. The financial implications hereof will undoubtedly be exorbitant, but if Government is serious about language parity and the promotion of all the country's languages, this is a matter that will have to receive attention.
- Politicians should be encouraged to use their mother-tongues rather than English. This will not only be promoting equity in keeping with the country's language policies, but as was pointed out in chapter 2, it has been found that politicians express themselves more fluently and make a better impression as leading public figures when they express themselves in the languages with which they grew up and feel more familiar with;
- A countrywide attempt should be made by every language practitioner involved with this kind of publication towards establishing uniformity in appearance and

presentation of *Hansard* books. At present these publications differ to such an extent in format, cover pages, fonts, headings, sub-headings, layout, and so forth that they cannot remotely be identified as belonging to the same species;

- A first step in this direction would be for the various *Hansard* editors to develop in-house editing and publication guidelines in conjunction with their subordinates on a provincial basis.
- This has to be followed by regular national *Hansard* editors' fora and workshops that aim at establishing clear editorial policies;
- A *Hansard* evaluation panel should be appointed to review these publications and provide guidance to the various editors and language practitioners involved;
- There should be more contact between *Hansard* language practitioners in South Africa during the interim period, either telephonically or through electronic mail, to ensure that everyone benefits from a larger pool of knowledge;
- Master copies of audio-cassettes of the *verbatim* speeches and debates, as they occurred during parliamentary sessions, should be kept in archives to provide records and proof of actual speeches and debates. In situations where such information should this be required for disciplinary or legal purposes, *verbatim* renditions could then be provided. This will have the added benefit of setting the minds of the *Hansard* language practitioners at ease regarding the verbatim convention that impacts so negatively on their transcribing and editing.

The overall finding is that *Hansard* as a publication serves a valuable and worthwhile purpose in informing the voting public of matters discussed by politicians. Linguistically and grammatically it is, however, not at present judged to be of an

acceptable standard (most particularly not in the Northern Province, as amply demonstrated in the course of the study). If the above recommendations should be put into practice, however, *Hansard* publications in South Africa could in actual fact become reading matter of importance and good quality - as well as being sensible historical records for generations to come.

6.5 Suggested future research projects

Various topics presented themselves throughout this study that could be explored in depth by language practitioners, especially those who are involved in the *Hansard* production processes, in the efforts of improving this publication. These include:

- The financial implications and feasibility of translating and printing *Hansard* in each of the official languages of the nine provinces of South Africa, as well as all of the eleven official languages in the case of National Parliament.
- The possibilities of producing video-recordings of legislative assemblies for distribution to the many remote villages of South Africa where large numbers of illiterate and semi-literate citizens live who constitute the voting populace of this country. Printed records of political debates and speeches are only of value to those who can read which means that the South African government's policy of transparency and openness fails insofar as its large percentage of semi-literate and illiterate citizens are concerned.

- The effectiveness and correctness of the *Hansard* interpretation processes, which presently appear unbound by the *verbatim* convention of its reporting and translation processes, require investigation.
- The role of the translator in a conventional *verbatim* translation situation like *Hansard* in the cross-cultural education process. Here, in particular, the viewpoint expressed by translators in chapter 4 on the aspect of the translation of figures of speech comes to mind, for example, do they provide a culture-specific idiom to make the text accessible to the target audience or do they strive to draw the target audience closer to the cultural group from which the source-specific trope originated by supplying a direct or literal translation? This topic, when seen against the background of the language and cultural differences and problems experienced by the Rainbow Nation, warrants renewed research into this facet of translation processes.

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