

Translation and the ATeLP

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present the rationale for the creation of the ATeLP – Associação de Tradução em Língua Portuguesa (Portuguese Language Translation Association) as well as its mission and objectives.

Key words: ATeLP, raison d'être, project.

The rationale

The ATeLP was born out of the desire to contribute to the advancement of translation, chiefly specialized translation, from and into Portuguese.

The motives for this decision were simple. On the one hand, translation is one of the most booming industries today and it calls for ever more highly- and widely-skilled (an apparent paradox, I know) specialists in translation. This brings a new tempo to their workplace, widens the professionals' range of opportunities and imposes exceptional and deeply challenging demands on those who wish to give them the best initial and life-long learning opportunities. In this age of greater and increasingly effortless communication, such a trend is, I believe, bound to continue.

On the other hand, Portuguese is spoken by over 200 million people every day, everywhere in the world. It is the official language of eight independent countries, Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor. And its potential for growth as a lingua franca in Southern Africa and South America, as well as in the Orient, is excellent. Wishing to promote Portuguese translation seems, thus, a logical desire.

Naturally, there were other reasons, some mere insights, others a bit more concrete.

Among the last, I could mention the visit to two types of websites: those of translators associations which every year orchestrate events attracting thousands of people either working in or simply interested in the language industry; and the sites of other organizations that, having chosen the discipline as their focal point – Mathematics or Paediatrics, for example –, carry out an inspiring number initiatives: workshops, summer schools, research, publications, competitions, prizes, the list is quite long and inspiring.

Among the insights, there was a feeling that I and my founding colleagues had that the scant events and publications about specialized translation were eagerly awaited. But not only that. There was also the realization that languages do not exist independently of people but, on the contrary, depend on them to be alive. And the conscience that translation is a stage where many actors perform, and that each one of them possesses store of information and experience which is unique, yet transmissible. And also the conviction that translation is both knowledge and a skill that grows out of the encounter of all other fields of knowledge and professional activity. And, perhaps most important of all, there was the belief that translation is at the centre of this highly complex world of *communication*.

The ATeLP was created to give life to these ideas.

The mission

It was created on the 8th of July 2005 as a non-profit making association by a group of eleven people working in different fields of translation. On that day, they pledged themselves to help implement the ATeLP's object of "cultivating, developing, promoting and disseminating information about the practice, study, teaching-learning, research and application of general translation and, more particularly, of specialized translation from and into the Portuguese language".

In practice, this means that the ATeLP envisions itself as a private, independent, cultural and scientific association. It is a private association because it believes in the generating power of private initiative. It is an independent association – independent of professions, institutions or firms – because it sees that as the best way to, unhindered, examine current beliefs and attitudes and to set off on new paths. It is a cultural association because it intends to undertake activity to disseminate, clarify and provide information about translation as well as make available resources for carrying out and studying translation. It is a scientific association because it plans to undertake research work and disseminate outcomes, edit publications, hold training courses, etc.

The objectives

From the activities we carried out to date, we highlight the launching of our website with information catered to the interests of our various publics, our presentation to the public on the 1st of May this year at Palácio Galveias in Lisbon, the agreement with the e-journal *Confluências – Revista de Tradução Científica e Técnica*, our first two *Cafés de Tradução*, and this, our first conference, **contrapor2006**. There are other activities planned for this year, such as the *Café de Tradução* in December on the topic of translation students in Portugal today.

We are indeed committed to gradually but surely accomplishing what we set out to do: to make the ATeLP a place where researchers, translators, teachers, language specialists, students, customers and translation users, translation teachers/consultants and anyone interested in Portuguese translation, especially in Portuguese specialized translation, can encounter a space for discussion and reflection. A space where they can learn more about the different kinds of translation and its rapid growth all over the world.

And we can all participate in this project. We can do so by creating a division to promote the reflection and the initiatives on a topic of our choice, whether it be a cultural, a scientific or a pedagogical theme. Or by sharing our experiences, our doubts, or the results of a project in a debate or a simple conversation. We can also contribute with information to place on the website, and even, who knows, by starting a delegation in other parts of Portugal or in other countries where Portuguese is spoken. The occasions to get involved are endless.

In conclusion, the ATeLP is open to all those who wish to participate in the interpersonal, interdisciplinary and interinstitutional dialogue that make translation such as

attractive profession and a fascinating topic of research and discussion. The ATeLP is in fact the result of such a dialogue. That is why we call it an association in progress.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



Rosário Durão holds a Masters Degree in Anglo-American Studies from the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon. She is preparing a PhD in the speciality of Translation Studies at Universidade Aberta in Lisbon. Her research interests include technical and scientific translation learning-teaching, technical writing, and technical and scientific genres. Currently, she is coordinating two post-graduate courses in specialized translation (Medical and Life Sciences, and Sciences and Technologies) at Universidade Lusíada. She founded and is chief editor of the e-journal *Confluências – Revista de Tradução Científica e Técnica*. She was a co-founder and chairs the ATeLP – Associação de Tradução em Língua Portuguesa for the period 2005-2008.