INFORMATION ECONOMICS, THE TRANSLATION PROFESSION AND TRANSLATOR CERTIFICATION

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Abstract

There have been few systematic and descriptive studies of the translation profession. As the demand for translation services has been increasing due to globalization and the development of information and communication technology, more economic and social resources have been spent on translation activities by regional and international organizations as well as multinational corporations. Besides, the status and working conditions of translators are frequently a topic of heated debate. Therefore, translation profession is a legitimate and important sub-field of research in Translation Studies.

This research uses the theoretical framework of information economics to analyze the translation profession. In particular, the economic concepts of asymmetric information and adverse selection are utilized. Asymmetric information involves two or more economic players and one of whom has better information than the other or others. When applied to the translation market, it means when translation service buyers need to recruit new translators for their work, they cannot effectively distinguish between a "good" translator and a "bad" one. Hence, they tend to pay a price that is below the level than when there was perfect and complete information. As a result, "good" translators may leave the translation profession for other professions and there will be adverse selection. It is sometimes suggested that a translator certification system, if properly designed, can act an effective signal to differentiate between "good" translators and "bad" translators.

The research questions that act as the guiding force behind this research include:
- Do certification systems have any effect on the pay and work conditions of translators?
- Are translator certification examinations perceived to function as effective signals to translation service buyers?
- Apart from translator certification, what might be possible signals in the translation market?

To investigate these questions, a triangulation method is employed in this study to investigate translator certification system and its signaling effects using a number of research procedures (corpus analysis, questionnaire surveys, an experiment using fictitious résumés and interviews). The translators and persons responsible for recruiting translators were surveyed using questionnaires, while Hong Kong was used as a case study in the analysis of job advert corpus and in-depth interviews involving fictitious résumés to examine the complex relationships between signaling devices and recruitment behaviors.

It is perhaps not surprising to find that the translation market is heterogeneous and highly fragmented and both buyers and sellers frequently enter and exit the translation market because translation is generally an unregulated "profession" and translators are an "ambiguous group". The recruiters seeking translators surveyed see translator certification as something that can enhance the overall image of the translation profession and bring benefits to translators who hold it (e.g. increase in number of job offers, higher self-esteem and respect from co-workers).

However, increased monetary benefits brought by translator certification might be minimal. The interviews with recruiters show that they still respect academic degrees as a signaling mechanism in the job market.

There are two main reasons why at present translator certification systems do not function effectively as a signal. First, high-quality translators may have less incentive to use translator certification as a signaling device because signaling behavior may mark them down as medium-quality translators. In fact, they prefer not to call themselves "translators" as for most translators, their self-image stops short of fully-fledged consultancy. The titles such as "language consultants", "language service providers" and "localizers" are preferred. This phenomenon is sometimes called "counter-signaling". Second, there is the problem of "signal-jamming". Vocation-oriented master's degrees in Translation are likely to compete with translator certification as a signaling device in the translation market. Since the difference between academic degrees and professional qualifications has narrowed, it becomes harder for employers to make inference about job applicants' employability from these two credentials. As there is a tendency for translator training schools to over-supply the translation market with academic degrees, it is likely that recruiters' respect for academic degrees in Translation will diminish as the effects of over-supply become more evident.

A number of recommendations are given to strengthen the signaling effect of translator certification system: closer coordination between certification systems and professional organizations in different countries or regions; better enforcement of professional codes and conduct regulation; more outcome-driven continuing professional development that keeps translators up-to-date with the changing workplace. More importantly, there is a need for professional translator associations, translator training institutions and other stakeholders to work together in developing multilateral signaling devices that can meet the demands of employers and clients, as well as provide professional translators with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for them to survive and thrive in the complex and ever-changing translation market.

Keywords

Information economics, information asymmetry, signaling, counter-signaling, signal jamming, professional translators, translation market, translator certification, licensing, professional associations, professionalization, translator training

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

viii

1. Introduction

Translation Studies has been quite frequently described as an "interdiscipline" (e.g. Toury 1980, 1995; Snell-Hornby 1988). Within the field of Translation Studies, there were conceptual and methodological changes in the late 1970s and 1980s. After this "cultural turn" in Translation Studies, translation started to be seen as a cultural process and product immersed in a particular socio-cultural context. Since then, the tools and ideas from anthropology (Appiah 1993), history (Pym 1998), philosophy (Benjamin 1989; Pym 2007), postcolonial theory (Niranjana 1992; Robinson 1997; Tymoczko 1999), psychology (Lörscher 1991; Jääskläinen 1993; Tirkkonen-Condit and Laukkanen 1996), sociology (Inghilleri 2005; Wolf 2006; Pym, Shlesinger and Jettmarová 2006), women's studies (Simon 1996; von Flotow 1997) and many other areas have been used to enrich the relatively young discipline, and all these areas are compatible with the Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) paradigm suggested by Toury (1995). As Weissbrod (1998) points out, it is precisely the incorporation of new perspectives that will help systemic approaches to Translation Studies to survive and strive. In this dissertation, the theoretical framework of information economics is utilized to examine the translation market and the translation profession. According to Friedman's (1953) *The Methodology of Positive Economics*, economics as a science should be free of value judgments, and a useful economic theory should be judged not by its descriptive realism but by its simplicity and fruitfulness as an engine of prediction. Because there is quite a lot of common ground between modern positive economics and DTS in methodology, the application of an economic approach can shed interesting light on the study and understanding of professional translation activities.

The study of professional translators as a research topic is relatively uncharted

territory. In the words of Chesterman (1998), "Translation Studies … [is] not concerned enough with the real problems at the messy grassroots of life in a big translation company". In its early history, translation research focused on texts, particularly literary texts (Lambert 1998). It was not until recent years that more attention was paid to the social texts in which translation activities take place. Some scholars state that a "social turn" (Wolf 2006) is emerging in the field of Translation Studies.

As compared with other professions or even semi-professions, the study of translation as a profession is still very limited (Hermans and Lambert 1998; Gouadec 2007; Dam and Zethsen 2008). This may reflect the fact that the translation profession is at an early stage of professional development. For example, Schreiber writes that "Many people still look upon us [professional translators] as, at best, semi-professionals, at worst non-professionals" (quoted in Liu 2001: 15). Bell (2000) further distinguishes between a pseudo-profession (one that resembles or imitates another profession), para-profession (one that bears a subsidiary and supporting relationship to a "true" profession), and proto-profession (one that is at an early and primitive stage of professional development), and points out that translators should "reject out of hand the 'pseudo-' label, resist the servile implications of the 'para-' label and focus on the 'proto-' to develop more sophisticated organization which will grow, in time, to a fully fledged profession" (Bell 2000: 147).

It is generally believed that there is a huge gap between Translation Studies scholars and practicing translators. Translation Studies scholars are too busy to be able to do "practical" translations, which are mostly commercial, legal or technical. Even if they do, they mostly translate literary texts, which is not the genre that most commercial translation falls into. In contrast, freelance or in-house translators almost always have to meet tight deadlines, face fierce price competition and work under pressure; they have little time and energy to reflect on their work and profession. Practicing translators

usually turn to online communities and TranslatorsCafé for exchanging information and networking. They also have their "own" magazines like *ATA Chronicle* (American Translators Association's monthly magazines), *ITI Bulletin* (the bulletin of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, UK) and *The Linguist* (the official journal of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, UK). Translation Studies scholars have conferences and academic journals that are mostly theoretically and philosophically oriented. This dissertation attempts to bring about a closer integration between translation theories and practice through the utilization of an information economics framework to study the translation profession and translator certification.

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of the research on the applications of economics in language and translation as well as academic research and non-academic discussion of the translation profession. Chapter 3 offers a theoretical framework of asymmetric information and signaling. The general effects are discussed, and attempts are made to apply them to the translators' market and translator certification system. In Chapter 4, the overall research design of the study is explained. The objects of study, definitions, research questions and hypotheses, population and sample, independent and dependent variables, procedures and data analysis techniques are discussed. The findings obtained from the research instruments include a corpus of job advertisements, two questionnaire instruments, an experiment involving fictitious résumés and interviews with persons responsible for hiring translators are described in Chapter 5. Following the research findings, Chapter 6 discusses the implications of the present study. In the final chapter, the limitations of this study and possible avenues for further research are outlined.

2. Literature review

In this chapter, the research on the application of economics in language and translation

and the research on the translation profession are surveyed. Section 2.1.1 shows that the scope of economic analysis has been expanded to include a much wider range of human behaviors and interactions. From Section 2.1.2 to Section 2.1.4, a number of microeconomic and macroeconomic studies are discussed in some detail. More specifically, in Section 2.1.5, economic studies of translation are examined but they can be criticized for being overly theoretical and abstract and fail to inform the studies of translation profession. At last, Section 2.2 looks into a number of studies and discussions on the translation profession.

2.1 Research on the applications of economics in language and translation studies

2.1.1 Orthodox and heterodox economics

What has economics to do with language? Intuitively, it makes little sense that economics and language can go hand in hand. To most people, economics, a sub-discipline of the social sciences, is concerned with issues like consumption decisions, investment analysis, government budgets and trade deficits. According to Milton Friedman, widely regarded as the most influential economist of the second half of the 20th century, "Economics is the science of how a particular society solves its economic problem. An economic problem exists whenever scarce means are used to satisfy alternative ends" (Friedman 1976: 1). More recently, a standard textbook definition of economics usually reads like this: "[T]he study of choices consumers, business managers, and government officials make to attain their goals, given their scarce resources" (Hubbard and O'Brien 2008: 4). This orthodox or mainstream definition of economics understands economics as a social science or business discipline that "deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, and with the various related problems of labor, finance and taxation" (*Webster's New World Dictionary* 2003: 207). According to mainstream neo-classical economists, an economy

4

is usually analyzed at a micro- or macro-level. Microeconomics studies how individuals, households, and corporations behave and interact under the constraints of scarcity. On the other hand, macroeconomics studies an economy on an aggregate basis. The concepts often examined include national income and output, economic growth, employment and inflation, and international trade and finance.

However, quite a number of economists believe that the scope of analysis of orthodox economics is too narrow and its analytical tools too limited. If economics is understood as the study of choice under conditions of scarcity, the economic principles can be applied to a wider range of human (or even non-human) behaviors and interactions (Hirshleifer 1985). The topics heterodox economists study include love and marriage (Friedman 1990; Grossbard-Schechtman 1993), childbearing (Becker 1981), as well as crime and punishment (Becker 1968; Posner 1992), which are traditionally more often believed to be in the domains of psychology and sociology. But this view has gained its popularity, as illustrated by the fact that the 1992 Nobel Prize in Economic Science was awarded to the University of Chicago economics (and sociology) professor Gary S. Becker, for "having extended the domain of microeconomic analysis to a wide range of human behavior and interaction, including non-market behavior" (Nobel Foundation 1992: 1).

In fact, the scope of economics has already been extended to include non-human lives. In the early 1970s, the American biologist Michael Ghiselin pointed out that biology could be regarded as "natural economy" (1974) and, more recently, as a result of the development of game theory, the relationship between economics and biology has never been closer. In game theory, the branch of applied economics that studies scenarios where players choose different actions in an attempt to maximize their returns, signaling theory has been applied to a number of biological questions. For instance, according to Grafen's (1990) model of mate attraction displays, the antlers of stags, the

elaborate plumage of peacocks and birds of paradise, and the song of the nightingale are all signals to attract the opposite sex.

The recent success of the bestseller *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (Levitt and Dubner 2005) might be another example to show that economic principles can be applied to more unconventional subject matter. The authors have demonstrated how economics can be used to explain the existence of cheating among Sumo wrestlers and the negligible effects of good parenting on education.

Some economists also criticize the strict dichotomy of micro- and macro-economics and try to put forward some alternatives. One of the more important and influential attempts is Dopfer's. Dopfer, a professor of economics at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, together with Foster and Potts, introduced the concept of "meso-economics" (Dopfer, Foster and Potts 2004). According to Dopfer (2006), if we were to merely look at the "micro-macro dichotomy, the unit proposed is homeless; it is an intermediate category that gets its place as 'meso'. Schumpeter's [one of the most influential Austrian heterodox economists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries] depiction of entrepreneurs adopting new technological and/or organizational rules that spread and become generic are of this character and it is no surprise that they are invisible in standard economic theory" (Dopfer 2006: 14) The meso-economists believe that there ought to be an intermediate level of economic analysis, apart from micro- and macro-level. This intermediate level of economic analysis studies economic organizations such as markets and other institutional arrangements. Two areas that were claimed to be in the realm of meso-economics, institutional economics and information theory, are of particular relevance to this research.

2.1.2 Economics of language: An overview

Although the study of economics can be dated back to Aristotle's (384 – 322 BC) *Politics and Nichomachean Ethics* in which he wrote about the division of labor, private property and the exchange process (Medema and Samuels 2003), it is probably Adam Smith, the Scottish neo-classical economist, who first referred to the relationship between language and economics as two aspects of the same process, human trade. This was because humans have language, whereas non-humans, thought Smith, do not trade because they do not have language (Smith 1994/1776). This view might sound a little outdated nowadays because, as discussed in Section 2.1.1, animals do trade and it is debatable to say that animals do not have "language" (see for example Friend 2004).

More recently, the renowned game theorist Ariel Rubinstein, who has made significant contributions to bounded rationality and bargaining theory, has noted, "Economic agents are human beings for whom language is a central tool in the process of making decisions and forming judgements" (Rubinstein 2000: 4). In the mainstream neo-classical economics, the study of language from an economic approach can be said to be quite recent. Some scholars (e.g. Grin 2002) argue that the economics of language as a field of research can be dated to the mid-1960s. In the 1980s, there were some studies about the style of economic arguments from a linguistic and rhetorical perspective (see for example, McClosky 1983). However, if we have a glance at most standard linguistics textbooks, it shows that economic principles are seldom mentioned, except probably in pragmatics, in which concepts like "speaker's economy" (Zipf 1949) and "economy principle" (Haiman 1983) can be found.

In Marxist economics, the studies of economics of language can be traced much earlier to V. N. Vološinov in the late 1920s. According to Vološinov (1986/1929), the socially constructed sign-system of language is in itself a material reality. Since every

7

word is a sign taken from a repertoire of available signs, the manipulation of the words contained in each speech act is regulated by social relations. In Vološinov's view, the meaning of verbal signs is the arena of continuous class struggle. Apart from Vološinov, the Italian philosopher Rossi-Landi, one of the most outstanding representatives of the school of socio-semiotics, also holds the view that the production of linguistic artifacts is homologous to the production of tools and other artifacts and one can interpret utterances and information as commodities (Israel 2002). These scholars have made significant contributions to semiotics and textual theory but it has taken quite some time for non-Marxist countries to recognize their contributions.

To sum up, according to Grin, the economics of language as a field of research can be defined as "the paradigm of mainstream theoretical economics and […] the concepts and tools of economics in the study of relationships featuring linguistic […] variables; it focuses principally, but not exclusively, on those relationships in which economic variables also play a part" (1999: 13). In his survey, commissioned by the Council of Europe, Grin (2002) identifies four main directions of research in language economics: (a) language and labor income, (b) language change and dynamics, (c) language and economic activities, and (d) the economics of language policy.

2.1.3 Macroeconomic studies of languages

There are a number of macroeconomic studies of language and communication in mainstream economics. Although sometimes criticized for their oversimplified "assumptions" and unnecessarily complicated mathematical modeling, these studies do offer some insights into the intricate issues of language and translation.

Yi and John (1997) and John and Yi (2001) make one of the few attempts to investigate the economics of language in the recent decade. Without evoking the concept of transaction cost, in which differences between languages can be

8

conceptualized as elements of transaction cost, the authors are quite correct to point out that "a society will possess more production and consumption opportunities when all its members share a common language. Neighboring societies and communities likewise have a strong incentive to utilize a common language" (Yi and John 1997: 1). English perhaps is a good example. However, Yi and John (1997) think that it is puzzling to see that more language assimilation has not occurred. Pym (1995) provides a possible solution to this apparent puzzle by pointing out that there is a tradeoff between translation and language learning in different time horizons. There are relative savings to be gained from a translation strategy in short-term situations and there are savings from language learning in long-term situations. Therefore, more language assimilation can be achievable when there are very long-term production and consumption opportunities between all members in the economic system.

2.1.4 Microeconomic studies of language

There are a large number of research studies on the relationship between language and labor income. Most of the studies on language and income come from North America, because of the huge number of immigrants there. Lang's (1986) survey, for example, discusses how imperfect knowledge of an existing language, say, Black English, can produce earnings differentials between populations. He explains that earnings differentials are not the result of any prejudice or discriminatory intent, but simply the consequence of communication costs between employers and employees who do not share the same language.

Moreover, quite significant language-based earning differentials have been shown empirically by comparing the Anglophones (people whose mother language or home language is English) with Francophones (people whose mother language or home language is French) in Canada (Vaillancourt 1996). Vaillancourt believes that language

is both an ethnic attribute and an indicator of human capital. He examines the difference in mean earnings between groups and the impact of language attributes (bilingual or unilingual) upon them. Through analyzing longitudinal census data, he finds that other things being constant, the return to knowing French in the labor market is higher than those knowing English for a given time period. In particular, bilingual Francophones have the higher mean income relative to unilingual Francophones. When income is broken down by sector, it is illustrated that there are higher returns to English in the manufacturing sector than in the services sector due to the greater significance of external (English dominated) markets. Furthermore, when language skills data is taken into account, it is evident that only those with excellent second language skills are remunerated for it in the labor market.

There is also a subfield of the economics of language, in which an economic approach is employed to investigate language changes and dynamics. The issue of a general theory of language changes and dynamics has always been a major concern of sociolinguists, particularly in the case of English (Crystal 1997, 2000; Graddol 1997). Fishman's (1991) analysis of threatened language revitalization (also known as "reversing language shift") has offered some insight into this area. One economic concept worth some discussion here is "network externality", first coined by the British economist A. C. Pigou (1999/1912). What are the network externality effects of language? Simply put, when more people use a language, the more useful the language becomes. Language is different from a cake in the sense that, when more people eat a cake, it will become smaller. According to Dalmazzone (2005), the benefits associated with the diffusion of a common language come from three different sources. The first is the reward obtained by each individual who joins a language community, and is due to the new potentials for communication thus acquired. The second source is the reward the members of a language community obtain whenever their community expands, and

is due to network externalities. Because the communication opportunities offered by the larger speech community are enjoyed by all those who have joined the network by learning that language—and the gains from the network obtained by one individual do not conflict with those obtained by others—the common language within that community is a public good. Therefore, it is the public good nature of a common language that gives rise to the externality. The third source of benefits spills over the boundaries of the speech community. The spread of a common language enhances trade, the sharing of knowledge and hence the creation and the diffusion of innovations, and it facilitates organization, coordination and management in most economically and socially relevant activities.

Another study worth mentioning is Cremer and Willes' (1991) small-scale survey of the use of language by merchandisers in trading activities in Asia. They found that trade can take place with a remarkably low degree of second-language competence among the various trading partners. This is well known from the socio-linguistic studies of pidgins (Holm 1988, 1989) but Cremer and Willes' small-scale survey does provide some useful quantified economic evidence to support this linguistic phenomenon.

2.1.5 Economic studies of translation

The application of economic principles to Translation Studies can be first found in Levý's (1967) "Translation as a Decision Process" in which he uses decision theory to study the translation process. The act of translating is a type of decision-making process, as it can been seen as a "a series of a certain number of consecutive situations—moves, as in game—situations imposing on the translator the necessity of choosing among a certain (and very often exactly definable) number of alternatives" (1967: 38). Levý argues that translation resembles a chess game, because "every succeeding move is influenced by the knowledge of previous decisions and by the situation which resulted

11

from them" (1967: 39). In this way, each time a decision is made, the translator creates the context for a number of subsequent decisions. One further important parallel between the translation process and this type of game (termed "games with complete information") is that, although the decisions are non-random, they may be inspired by subjective preferences (Gorlee 1986: 99). Levý's view that translation is a "game with complete information" (1967: 39) is quite restrictive, but his introduction of the game theoretical framework into translation theory, including the general "minimax" principle—that the translator must exert minimum effort for maximum effect—remains valid. Although Levý's model has been cited in Translation Studies literature (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997; Baker 2001), it seems that no empirical research has yet fruitfully applied his model.

It is always tempting to apply a neo-classical approach to the study of translation, in which the subjects being considered are technically egoistic (they want to obtain benefits for themselves) and rational (they can calculate the probability of obtaining the benefits and how much they might obtain). Criticisms of this model have been raised on several occasions within Translation Studies (Seguinot 1991; Tirkkonen-Condit 1992).

Pym has made a number of attempts to investigate translation problems from an economic approach. He has used translation cost analysis (Pym 1995; Pym 2004a, 2004b), which is one of the key concepts in the subfield of institutional economics in meso-economics, to attempt to provide an explanation for some aspects of translation activities. In his discussion, transaction costs can include the production, location, transfer, translation and evaluation of information. He points out that a fundamental success condition of all communication acts is mutual benefits. This theory claims to be superior to other translation theories, which either emphasize source elements at the expense of target elements or vice versa. Two-way interaction between communication

participants is considered.

More recently, Pym (2004a, 2004c) also uses the concept of risk to examine how translators make decisions when translating. Risk is defined as the probability that a particular translation option will lead to success conditions not being obtained. Language and intercultural mediators should also be trained not to expend excessive effort on low-risk or background messages. Indeed, participants of all kinds would benefit from accepting low-cost mediation in such cases. The reason is that any reduction in transaction costs increases the range of mutually beneficial outcomes.

The work of Steyaert and Janssens (1997) is one of the recent attempts to examine the role of language and translation in an international business context. The authors believe that translation should not simply be regarded as a neutral act and language learning as a technical skill. Translation can be better understood as a managerial act and language learning as a cultural production. Although Steyaert and Janssens's research paper may not be directly related to the topic of this dissertation, it does show that there have been attempts to view translation from the perspectives of economics and international business.

Robert Tamura, a professor of economics at Clemson University in the United States, provides a theoretical study of the role of translators in integrating two regions that conduct business in two incompatible languages (Tamura 2001). One of his findings is that the combined regions economize on the number of translators. His analysis, though theoretically sophisticated, is highly abstract and mathematical. It reveals little about the nature of translation and is impossible to test empirically. As Grin (1996) notes, language is a slippery subject: reducing it to a point where our mathematical tools can have purchase often results in not entirely useful exercises in formal abstraction. Moreover, in Tamura's (2001) paper, translators and bilingual individuals are used interchangeably, resulting in a somewhat naïve view of translation

13

professionals. However, this shows that the interplay between economics and translations is an area in which a lot of research remains to be done.

Zhong (2006) provides a somewhat ambitious attempt to re-establish the discourse of translation with an alternative economic framework. The author believes that economics might be a resourceful discursive bank of concepts and terms to replace the conventional narratives in translation, such as equivalence, accuracy and adequacy. However, no details have been provided about how these concepts can be applied empirically to inform the field of Translation Studies.

In discussing the federal government translation in Canada, Mossop (2006) has also noted the lack of interest in how the economics of translating affects the wording of translations and the quality ideal with which translators work. He suggests that translation should be treated as an economic end in itself rather than merely "a socio-cultural activity which incidentally provides people with a living".

Given the fact that the demand for translation services has constantly increased due to globalization, more economic and social resources have been spent on translation activities. For example, according to Juhani Lönnroth, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, in 2007 the European Union (EU) institutions spent around €1 billion on translation and interpreting, representing around 1% of the EU budget or €2.50 per citizen and the spending figure would continue to rise by 5% annually (EurActive Network 2008). Therefore, the economic analysis of translation market, no matter in the EU or elsewhere in the world, is a legitimate and necessary object of enquiry. More specifically, institutional economics and information theory are particularly useful to this end.

2.2 Academic research and non-academic discourse on the translation profession

14

2.2.1 Academic research on the translation profession: Relatively uncharted territory?

Although there are some attempts in the economics journals to research the translation phenomena, in the field of Translation Studies, very few studies about the translation profession can be found in academic journals. In Williams and Chesterman's guidebook introducing students to the basics of Translation Studies research, *The Map: A Beginner's Guide to Doing Research in Translation Studies* (2002), it is pointed out that the context in which translators work is relatively uncharted territory. One of these few attempts is Choi and Lim's "An Overview of the Korean Translation Market" (2000), published in *Meta*, in which the authors discuss the status of South Korean translators, their working conditions, translation rates and the problems they encounter. Perhaps unsurprisingly, translators in South Korea do not enjoy a high status, and "[t]he current translation fees on the Korean market are, in general, too low. A rough estimate calculated based on an 8-hour work day would set the average monthly income of a [freelance] translator at about US$1,600" (385). These descriptive statements about the translation sound reasonable, but they are also highly evaluative in nature. Some translators even disagree with these claims. For example, according to Jung, Seo and Chung (2008), the conditions of the translation market in Korea are improving due to the government's efforts to support translation and interpretation industry, professional translators' efforts to improve their status, and increase of institutions providing specialized translation trainings. Therefore, it is difficult to say which is a true picture of the situation.

2.2.1 Discussion about the translation profession found in the publications of professional translators associations and online journals

The economic aspects of translation are, however, quite often discussed in other profession-oriented publications. It is easy to understand why professional translators

15

are concerned about their pay and working conditions. Like all of us, they have to earn a living, and pay has a significant effect on the quality of translation work. Regarding why pay and other professional issues are not often discussed in academic research, Robinson (1997) points out the following, albeit somewhat jokingly: "Translation theory has always had a bit of a problematic relation with the issue of money. 'How much should the translator be paid?' may not be an appropriate question for theory to ask".

The newsletters of professional translators associations and online journals cater for a more general audience of practicing translators. Take the journal of the Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom as an example. In a recent issue of *The Linguist*, Wood (2004) discusses how there is a "lack of elementary harmonisation" in the way translators charge. He also criticizes translators associations for being "legally hidebound when it comes to setting recommended prices", resulting in "a vicious circle of underbidding and price-cutting that may never come to rest" (50).

The kind of discussion that takes place in online journals is exemplified by a number of articles devoted to the issue of payment for translators in the online Translation Journal (TJ). TJ is "a publication dealing with topics related to industrial translation and the problems faced by professional translators" (Boker 1997) and is quite widely read among translation practitioners. In one article, Tan (2000) points out that translation is among the few services where clients do not understand what they are paying for. He discusses the problems resulting from clients seeking the lowest price, one of them being the drop in the average quality of translations, which will in turn generates a higher demand for experienced translators and professional editors to "debug" poor translations. This is an apt observation but more evidence is needed to substantiate this claim.

In another article in the same online journal, Nogueira (2002) discusses how much

16

a translator should be paid. Although the discussion cannot be considered as "academic" and no references are provided, Nogueira correctly points out that "the theory and practice of translation are well served in currently available literature, the economic side, translation seen as a way to earn a living, as a professional activity, requires greater attention, attention that goes a little beyond the usual and illogical grumbles". The use of an economic framework to investigate the translation market and translation profession seems to be a fruitful avenue.

2.2.2 Discussion about the translation profession on the Internet

Since the Internet has been an indispensable component in the translators' toolbox, online discourse about the translation profession should also be looked at in order to know more about the concerns of professional translators. On the discussion board of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, threads range from an explicit discussion of translation rates to the effects of low pay for translators can be found. One translator writes, "I personally won't go down below £50 but there are some incredibly low rates offered on ProZ" (Joanna 5/0/2004, www.iol.org.uk/discussion/viewtopic.asp?id=482). (ProZ is a business-to-business portal for freelance translators and translation agencies and on-line translation portals will be discussed in Section 4.1.) Another translator voices her opinion in the following way, "… unqualified people charge much cheaper rates than trained professionals and take their work by undercutting them, in this way gives the impression that the profession is over subscribed" (Tracey 16/4/2004, www.iol.org.uk/discussion/viewtopic.asp?id=572).

Of course, comments about how translators are underpaid and undervalued can also be easily found by doing a Google search with the keywords "underpaid translators". To give just a few: "Only a lunatic would dispute the fact that translators

17

are overworked, underpaid …", "Translators, those unsung, underpaid creatures …", "It seems that Italians have many of the same issues and concerns as we in America do: translators are underpaid, undervalued; …" (search done on 15 May 2005).

The above studies can only be considered as anecdotal evidence and cannot be regarded as academic research because no scientific investigations have been involved. To represent an effort to use economic approach to study the translation profession, this thesis utilizes the framework of information economics to analyze the translator profession and examines whether translator certification can be a possible solution to some of the problems currently found in the translation market.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 A descriptive information economics framework

Information economics is a branch of economics that studies how information affects economic decisions. Here, economic decisions are not restricted to finance, government budgets and international trade; they are understood as any decisions made under the constraint of limited resources, including those conventionally regarded as non-market decisions. A key concept from information economics for our purpose is asymmetric information. In a state of information asymmetry, one party in a transaction has more or better information than the other on which to base decisions. This creates an imbalance in power, which can adversely affect the transaction. A classic example is Akerlof's (1970) case of used cars, in his seminal paper "The Market for Lemons: Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism." He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Science in 2001 for his contributions to the field of information economics.

The information economics framework is in line with the paradigm of descriptive

18

translation studies. As pointed out by Hermans (1995), descriptive translation studies "recast the field of translation studies on the model of an empirical science" (216). In this paradigm, value judgments are left aside as far as possible and explanation and prediction are emphasized. According to Toury (1995: 267), translation studies must tackle all that translation can involve, what it does involve and the reasons for this (explanation), and what it is likely to involve under given conditions (prediction). In addition to this, Chesterman (1993) points out in his paper "From 'Is' to 'Ought'" that translation studies should also cater to evaluation. It is believed the following analysis might offer some insights for improving the situation of professional translators and enhancing the quality of intercultural communication.

3.2 Human capital theory: An alternative to information theory and its inadequacies

Before a discussion on information economics can be carried out, human capital theory should be covered in some detail, as it is an influential theoretical framework for the studies and policy formulation of education, training and vocational certification.

The premise of human capital theory is that expenditures on education, training and vocational certification are investment that produce capital in human beings in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Benjamin, Gunderson and Riddell 1998). The theory was first expounded by Becker in 1975 in *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. In this seminal work, he challenged the conventional wisdom that labor was conceived as one factor of production which is homogeneous and easily interchangeable. He suggested that the stock of productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in the human body could better be understood as a form of capital called "human capital". It is similar to other

physical forms of capital such as factories and machines. One can invest in human capital through various means like education and training, and output depends partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns. It is believed that additional investment in human capital yields additional output. If the productive capabilities of individuals are effectively utilized, advantages to the individual, the organization, and to society as a whole are likely to result (Livingstone 1997).

According to human capital theory, higher education and more training lead to higher earnings and enhanced productivity, because better educated and trained individuals have improved knowledge, skills and ability to analyze problems in the workplace. In return, firms reward the employees with increased productivity brought to them by highly knowledgeable, skilled and capable employees. The credentials earned from education and training are thus important for earnings and productivity, as they convey observable information that is relevant to prospective employers.

However, there is a lot of criticism of human capital theory. For example, this theory may not be applicable in countries whose free market systems have been highly distorted. In communist societies and other forms of dictatorship, education and earning potentials are not correlated. In the former Soviet Union, brain surgeons would receive the same pay as a janitor (Rosefielde 2007). One of the more relevant criticisms is that, in the recent decades of increased globalization, a strong positive relationship between education/training and earnings seems to be lacking. Data collected since the early 1980s indicate that, although there has been an increase in higher education opportunities, average income has stagnated and unemployment rates have grown, and underemployment of educated people has been identified as a social problem (Livingstone 1997). Livingstone noted that the expansion of knowledge, the increase in on-the-job learning and the underemployment of many educated people point to the limits of human capital theory in explaining the benefits of contemporary education and

learning opportunities. Livingstone's critique has become even more relevant with the emergence of professional certifications in today's workplace. The fact that these professional certification systems often operate outside the boundaries and oversight of formal education, and the fact that corporations may be willing to pay a wage premium to recognize the certified skills set, raise the question of whether traditional academic qualifications or a professional certification should be recognized as a better signal of the prospective employee's knowledge, skills and attitudes. The preference for one type of credential over another needs to be examined before the extension of human capital theory to professional certification can be fully embraced. Part of this study provides an initial exploration into this question by examining how recruiters view professional translator certification compared to university degree.

3.3 Imperfect and asymmetric information

Despite the importance of the concept of asymmetric information, it is often confused with another related but entirely different term—imperfect information. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish among the three interrelated concepts—perfect information, imperfect information, and asymmetric information.

In economics, perfect information refers to a state of complete knowledge about the actions of other economic players. In a more temporal term, the economic decision will be updated instantaneously as new information appears. Perfect information is a prerequisite for perfect competition in neo-classical economics. In an economic model of perfect competition, it is assumed that all agents are rational and have perfect information, they will choose the best products or services, and the market will reward those who make the best products with higher sales. To put it simply, perfect

information means that *all* economic players have the best knowledge about *all* products or services at *all* times.

This assumption, if not erroneous, can be criticized for being simplistic. It might be useful to quote Hayek (1945) (though in a different context, arguing against government central planning):

> The peculiar character of the problem of a rational economic order is determined precisely by the fact that the knowledge of the circumstances of which we must make use never exists in concentrated or integrated form but solely as the dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all the separate individuals possess. (519)

Neo-classical economics got itself into trouble by assuming perfect information to begin with. Information is either imperfect or asymmetric in real life. To put it simply, imperfect information is the absence of certain knowledge about the product or service. A single person can only have imperfect information, for example, about whether a particular stock index is going to rise or fall. Risk will be involved in markets of imperfect information.

Asymmetric information involves two or more economic players, one of whom has better information than the other or others. A number of problems can emerge in scenarios with asymmetric information. The problems of asymmetric information and adverse selection are discussed in this dissertation.

3.4 Asymmetric information: The general effects

A market with asymmetric information results in a market price lower than the "fair"

price[1]. Akerlof (1970) uses the example of second-hand cars to illustrate the problem of asymmetric information. For simplicity's sake[2] and for the purpose of illustration, he assumes that, in the market of used cars, there are only two types of cars: good cars and bad cars (bad cars are called "lemons" and good cars are called "plums" in the United States). Before buying a used car, the potential buyer forms a probability distribution: a probability q that a car is a "plum" and a probability of 1-q that it is a "lemon." To put it more elegantly in a mathematical form:

$$ER = q\,R(G) + (1-q)\,R(L)$$

ER = expected return from buying a used car

R(G) = return from buying a good used car

R(L) = return from buying a bad used car

$0 \leq q \leq 1$

After owning a specific used car for a certain time, the owner can form a better idea of the quality. It is likely that a new probability is to be formed. This estimate is more accurate than the original one. This is clearly a case of an asymmetry in available information: the sellers have more knowledge about the quality of a used car than the potential buyers. Because it is almost impossible for a potential buyer to tell exactly the difference between a good used car and a bad one by just looking at them[3], sellers may sell both of them at the same price.

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[1] Fair price can be interpreted here as the price for a product or service that customers are willing to pay, on average, for a specific level of performance. It is equivalent to the economic value of the offer. To determine the fair price for a product, locate its performance score on the horizontal axis of a value map, move up vertically to the fair-value line, and move horizontally to the price on the vertical axis (Customer Value Inc. 2007).

[2] Occam's Razor states that one should make no more assumptions than needed. When several explanations are available for a phenomenon, the simplest version is preferred (MacKay 2003).

[3] An online guide to second-hand cars advised potential used car sellers to "wash the exterior" and "change the oil and oil filter" in preparation for sale (Cybersteering n.d.).

This might lead to a problem that some people may call a version of Gresham's Law[4]: Most traded cars will be "lemons," and "plums" may not be traded at all. There are two possible reasons for this. Most buyers would be willing to pay more if they knew they would be purchasing used cars of higher quality, but in general they do not have this information. However, owners who know they have good cars tend to keep them because they cannot get the price they want. The more good used cars are held off the market, the greater the proportion of lemons that are sold. This creates a downward spiral of prices, making fewer good used cars available and more owners of better vehicles discouraged from selling them.

To tackle this problem, an effective signal may be used. In the case of second-hand cars, a signal (a message that a seller sends to a buyer that conveys credible information about quality) is effective if we can use it to differentiate between "plums" and "lemons." Manufacturer-certified used vehicles might be an effective signal. Before manufacturer-certified used cars hit the showroom floor, they are thoroughly examined by qualified technicians, refurbished to like-new condition, and then backed with a comprehensive manufacturer's warranty. Manufacturers have an incentive to bring the used vehicles to like-new condition because corporate reputation is tied to the sale. In fact, according to a report by Overby (2004), the era of the manufacturer-certified pre-owned (CPO) vehicle is in full swing, and the sales of CPO vehicles have risen steadily from 816,000 to 1,400,500 all over the world. Although warranty provides a way of sharing the risk associated with uncertainty about the quality of the product (Heal 1977; Spence 1977), the use of warranties as a signal of quality is not without problem. Gal-Or (1989) found that warranties are good signals only when the intrinsic

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[4] The original version of Gresham's Law is: Bad money drives out good money. It says that the money in circulation tends to be dominated by the "bad" (debased) money. The reason is that people will spend the "bad" coins rather than the "good" ones and either hoard the "good" ones or melt them down and sell the metal for what they are worth (Rolnick and Weber 1986).

attributes of products were neither too clustered nor too widely spaced.

In the United States, all states have "lemon" laws, though they differ as to what they require dealers to do with returned vehicles. It is still possible to sell a car identified in one state as a lemon, without warning in another state (Autopedia 2007). In the European Union, a directive that took effect from 2002 forces dealers to fix defects within two years in a new car or one year in a used car (Datamonitor 2003). Consumers in Asia generally enjoy less protection, and Asian countries have only recently introduced legislation on used cars. For example, the Philippines passed a "lemon" law in 2005 to "strike a balance between the rights of buyers and sellers" (Gulane 2005).

Of course, dealer reputation can also be an effective signal. Large dealers of used cars may invest resources in developing a reputation for high-quality products. They usually spend a great deal of money on their showrooms, and some portion of their advertising can be explained as an attempt to signal product quality (Milgrom and Roberts 1986). Dealers who have spent enormous amounts on showrooms and advertising are more likely to be dependable.

The above signaling devices have been quite extensively discussed in literature on signaling theory and it is worth having a look at signaling theories and their applications in education and employment market.

3.5 Signaling and screening theories

Signaling theory was first proposed by Michael Spence (1973, 1974) and he applied this theory to job market. He suggested that prospective employees possess two types of attributes: unalterable observed attributes (e.g. age and gender) and alterable attributes (e.g. level of education). Those alterable attributes are also call signals and are subject

to change at the initiative of the individual. In fact, since modern time when education was institutionalized, education and the academic qualifications and credentials that result have long served as signals for organizations that make hiring decisions. Because employers do not have a real measure of knowledge, skills and attitudes of job applicants, they use academic qualification and other credentials as signals for making inferences about missing information (Barber 1998).

Since corporations do not have a more accurate estimate of the future employability of an employee, they may make the assumption that a potential employee who has a higher level of education possesses the qualities that may imply higher productivity. According to Benjamin, Gunderson and Riddell (1998: 322), employers use education to signal "unobserved ability" when screening employees. The signaling theories argue that individuals with higher ability are more likely to obtain higher levels of education than those with lower ability. This suggests that the level of education attainment is a reflection of the inherent abilities of the individuals.

Sometimes, a distinction is made between signaling and screening theories (Stiglitz and Weiss 1990). Their difference mainly depends on which party makes the first move in the recruiting process. In signaling models, the informed party moves first. More specifically, individuals choose to offer their services to prospective employers that value their level of education. In screening models, employers, the uninformed party, move first and make salary offers dependent on the applicants' level of education and other credentials. Traditionally, as the educational system was simpler and the economy was more localized, information on the types of education qualifications presented by applicants has been easily available, which has made the screening relatively straightforward for hiring organizations. However, the rapid increase of occupational certification systems in different professions in recent decade has left both potential employees and employers puzzled about the signaling power and the appropriate

26

screening mechanism of professional certification in relation to other more well-established academic qualifications.

An application of screening theory is the prediction that individuals who receive a recognized academic qualification will earn more than their counterparts with the same number of schooling but have not possessed the qualification. This is some known as "sheepskin effect" (Layard and Psacharopoulos 1974). This effect can be described as the wage return specific to academic qualification, rather than to accumulated years of education. Layard and Psacharopoulos (1974: 890) postulates that "wages will rise faster with extra years of education when the extra years also convey a certificate or credential". In other words, sheepskin effect refers to the difference in earnings between individuals possessing a recognized academic credential and those who do not after equal years of schooling or training. In some occupations (e.g. computer and information technology), there are debates as to whether professional certification has become the new sheepskin (Carew and Flynn 2002). Therefore, the role of signaling and screening theory can be a useful lens through which to examine this issue.

An interesting application of signaling theory to education is the realization that job applicants can also use educational requirements as a signal to gain information about what a prospective employer value (Weiss 1995). According to signaling theory, organizational preferences for professional certification or more traditional academic qualifications provide job applicants with information about prospective organizations and what types of knowledge, skills and attitudes they value (Greening and Turbin 2000). In this research, a corpus of job advertisements looking for translation-related positions will be examined to see what signals job applications in the translation market can obtain from these classified advertisements.

3.6 Asymmetric information in the translation market

Before we attempt to provide an alternative explanation using the theory of asymmetric information, it might be useful to look at the nature of translation service. In a translation service market, it is usually difficult for service buyers or clients to assess the skills of a translator before any business relationships have been established. This is particularly true if we take into consideration the fact that the turnover rate for freelance translators is high, as there are many service providers entering and leaving the translation market. Most of the time, service buyers or clients can assess the quality of translation only after they receive the translation or when the translation is used in actual communication acts for various purposes. Therefore, like used cars, food and expert advice, translation service is an experience good which is distinguished by the fact that "its quality, and hence its value to consumers, cannot be precisely determined by buyers at the time of purchase" (Moav and Neeman 2004: 1).

In practice, clients can ask potential translators to first translate a small sample. However, experienced translators might not be willing to carry out a test translation, and quite a few translators point out that agreeing to do these tests will be detrimental to the professionalism of translators. "If you were going to contract a builder to build you a house would you ask them to build you a garage for free as a test of their competence?" (Hernandez, quoted in Protopopov 2007). Some translators (for example, Gerasimov 2001) even suggest that test translations are practically useless and should be ignored. Firstly, there is no guarantee that this small sample of test translation will be a valid and reliable representation of the whole, "because any rookie can hire a seasoned ace to do or edit the test translation" (Gerasimov 2001). Secondly, it is questionable whether the translation service buyers have the expertise to assess and evaluate the test translation. Josephine Bacon, who has worked for 38 years as a technical translator, when referring

to test translations, contends that "they are useless and they are only used by agencies that know very little about translation" (quoted in Protopopov 2007).

It may be helpful in this regard to note the difference between translation and interpretation, which is less an experience good but more a search good. Search goods can be inspected prior to purchase. Take conference interpreters as an example. Their performance in the glass booth is easier to monitor than that of translators working freelance at home. As the quality of conference interpreting is easier to observe (but of course there are still methodological issues with regard to what constitute "quality" [Kopczynski 1994; Shlesinger 1997]), the entry into this segment of interpretation market is relatively difficult. In the interpreting profession as a whole, there are a lot of debates regarding the question of quality in different types of interpreting: community interpreting (Pöchhacker 2001), court interpreting (Morris 1995), and medical interpreting (Flores 2005), to name just a few.

In the translation market, apart from the translation agencies which predominantly use freelance translators in their operation, due to globalization and more international marketing opportunities, there is also an increasing number of clients who need the translation services. However, because of the asymmetric information problem previously illustrated, translation service buyers cannot effectively distinguish between a "good" translator and a "bad" one when they need to recruit new translators for their work. Therefore, they tend to pay a price that is below the "fair" level. It is worth pointing out that we are assuming a fixed number of translators in the market and it needs to be pointed out that the terms "good", "bad" and "fair" are for illustration purposes only and based on operational assumptions. Let us assume good translators are worth $10 for a certain number of words and bad translators $5. As clients do not have complete information about the quality of translators they first work with, they are only willing to pay according to a certain probability distribution. Assuming a probability of

29

50% for both types of translators, i.e., half are good and half are bad, clients are only willing to pay $10(1/2)+$5(1/2)=$7.5. (This distribution is actually a little conservative. We often hear complaints about poor translations, but good translations are seldom praised.) Therefore, the probability that clients will expect a translator to be bad might be higher than 50%, and the price paid may thus be even lower, for instance, $10(1/4)+$5(3/4)=$6.25.)

One result is that most good translators will leave the market and only poorer translators will stay. This phenomenon is "adverse selection" (see for example, Stiglitz and Walsh 2000). In the illustration above, good translators should be paid $10 but they receive only $7.5 because of the asymmetric information problem.

Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that quite a number of translators will stay in the market because they find the work fulfilling for non-monetary reasons. This is particularly true in the field of literary translation. Literary translators are usually paid much less than are technical and financial translators. Clifford Landers, author of *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide* (2001), when discussing the reasons for doing literary translation, writes:

> [M]oney…has been omitted from these deliberations because if it's your primary motivation for doing literary translation, you should choose another field. Much greater monetary compensation can be had in any of the other areas of translation;…… While it's a cliché that literary translation is a labor of love, basically it *is*. (2001: 6, emphasis in original)

Therefore, we hypothesize that Gresham's Law and adverse selection to a great extent apply in the commercial translation service market. Many highly skilled translators set up their own agencies and then farm jobs out to freelancers. In this case, the former devote more time and effort to project management and marketing than to translation

work. However, some translators might acquire further academic qualifications and become translator trainers, as teaching usually gives them a more stable income and probably a higher status.

3.7 Possible signals in the translation market: Translator certification

Translator certification has long been an issue of concern in the translation profession. As Chriss (2007) has noticed, translator certification "has been regularly discussed, and even hotly debated, among translators, at translation and localization conferences, and even in the federal and state government" of the United States.

In an online symposium in January 2000 organized by the Intercultural Group of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain titled "Innovation in Translator and Interpreter Training", most discussants agreed on the importance of accreditation and certification (Dimitrova 2000). Most of them believed that it would lead to the professionalization of translators, improving pay and working conditions, as the development of well-established profession prototypes like doctors, lawyers, and accountants has shown.

It is worth pointing out that these professional services require a license, not a certification. Licensing of translators is practical only under very specific circumstances (e.g., court interpreting), whereas lawyers and doctors have to have a license if they want to practice at all. This shows an example of confusing licensure with certification.

Some view the licensing of doctors and lawyers as a means to restrict entry into the market, thus creating a monopoly. The institutional barriers to entry preserve the average quality of the service and raise the rate of return of the profession up to "supernormal" levels. Here, a supernormal-level rate of return is one that is above the

perfectly competitive rate. In fact, as early as the late 18th century, Adam Smith pointed out that:

> The exclusive privileges of corporations, statutes of apprenticeship, and all those laws which restrain, in particular employments, the competition to a smaller number that might otherwise go into them, have the same tendency, though in a less degree. They are a sort of enlarged monopolies, and may frequently, for ages together, and in whole classes of employments, keep up the market price of particular commodities above the natural price, and maintain both the wages of the labour and the profits of the stock employed about them somewhat above their natural rate. (1776/1981: 7).

Economic analysis has shown that such monopolistic efforts benefit private interests at the expense of public interests (Harberger 1954). The argument against a monopolization of goods and service provision is that it restricts total output below competitive levels. In the absence, or because of the ineffective exercise of market power, price will be greater than marginal cost, which may lead to a misallocation of valuable resources in the economy. An optimal resource allocation solution will not be attained, and this calls for an anti-trust solution.

The case in the United States is an example (for details, see Hammond 1994). Before the 1990s, discussion of prices and money matters was commonplace. For example, the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) published a list of recommended prices for its members. The American Translators Association (ATA) had a Rate Guidelines Committee (RGC) that once a year published a list of fees that it recommended translators to consider. In 1990, almost all major translator and interpreter associations in the United States became the target of anti-trust investigations by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), whose objective is to work to

eliminate unfair or deceptive marketplace practices. By 1994, at least two of the organizations, the American Association of Language Specialists (TAALS) and the American Society of Interpreters (ASI), had signed consent decrees in which, according to the press, they agreed to stop any meetings at which two of those present mentioned rates. The ATA's board had approved a strict anti-trust policy seven months before the FTC investigation began, and thus in March 1994, the Commission decided to close the investigation. However, it should be pointed out that the FTC issue is relevant to the United States only. In many countries, professional translator associations (e.g. Institute of Translators and Interpreters, UK [Aparicio, Benis and Cross 2001]; Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario, Canada) publish recommended rates for translators.

Translator certification, in contrast, can be viewed as a signal of good translators instead of an attempt to monopolize the market. If devised and implemented in a valid and reliable manner, certification could act as an effective signal to differentiate good translators from bad ones. The United States (American Translators Association) and Britain (Chartered Institute of Linguists) have developed systems for translator certification. In the People's Republic of China, an attempt was made by the Ministry of Personnel to devise a national certification system for translators in 2003, called China Aptitude Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI). CAATI was modeled after the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), an Australian government-owned company, which has been certifying translators and interpreters since 1977.

Of course, designing an effective certification system is more easily said than done, and quite a number of authors have argued against such a system. For example, Chriss (2007) points out the difficulties in evaluation and the enormous costs involved in making the system "widely recognized and accepted as a sign of superior quality, as for

instance ISO-9000 certification is within some industries". As a translator, he prefers the status quo of the translators' market being a gray market. In fact, the translation market is an unregulated one as there are no obligatory tax declarations for all jobs. In an unregulated translation market with asymmetric information, it is no wonder that recruiting quality translators may be a problem. Bonthrone (1996) argues that "processes are easier than people" and consistent and acceptable translation output quality can be achieved most effectively through process-oriented quality design and standardization procedures. No certification system can claim to be perfectly valid and reliable but, as with other standardized tests (for example, Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL] and International English Language Testing System [IELTS] in foreign language testing), certification should always be dynamic and constantly changing to respond to evolving market and social demands. As the online symposium held by the International Studies Group of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain concludes, "The criteria for accrediting/certifying translators/interpreters are not universally given, but to a large extend depend upon who does the accrediting and what its purpose is held to be". Therefore, it can be said that certification of translators is not a complete solution to the problem of asymmetric information but nonetheless offers a signal that may help buyers of translation services to determine the quality of translators.

3.8 Possible signals in the translation market: Specialized MA Programs

To obtain an academic qualification through completing a translation program can be another possible signal to denote a translator's quality in the translation market. Caminade and Pym (1995) list at least 250 university-level organizations in over 60

countries offering four-year undergraduate degrees and/or postgraduate courses in translation. Since this survey was taken more than a decade ago, there are now much more translation programs offered by translator training institutions in different parts of the world. According to the list of American Translators Association-approved translation and interpreting schools (2008a), there are 539 educational institutes offering translation and interpreting courses in 73 countries ranging from Algeria to Zimbabwe. This shows that the number of university-level translation and interpreting programs has more than doubled in the past decade. Besides, the increase in translation programs has also drawn much attention within the translation profession. For example, in the 18th Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs World Congress held in Shanghai, China in 2008, there was a workshop specifically devoted to the recent surge in the number of Master of Translation and Interpreting programs in different parts of the world.

According to Caminade and Pym (1998), there has been a dramatic rise in the number of university-level institutions offering degree or diploma programs specifically in translating and interpreting in the first half of the 1990s. While citing the "market demand for translators" as a reason for this rapid expansion of post-secondary educational and training opportunities, they are cautious to point out that "the worldwide growth in youth unemployment has also created a demand on the part of students in search of jobs". This echoes the assertion of Livingstone (1997) cited in Section 3.2 that the underemployment of educated young people has become a social problem.

In British universities, most of the career-oriented postgraduate Translation Studies programs are offered by the "new" universities which are formerly polytechnics and generally believed to be more market-oriented (Naudé and Ivy 1999). For example, the University of Westminster, which offers an MA in Interpreting, Translation and Diplomacy, was formed in 1992. It predecessor is the London Polytechnic, which itself

is a merger of the Holborn College of Law, Languages and Commerce and the Regent Street Polytechnic in 1971. As stated in its course description, this MA program targets at "government interpreters and translators" and students will "write on a subject related to their own professional interests" (University of Westminster 2008).

In continental Europe, more MA degrees have been offered because of the Bologna Accords, which have made academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe. The European Commission' Directorate-General for Translation (2006) even issued a guideline for curriculum planning, assessment and comparison of master's programs in translation in Europe but it is not without criticism (see for example Pym 2008). Besides, a number of universities in Europe have utilized the new Internet technologies to cater for the learning needs of working translators throughout the continent. Examples are the Online Master's Program in Audiovisual Translation offered by the Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona, the Online Certificate in Technical Translation and Electronic Tools offered the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain, and Distance Master's Program in Specialized Economic, Banking and Financial Translation offered by the Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy (see Schmit 2006 for a list of these programs).

Although it may be argued that the mushrooming of these specialized MA programs in translation shows that higher education has become more vocation-oriented, it is also true that, as a result of an increasing number of would-be translators, the graduates of these MA programs might offer a better signal to the prospective employers.

In fact, some universities have started to include an element on the translation market in their curriculum, either formally or informally. My personal communication with a lecturer at Universidad Alfonso X (Calvo 2005) reveals that there is a module on the translation market and translator employability in that university. Also, Imperial

College London in the United Kingdom has organized professional seminars for their MSc graduates in scientific, technical and medical translation with translation technology. For the Master's Program in Translation and New Technologies offered by the Universitat i Rovira and Virgili in Tarragona, Spain, there is also a module called Concepts and Realities which deals specifically with the translation market. These efforts seem to be geared towards making students more employable so that they may send better signals to prospective employers when they enter the job market.

As demonstrated above, the descriptive information economics framework can be a useful tool for our research. Therefore, concepts like asymmetric information and signaling will be used in this research to study the translation market, translation profession and translator certification.

4. Research methodology

This chapter describes the overall research design of the study. The objects of study, definitions, research questions and hypotheses, population and sample, independent and dependent variables, procedures and data analysis techniques are discussed. A corpus of job advertisements, two questionnaire, an experiment involving fictitious résumés and interviews with persons responsible for hiring translators are also described.

4.1 Objects of study: The translation profession and the translation market

The objects of this research study are the translation profession and the translation market. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2007), a translator is "one who translates or renders from one language into another." However, in real life, people involved in translation work may not have the job title of translator. They may be called

communication officers, editors or sometimes secretaries, personal assistants, etc. Conversely, translators may be asked to work on transcription, editing, terminology management, rewriting, and desktop publishing. Because translators have to play so many roles in a language service market, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the translation market is heterogeneous and highly fragmented. Here, we take a more liberal definition and the translation market includes all translation-related work translators do, for example, editing, proofreading, revision, transcription, subtitling, voiceover, localization, desktop publishing and terminology work.

How large is the statistical population of our study? There are a number of business consultancy reports on the scale of different translation markets. We can take a look at Europe, one of the hubs of translation. As a result of the increasing integration of European countries, the demand for translation services has increased drastically. *The European Translation Industry—Facing the Future*, compiled by Boucau (2005) and published by the European Union of Associations of Translation Companies, has shed some light on the scale of the translation industry in this region. In the report, the European translation market was estimated at €5.15 billion for 2004 (forecast) according to Allied Business Intelligence (1999). Other sources provide different estimated figures: €2.85 billion for 2005 (Common Sense Advisory 2004) and €4.78 billion for 2004 (not including interpreting) (Bureau van Dyck 1999).

There are a few points worth discussing here. First, there are no reliable official statistics for translation services. We have no choice but to rely heavily on forecasts. In the above, two of the figures are compiled by private consultancy firms that depend for much of their data on econometric estimates. They estimate something called the latent demand (also known as potential industry earnings). According to Parker (2005), latent demand is defined as "the industry earnings of a market when that market becomes accessible and attractive to serve by competing firms. It is a measure […] of *potential*

industry earnings (PIE) or total revenue […] if a market is served in an efficient manner. It is typically expressed as the total revenues potentially extracted by firms" (10, my emphasis). In other words, the latent demand is not observable or yet realized, and as one may be able to deduce, latent demand can be "either lower or higher than actual sales" (ibid. 10). Although we cannot accuse these reports of being pure guesswork, they must be used with a great deal of caution. For example, it seems that these business estimates attempt to exclude translations that do not go through companies (i.e. freelance translators working directly with clients). However, this segment of business should be included in this definition of the market as it is on this level that the problem of asymmetric information seems to be most serious.

Another point needs to be noted is that the last source of our data, the study conducted by Bureau van Dyck (1999), is based on questionnaires rather than estimates. This reveals the problem of the small-scale sample. Let us look at Canada, whose translation demand is to a large extent spurred by the use of both English and French as official languages. In *The Survey of Language Industry Companies in Canada—Translation, Interpretation and Language Training*, which is based on a survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 2005, of the 874 establishments invited for the survey, only 312 (37%) responded. There are some usability problems with surveys with a small sample size, and their statistical significance should never be overestimated. One possible solution might be triangulation, i.e., the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. This is exactly our research intends to do.

Despite the fact that we have no way to gauge the exact size of the translation market, there is almost a consensus that it will continue to grow. According to the report on the European translation industry compiled by Boucau (2005), the translation sector is and will remain a high and continuous growth sector. However, he also notes that between 2000 and 2005, there was intense competition between translation companies,

and a significant and continuous erosion of margins. This keen competition seems to be quite an accurate description of the phenomenon in other parts of the world as well. These phenomena in the translation market are to be investigated in this research.

Although this dissertation does not aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the vast terrain of the translation market, any such attempt will be futile without a discussion of the concept of localization. For most people, localization is often referred to as the translation and adaptation of software, hardware documents and online products. However, localization should be understood as a more general concept. According to LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association), a non-profit organization for companies in the localization industry to exchange information and best practices in order to develop localization business, localization is defined as "the process of modifying products or services to account for differences in distinct markets" (LISA, 2003). These distinct markets are often called "locales" and localization usually involves translation and changes to fonts, keyboard usage, and date and time formats. The development of the localization industry has been closely connected with the spread of computing, in particular the popularization of the personal computer and the Internet.

The same data problem also exists in the localization industry. The *Localization Industry Primer* (LISA 2003) mentions a number of key reasons for this problem: the relative youth and dynamic growth of the sector, its global reach and heterogeneous nature, and the small size of many players. More importantly, the reliance on outsourcing and subcontracting within the localization industry may lead to double counting. LISA have said quite bluntly that "… past market estimates and surveys have generally failed to agree on a standard definition of the localization industry and process, making correlation difficult" (LISA 2003: 18). The same caveat is applicable to the more conventional translation market. Besides, quite a large percentage of these outsourced and subcontracted jobs are likely to go to freelancers working directly with

clients and the issue of asymmetric information seems to be much relevant. Therefore, the translation industry surveys can only provide snapshots and/or basic information on the translation market, and full statistical significance should not be assumed.

On a more optimistic note, the limited data available do provide some interesting snapshots of the translation market. One interesting phenomenon that has emerged as a result of globalization is the electronic market for translators and it is closely related to the development of e-commerce. Regarding this aspect, there has been some discussion in the field of Translation Studies. For example, about a decade ago, O'Hagan (1996) predicted that the future of the translation profession itself lies in the appropriate utilization of global telecommunications. In a more recent book, O'Hagan and Ashworth (2002) further forecast that the translation industry is likely to see more dramatic changes. They argued that the distinction between text and speech, translation and interpretation, is likely to become increasingly blurred as technology brings translation into situations where it must serve to facilitate textual communication in a time-frame approaching what is traditionally associated with interpretation.

Globalization, as mentioned above, is definitely not a brand-new phenomenon. In *The Communist Manifesto* published in March 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels commented on the globalization of the market economy:

> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. … In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. (2005/1848, 44–45)

Globalization, whether we are talking on an economic level or a cultural one, has opened up more cross-border business opportunities for the translation industry and

41

potentially more jobs for translators. However, quite a lot of translators tend to think that the globalization of the translation market has led to more undercutting price competition. It is not surprising to find companies that outsource their translation business to countries like India and the People's Republic of China. For example, the website of a translation company in India boasts of its ability to "cut down the project expense to incredible [sic] level" (Lyric Lab 2006).

Electronic commerce, or e-commerce, emerged not long after the advent and popularization of the Internet, the World Wide Web, and electronic mail in the 1990s. According to Till (1998: 9), "[E]lectronic commerce covers any form of business or administrative transaction or information exchange that is executed using any information and communications technology (ICT)". To many people, e-commerce simply means buying a book online at Amazon.com. To be more exact, this is one type of e-commerce, called business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce, the online commercial activities of corporations serving end-consumers with products and services.

The focus of this discussion, however, is not on B2C but another type of e-commerce, B2B (business-to-business). A pricing mechanism called "reverse auction" (Shrivastava, Gupta and Mohapatra 2007) is highly relevant to this type of e-commerce. Reverse auction is called procurement auction or e-sourcing. It is an auction in which the usual roles of buyer and seller are reversed. In a reverse auction, a company specifies its needs and finds the lowest bidder from among suppliers. This process is usually carried out on the Internet and will be elaborated in a later paragraph.

The segment of B2B that is of particular importance and interest to the translation profession is the online translator marketplace. We are aware of no comprehensive survey of this topic, but almost all translators are aware of the opportunities (and arguably benefits). According to one translator and owner of a translation company, "I would estimate that over 40% of my freelance work comes from net-related sources.

42

That is, either people found me or I found them on the net in one way or another"
(Eames 1999). However, this "new" technology is not without problems or challenges
related to cost, quality and tight deadlines. Ruppaner-Lind (2000: 3) writes, "It did not
take very long to get the impression that in many cases the [translation] agencies were
looking for real cheap translations or were desperate to find someone to translate this
difficult project with an impossible deadline (6,500 words by tomorrow, please)".

Table 1 gives a glimpse of what the online translator marketplace is like. The data
are from August 2008.

Table 1: Online marketplace for translators

Name	Date founded	Number of registered members	Remarks
Proz	August 1999	180,000	Free regular membership and platinum membership
TranslatorsCafé	August 2002	54 000 registered linguists and 4 500 translation agencies	
Trally Translation Portal	Not known	40 000	Three levels of freelancers, agencies and clients. Level 1 is free-of-charge
Aquarius	Not known	35 000 registered members	
Language123	September 2004	12839	Free standard membership and premium membership
Experts on the Web	Circa 1999 (closed)	2 700 (?)	
Babelport	February 2005	Not known	Premium membership
Go Translators	November 2003	Not known	
Linguist Finder	2003	Not known	Free membership but 15% commission on bookings
MyConduit.com	September 1999 (closed in January 2001)	Not known	
Translators Base	February 2003	Not known	Free membership
Translators Planet	2003		Safe Escrow System: Companies have to make

			non-refundable up-front payments to translators
Translation Town	2002		Annual registration fee €45 and €2 per translation project quote

Website information retrieved August 2008

The information in the table may not be exhaustive. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of these companies only exist virtually; they are clicks but not bricks; they may vanish in a few years. For example, MyConduit.com, established in September 1999, once claimed to be "the world's largest Web-based translation services marketplace" (*Adlands' Digest* 1999), but it no longer exists as of January 2001. Another portal, Experts on the Web, which once had a database of over 2,700 professional translators (Eames 1999), terminated its business after nine years of operation and announced that they were unable to make a viable business out of the website and could not afford to continue operations.

The members of these online portals come from different parts of the world. Take ProZ, one of the oldest and largest of the linguistic B2B portals, as an example. A lot of its subscribers live in North America, Europe, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand, and East Asia. This confirms the earlier observation that the translation market is globalized and competition of any kind is on an international level.

The form of price competition in the online marketplace is reverse auction. In a normal auction, there is one single seller and many potential buyers bidding for the item being sold. Bidding for collectibles on e-Bay is an example of this. However, translation jobs posted on these online portals are allocated using reverse auction, a form that has gained popularity since the late 1990s as a result of the emergence of Internet-based online auction tools. The auction is called "reverse" because suppliers respond by bidding for a customer's business (McKie 2001). It involves one customer and many

suppliers. The customer specifies what he or she wants to purchase (number of words/pages, field/specialty, turnaround time) and offers it to many suppliers. The bid with the lowest possible price will usually be chosen if the customer cannot extract any information about the quality of different bidders.

What kind of service do these online portals provide? We can consider B2B market makers as third-party intermediaries whose primary purpose is to match buyers and sellers. They typically take a fee, make a spread or receive commissions (e.g. Linguist Finder in Table 1) for their services (DeMaio 2001), or collect membership dues. For example, ProZ.com charges platinum members US$120 a year, and Language123 charges US$119.95 (this shows how competitive the market is). Of course, some of these online portals also use banner advertisements as another source of income.

These online portals also function as a form of virtual community, which is definitely worth our attention. According to Hagel III and Singer (1999: 88):

> Virtual communities create environments to facilitate and enrich such connections by integrating published content, communication resources (bulletin boards, chat rooms, and e-mail), and commerce capabilities relevant to these areas of interest. Rather than focusing bilateral communication (between the organizer and each member, or between specific vendors and each potential customer), virtual communities generate a rich web of personal relationships among the members themselves.

In virtual communities, trust is of great importance. Trust can be defined as "an ongoing interaction that establishes and maintains confidence between or among entities" (DeMaio 2001). In fact, trust is becoming more important as our world has become more globalized. Francis Fukuyama (1995), the American philosopher and political economist, holds the view that the future of our economy and society lies in the

network organizations (the online marketplace for translators is an example), and this will give a natural advantage to those communities (including virtual communities) that have a high degree of social trust. In the case of translation, Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) use empirical evidence from interviews regarding the roles of trust, loyalty and social capital in online translator marketplace with six Finnish translators and find that (a lack of) trust may be the Achilles' heel of these economic networks.

There are a number of ways for these online portals to maximize trust and minimize risk. For instance, ProZ.com signed an agreement with VeroTrust to offer identity verification services to translators and their clients. VeroTrust is an independent information and risk-management company. With its TrustIdentity product suite, VeroTrust provides a service that enables translators and those wishing to use the services of translators to transact online with the confidence of knowing they are dealing with someone whose identity has been verified by an independent third party (*Yahoo! Finance*, November 20, 2001). Therefore, this shows that asymmetric information is a genuine problem in the virtual world of the Internet and there are incentives for different parties to invest resources on creating effective signals to facilitate transactions.

To further build trust in the community-based marketplace, ProZ also offers a point-based system in which translators can ask each other for assistance in translating terms. Those who receive KudoZ points may be seen as having expertise, which sends a signal to future clients (*Multilingual Computing and Technology*, March 2000). On Babelport, there is a similar Freelance and Agency Rating System to provide more transparency and trust in the translation industry. Registered Babelport members can gain two kinds of points: AP (Activity Points) and XP (Experience Points). Activity points are awarded whenever a member participates in babelport.com, i.e., by rating an article or an agency, by answering or rating TransHelper Questions, or entering a new

Online Dictionary. Experience Points can be gained by rating glossary entries, articles, freelancers or agencies, and when the person asking the question accepts one's TransHelper answer. The illustrations shown here point to the fact that although translation service buyers in general look for the lowest procurement price, they will also consider the quality factor, as in the long run a poorly done job will end up costing more. Hence, the translation service buyers in the electronic marketplace have a demand for market signals due to asymmetric information.

However, there are still quite a number of clients who prefer to work with someone they know or someone who has been recommended by someone else rather than going to the electronic marketplace. This is because reputation or words-of-mouth can also to some extent act as a signaling device. And according to Shapiro (1983), for products whose quality is difficult to observe prior to purchase, most buyers are willing to pay a premium for the seller's investment in reputation. This reliance on words-on-mouth on a local scale shows that e-trust needs to be further develop if the translation market is to achieve further growth.

4.2 Definitions: Certification and accreditation

Licensure and certification has become a topic of interest both in the workplace and research community in recent years (see for example Schoon and Smith 2000; Jin, Kato and List 2006). Some people support the idea of licensure and professional certification, stating that it is a stage of professionalization. For instance, Shanahan, Meehan and Mogge (1994: iii) points out that one of the possible definitions of professionalization can be "the process of using education and certification to enhance the quality of performance of those within an occupational field". Others mock it as "alphabet soup" (Stephenson 2002; Dale 1999) as the sheer number of designations has created

confusion among employers and service buyers. In the financial profession, there are at least nine certification systems (Investopedia 2008) and in the IT profession, there are about thirty-seven vendor-specific certification systems. Despite this contention, certification and accreditation can be important signals to the translation service buyers.

The terms "certification" and "accreditation" can cause confusion, so clearer definitions might be useful. As Stejskal (2003a) points out, accreditation is "not the most accurate way to describe qualifying an individual person… [The term] 'Accreditation' is used for a conformity assessment process for systems, organizations, or institutions. Certification, on the other hand, is a process by which an organization grants recognition of a certain level of competence to an individual who has met predetermined qualifications". In Stejskal's (2004) more recent international study of translator certification, the process of certification, accreditation and licensure is clarified:

Certification: A voluntary process by which an organization grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualification standards.

Accreditation: A process by which an entity grants public recognition to an organization such as school, institute, college, program, facility, or company that has met predetermined standards.

Registration: A process by which the possession of specific credentials relevant to performing tasks and responsibilities within a given field is verified.

Licensure: A mandatory credentialing process by which a government agency grants permission to persons to engage in a given occupation or profession by attesting that those licensed have attained the minimum degree of knowledge and skills required.

Of these processes, registration is the weakest, as it only entails the verification of specific credentials. Licensure is the strongest, as it is a mandatory process before a translator can practice.

In an edited volume that investigates in some depth the purposes, procedures, and practices of licensure and other related concepts such as registration and certification, Schmitt (1995) also agrees that there is frequent misuse of the terms. For example, "registered" nurses are in fact licensed, as are "Certified Public Accountants". His remark on certification is that it is a form of title protection and recognition to individuals who have met predetermined requirements. Non-certificated individuals may offer similar services to the public, provided they do not describe themselves as being "certified". He concludes that "a precise distinction among registration, licensure and certification will probably never be achieved because of the way in which the meanings of the terms have been interchanged" (Schmitt 1995: 19). His distinctions between registration, certification and licensure are particularly useful. It is reproduced in Table 2.

Table 2: Distinction among registration, certification and licensure (Schmitt 1995)

	Competency standards	**No competency standards**
Mandatory	Licensure	Registration
Voluntary	Certification	—

Here, competency standards include specified educational qualifications, professional work experience, and/or examination requirements prior to licensure or certification.

The supporters of certification believe that certification organizations have an

important role to play. According to the National Commission for Certifying Agencies in the United States:

> A certification organization that conducts a certification program or programs that evaluate the competence of practitioners has a responsibility to individuals seeking and holding certification, employers of those individuals, agencies, and customers that pay for or require the services of the practitioners, and the public. (1996: xiii)

However, some critics of licensure and certification believe that neither form of regulation achieves the stated objective of public protection. Both mandatory licensure and voluntary certification are perceived as self-serving to those who are able to meet the imposed standards and have received licensure or certification. According to Hogan (1979: 336), "associational policies tend to promote precisely the same harmful effects of licensure [restricting the supply of practitioners; decreasing mobility; increasing the cost of services, etc.] although their effects are probably not as pervasive".

4.3 A survey of the translator certification systems in the world

In recent years, the issue of translator certification has attracted much more attention among professional translators and Translation Studies scholars. Many countries, especially those in Asia, have developed or are in the process of developing their own translator certification systems. Even more mature certification systems offered by well-established professional translator associations (e.g. the American Translators Association [ATA] and the Chartered Institute of Linguists [IoL], United Kingdom) have introduced a number of new initiatives to strengthen and further develop the

existing system. In 2004, ATA established eligibility requirements for candidates to take the certification examinations and introduced continuing education requirements for new candidates and members who currently hold certification. Since 2007, IoL has been accepting applications from individual members for the designation of Chartered Linguist.

Also, in the last few years, there have been a number of conferences which have devoted a significant part of their programs to the discussion of translation certification systems:

- 31st Annual Conference of the International Association Language and Business, Brussels, Belgium, 17–18 November 2006;

- International Conference on Translator Training — Qualifying Translators: The Role and Responsibilities of Higher Education, University of Rennes, France, 22–23 September 2006;

- From Success to Recognition — The 6th International Conference of the Israel Translators Association, Jerusalem, Israel, 5–6 February 2008;

- Translation and Cultural Diversity — The 18th International Federation of Translators, Shanghai, China, 4–7 August 2008

This list illustrates there is substantial interest in the issue of translator certification for different stakeholders in the professional and academic translation community. Despite this, there have been few international surveys of translator certification systems and, according to Stejskal (2003b: 103), there is "a large gap in the [translation] industry's pool of knowledge". Stejskal's International Certification Study (2003) is a recent attempt to examine "the way in which translators and interpreters earn their credentials in more than 30 countries on six continents" (99). Because more than five years have passed since the monograph was published, it is the intention of this thesis to

provide a current survey of translator certification systems in different parts of the world. In 2003, Stejskal (2003b: 103) wrote "[In some countries], certification is not offered by the government or professional associations (for example, in China and Israel)". However, at the end of that year, China launched its national translator certification system, the China Aptitude Test for Translators and Interpreters (CAATI). The Israel Translators Association is also actively looking into the possibility of developing a certification system. A large part of its 2008 Annual Conference was "devoted to reflection on accreditation and the status of our profession" (Israel Translators Association 2008). Moreover, Stejskal has not provided extensive coverage of translator certification systems in Asia; only Japan was included in the discussion. In fact, as the following shows, two Asian countries already have their new certification systems up and running, and at least four other countries are seriously pursuing the possibility.

As pointed out by Stejskal (2003b), there are three possible situations in which the credentialing process can be carried out in the field of translation and interpreting: (1) certification by a professional association, (2) certification by a government, and (3) certification by an academic institution. Although Stejskal has discussed all three possibilities and aptly pointed out that "Certification by a professional association is strongest in common law countries, whereas certification by a government body is usually employed in civil law countries" (100–101), the following discussion mostly includes the certification process carried out by professional associations in different countries. Certification by a government body is often referred to the certification of sworn translators. However, sworn translation accounts for only a relatively small percentage of the total translation business, and certifying or swearing has no bearing on the quality of a translator or translation. Because one of the main concerns of this issue is asymmetric information and translator quality, the sworn translator system is excluded. In addition, although an academic degree granted by a translator training

52

institution can sometimes be regarded as a signal of quality "certification", it is not

certification proper. According to the definition given in Section 4.2, certification by

academic institution is also not included. The SDL TRADOS certification is also

beyond the scope of this thesis. In 2007, the translation memory developer and content

management company SDL launched the SDL TRADOS test program. According to the

information on SDL's website, more than 5,000 translators and project managers have

passed the test. This certification test is by all means an interesting discussion point, but

because the emphasis of this thesis is not on technology-related certification, it is not

dealt with here.

In the following, the translator certification systems around the world are surveyed.

The emphasis is on translator certification, so interpreter certification is not discussed. A

brief history of the certification systems, the language pairs, the levels and

specializations offered, the testing format and fees of certification tests are described.

Section 4.3.1 looks into the development of more mature translator certification systems

in four countries: the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia. In

Section 4.3.2, smaller or emerging certification systems in different continents are

described and discussed. Section 4.3.3 examines the situations in a number of countries

(mostly in Asia) where a translator certification system is in the pipeline. In each

sub-section, the discussion follows the chronological order of the establishment of

translator certification systems. In this way, we can have a glimpse of the historical

development of translator certification on an international level. Most of this

information was obtained from the websites unless otherwise stated. Also, some of the

data have been taken from Stejskal's 2003 *International Certification Study* and may not

be quoted in every instance.

4.3.1 Major and well-established translator certification systems

The United Kingdom

The translator certification systems of two professional translator associations are discussed here: the Chartered Institute of Linguists (IoL) and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI). The IoL, founded in 1910, is the United Kingdom's largest membership organization for professional translators and other language professionals. Apart from serving the interests of professional linguists throughout the world, the IoL acts as a respected language assessment and accredited awarding body. It now has around 6,500 Fellows, Members and Associate Members. It aims to:

- promote the learning and use of modern languages;

- improve the status of all professional linguists;

- establish and maintain high standards of work;

- serve the interests of all linguists; and

- ensure professional standards amongst language practitioners through its Code of Conduct.

The IoL has been setting translation and language examinations since its inception in 1910. The first examination was in French or German, and only 21 candidates took the test. The examinations offered by the IoL Educational Trust, the qualifications-awarding body of the IoL, offered the following examinations:

- Diploma in Translation: This is set at postgraduate level and a translation-related qualification recognized in many parts of the world;

- International Diploma in Bilingual Communication: This first-degree level examination is designed to test candidates' ability to translate successfully in both languages, written and orally, in a professional business environment.

- Certificate in Bilingual Skills: This is an Advanced Level qualification for those

who aspire to work, or are already working, in the public or voluntary sector in situations where bilingual competence is required.

Because the Diploma in Translation (DipTrans) examination is more relevant to our discussion of translator certification systems, it is described in greater detail. The DipTrans examination was introduced in 1989 and tests the ability of candidates to translate from their source language into the mother tongue to a professional standard, and tests their awareness of the professional task of the translator. Although it is stated that the test is targeted at candidates with a level of linguistic competence at least equivalent to a good honors degree in languages, an academic degree is not required for entry. The DipTrans examination is offered in most major European languages and normally either the source or target language should be English, though it is possible to arrange examinations between French, German, Spanish and Italian. Candidates can sit the examination in the United Kingdom, many countries in continental Europe, Hong Kong and South America. As of January 2008, the DipTrans examination was conducted in 44 countries and 43 language combinations.

The DipTrans examination consists of three parts: a general paper with a text of about 600 words and two papers with a semi-specialized option (technology/business/literature and science/social science/law). The two semi-specialized papers each contain approximately 450 words. Annotations used to be a requirement, but it is now optional to include translator's notes. Candidates are required to pass all three parts to qualify for the DipTrans. The fees for the examination are about £500 (€632) including the examination center charge.

After passing this test, which serves as a qualifying examination for membership in the IoL, DipTrans holders can obtain membership after gaining three years' relevant professional experience.

Another important professional translator association in the UK is the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI). It was founded in 1986 as a breakaway group from the Translator Guild of the IoL. Although most of its members are based in the UK, ITI has members from across continental Europe and other countries where English is commonly used. In November 2007, it had 2,642 members of various grades including Fellows (30), Qualified Members (1,421), Associates (987), Students (85), Corporate Members (77), Honorary Members (7) and Concessionary Members (35). In order to become a Qualified Member of ITI, one needs to fulfill the following:

- A first degree or postgraduate qualification in a relevant subject or a corresponding qualification accepted by ITI;

- Recommendation regarding ability and good repute by at least three persons (two professional and one character);

- A minimum of five years' full-time work (or a correspondingly longer period of part-time work) and successful assessment of work or a Pass in the ITI Membership Examination; alternatively, three years' full-time (or correspondingly longer period of part-time work), plus a Pass in the ITI membership examination, unless the applicant can satisfy the Admission Committee that there are exceptionally strong grounds for exemption.

Although the examination for ITI members can be used as a route to obtain the institute's membership status, its scale is much smaller than that of IoL. For example, in the May 2006 examinations, there were only 15 candidates and 13 of them passed. Assessors have written reports for candidates who were unsuccessful, to encourage them to learn from their mistakes and try again. The examination fee is £235 (€297).

IoL and ITI (and the Association Internationale d'Interprètes de Conférence, for interpreters) are working together in the award of the Chartered Linguist (CL) title and

have been accepting applications since September 2007. The granting of chartered status to individuals is aimed at protecting the interests of the public and all those who use language services and encourage the pursuit of excellence and enhance the standing of the profession. A CL is a practicing linguist who:

- exhibits the highest levels of competence, skill and professionalism;

- is willing to demonstrate his or her commitment to maintain and develop these skills; and

- agrees to periodic review by his or her professional peers

Those applying for the Translation section of the CL shall have practiced full-time in professional translation during the Qualified Period (i.e. the five-year period prior to the date of application) or submit evidence of experience gained on a part-time basis for the Admissions Committee's consideration. For all categories of CL, an applicant must:

- be a fit and proper person to be granted CL status;

- satisfy the practice requirements of the Qualifying Period;

- have obtained an honors degree or equivalent in any discipline, or an appropriate professional qualification;

- have demonstrable knowledge of the relevant languages to honors degree level or above;

- be a member, and have been a member for at least the two years preceding the date of application, of one of the recognized, relevant and approved professional bodies;

- be in continuing professional practice and undertaking Continuing Professional Development;

- agree to adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct applicable to CL and to be subject to the disciplinary procedures applicable; and

- consent to personal data being held on an online, open-access, searchable website.

In addition to the above, practicing translators who wish to apply for CL (Translator) status may satisfy the following criteria:

- members of the Chartered IoL must hold the DipTrans award by the Institute, or equivalent qualification in Translation at master's degree level, in the relevant language combination(s);

- in all cases the relevant language combination(s) shall be the language combination(s) to be recorded on the Register of Chartered Linguists; and

- all applicants for CL (Translator) status must provide evidence of the volume of work they have completed over the Qualified Period. This should be an average of 300,000 words per year for most translation work.

We can see that the requirements for becoming a CL are more stringent than those for applying for membership in IoL and, according to the institute's council minutes on 12 July 2008, there were six CLs (granted to five members of the IoL and one of ITI). Three more are in the pipeline and a further three prepared for consideration at the next meeting. The effects of introducing CL status remain to be seen in the years to come.

The United States of America

The American Translators Association (ATA) was founded in 1959 and is now the largest professional association of translators and interpreters in the US, with over 10,000 members in more than 80 countries. ATA's primary goals include fostering and supporting the professional development of translators and interpreters and promoting the translation and interpreting professions.

ATA held its first certification examination in 1973. A total of 31 candidates sat for the German-into-English examination in New York City and Camden, New Jersey. Nowadays, there are around 1,000 candidates taking the examination every year.

The ATA certification exam is currently available in 26 language combinations (from Arabic, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish into English and from English into Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian). English is always one of the languages in the combination. In order to be eligible to take the exam, individuals must be ATA members for at least four weeks before applying for the exam. The candidates also need to fulfill the following education and experience prerequisites. They must provide proof of a combination of education and work experience in order to qualify to take the examination and sign a statement that they have read and understood ATA's Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices and that they pledge to abide by the code.

The certification examination is a three-hour, open-book proctored exam in a specific language pair. The exam presents three passages of approximately 225–275 words, or the equivalent in another language (e.g. 325–400 characters from the Japanese writing system). One is a general passage and is mandatory for everyone. This general text is written for the educated lay reader in expository or journalistic style. The candidate must also choose one of the other two passages to translate: one from the domain of science/technology/medicine and the other from law/business/finance. The translation of both passages must meet the ATA certification standards for a passing grade. The exams must be written by hand; no electronic equipment of any kind is permitted in the exam. The certification exam is challenging: the overall pass rate is below 20%. The examination fee is currently US$300 per test (€ 212).

Passing the certification exam automatically converts an Associate member of the

ATA to an Active member (or to Corresponding membership for those who are neither US citizens nor permanent residents.) Starting in January 2004, ATA certified members have to earn and keep track of continuing education points, as determined by the ATA, in order to maintain their certification status. Certified members are given three years to accumulate 20 credit hours.

Canada

The Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters (CTTIC) (or in French, the Conseil des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes du Canada) is a federation of provincial and territorial associations representing translators, terminologists and interpreters in Canada. It was founded in 1970 and is the legal successor of the Society of Translators and Interpreters of Canada (STIC) which was incorporated in 1956. The original members include the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) and the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (OTTIAQ) and since 1972 have been joined by:

- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta (ATIA)
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Manitoba (ATIM)
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Nova Scotia (ATINS)
- the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Saskatchewan (ATIS)
- the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC)
- the Corporation of Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters of New Brunswick (CTINB)
- the Interpreters/Translators Society of the Northwest Territories (ITSNWT)
- the Nunavut Interpreter/Translator Society
- the Society of Interpreters and Translators of Yukon (SITY)
- the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia (STIBC)

Because professional organization is a matter of provincial and territorial jurisdiction in Canada, CTTIC admits only provincial and territorial bodies, called associations, orders, societies or corporations. The council's membership consists of the twelve member bodies which in turn represent their own members. Its mission is to set, maintain and promote national standards in translation, interpretation and terminology to ensure quality communication across linguistic and cultural communities. CTTIC represents more than 3,000 certified translation professionals.

The institute's board of certification administers exams for translators under the aegis of CTTIC but which are a collaborative effort with the member bodies. All forms of certification include an ethics component. CTTIC does not accept applications for certification. These are normally directed to the member body serving the applicant's province or territory of residence. Successful completion of an examination or other certification procedure confers the status of certified member, which is portable among all member bodies.

Translation examinations have been held since 1975. They are intended for professionals who wish to have their competence recognized by their peers. They seek not to identify mere aptitude or potential but rather to attest to a candidate's professional skills. In translation, for example, a candidate who can produce a translation which is faithful and idiomatic and requires little or no revision is deemed capable of practicing the profession independently. The examination is held annually on the same day in a number of cities across Canada. Registration is usually in the early autumn. This is an open-book examination: dictionaries and reference books are permitted, but all technological aids are prohibited.

ATIO (a member association of the CTTIC) members eligible to sit for a certification examination are:

- Candidates for Certification in Translation in good standing who hold a degree in Translation and provide proof of a year of full-time professional experience, or those who are able to provide proof of four years full-time experience in the field of translation;

- Certified Translators in good standing during the years 2008 and 2009 who wish to have their competence in another language combination confirmed.

The CTTIC Certification examination in Translation is of two hours and thirty minutes duration. During the examination, candidates must translate two texts of approximately 175–185 words. The texts are chosen to test candidates' ability to analyze and comprehend, as well as their mastery of the target language. One of the texts is compulsory and general. There are two other texts, from which the candidate must select and translate one. One of these is mildly technical/scientific/medical and the other somewhat literary. None of the three texts should require specialized terminological knowledge. The fee for the February 2009 examination is CAD$190.80 (€126.3) per examination.

ATIO and a number of other member organizations also offer on-dossier certification. Candidates may submit a complete professional dossier in accordance with the general criteria outlined in the by-laws, and the particular requirements for each professional category. The fee for this is CAD$380 (€251). This is discussed in detail in Section 6.6.

OTTIAQ, which was founded in 1940, discontinued its certification examination in 1998 and introduced another set of requirements to become a certified member. If individuals want to be granted the title "certified translators", they need to follow the following certification process:

- Candidates check if they hold one of the degrees in a list of Quebec institutions

and BA degrees recognized by OTTIAQ. If they hold one of the listed degrees, they can proceed to the next step. Otherwise, they can contact OTTIAQ's staff to obtain information about equivalency requirements.

- Candidates enroll in the mentoring program or request equivalency credits after demonstrating that they have at least two years' relevant full-time work experience in translation in the language combinations. This combination must include English or French as the source or target language. For translators, relevant full-time work experience is defined as: (1) working as a salaried full-time translator for at least two years; (2) working as a salaried part-time translator (at least two years of professional experience and at least 450 days of work experience); or (3) translating as freelancers. This requires the equivalent of at least two years of professional experience.

- The next step in the certification process is the filing of all supporting documents with the Certification Committee. The documents required include: (1) completed application form for OTTIAQ certification; (2) photocopy of the recognized degree; proof of at least two years of relevant full-time work experience; and (3) academic records, including a description of the courses taken and marks obtained.

- Lastly, candidates have to take a twelve-hour training course on professional practice standards which cover: (1) Professional Codes; (2) OTTIAQ Code of Ethics; (3) other regulations and standards governing professional practice; (4) Civil Code of Québec; and (5) Act respecting the protection of professional information in the private sector.

These requirements are quite stringent and complex. Because a certification examination is not used, these certification criteria, as Stejskal (2003b: 15) notes, can

help "OTTIAQ … fulfill its mission to promote the quality and effectiveness of communication by ensuring that its members have the requisite skills in the fields of translation, terminology and interpreting".

Australia

Founded in 1977, the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Limited (NAATI) is a national standards body owned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments of Australia. Its mission is to set and maintain high national standards in translating and interpreting to enable the existence of a pool of accredited translators and interpreters responsive to the changing needs and demography of the culturally and linguistically diverse Australian society. The functions of NAATI include the following:

- To set and maintain the standards of translation and interpreting at four accreditation levels;

- To accredit translators and interpreters who meet the specified standards;

- To conduct translator and interpreter accreditation tests in various cities in Australia and New Zealand. It also provides similar tests for overseas candidates who are unable to sit for the tests in any Australian city;

- To approves translation and interpreting courses at tertiary institutions in Australia;

- To assess translation and interpreting qualifications obtained from overseas tertiary institutions;

- To provide advisory services relating to translation and interpreting service delivery; and

- To provide a Directory of Accredited and Recognized Translators and Interpreters available for work.

NAATI accreditation may be obtained by: (1) passing a NAATI test; (2) successfully completing a course of studies at an Australian institution approved by NAATI; and (3) providing evidence of specialized qualifications in translating/interpreting obtained from a recognized training institution overseas, or membership in a recognized international professional association. Here the focus is on the NAATI test, which is offered in 56 languages. As stated in NAATI's Annual Report 2006–2007, a total of 2,036 accreditations were awarded, of which 903 were awarded as a result of tests.

NAATI runs two kinds of testing: Annual Program and Special On-demand Program. The Annual Testing Program operates over a twelve-month period, commencing in July of each year. Translation tests are held from March to June of each year. The Annual Testing Program is available in Australia and New Zealand only. For the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, the examination fees range from AUD $295–424 (€168–241) in addition to an application fee of AUD $90 (€51) (for Australia) or AUD R96 (€55) (for New Zealand).

Candidates who wish to sit for a test outside the Annual Testing Program, or if the language they wish to sit for is not available on the program, can apply for a Special On-Demand Test. Special On-Demand Tests charge a higher fee than those in the Annual Testing Programs. For the same period, the fees for Special On-Demand Tests in Australia range from AUD $424 to 616 (€241 to 350) plus an application fee. The fees for Special On-Demand Tests in New Zealand range from AUD $458 to 1,389 (€260 to 789).

NAATI also offers Overseas Testing at various locations outside Australia. These are standard accreditation tests at the Translator level that are conducted on demand. The examination fee for the Translator Test is AUD $1,111 (€631) plus a charge of AUD $204 (€116) for an overseas prospectus (information kit for overseas testing, includes

sample test).

NAATI translator tests are designated as Paraprofessional Translator, Professional Translator and Advanced Translator. There is also a level called Advanced Translator (Senior), which is the highest and not available through NAATI testing. The details are as follows:

- *Paraprofessional Translator*: This represents a level of competence in translation for the purpose of producing a translated version of non-specialized information. Practitioners at this level are encouraged to proceed to the professional levels of accreditation.

- *Professional Translator*: This is the first professional level and represents the minimum level of competence for professional translating. Translators convey the full meaning of the information from the source language into the target language in the appropriate style and register. Translators at this level work across a wide range of subjects involving documents with specialized content. Translators may choose to specialize. They are qualified to translate into one language only or into both languages, depending upon their accreditation.

- *Advanced Translator*: This is the advanced professional level and represents the competence to handle complex, technical and sophisticated translation. Advanced Translators handle complex, technical and sophisticated material, compatible with recognized international standards. They may choose to specialize in certain areas. Advanced translators are accredited to translate either into one language only or into both languages, depending upon their accreditation.

- *Advanced Translator (Senior)*: This is the highest level of NAATI accreditation and reflects both competence and experience. Advanced Translators (Senior) are Advanced Translators with a level of excellence in their field, recognized

through demonstrated extensive experience and leadership.

To be eligible to take these tests, candidates need to fulfill the following requirements:

- *Paraprofessional Translator*: Candidates must have general education equivalent to at least four years of Australian secondary school and provide evidence of proficiency in both languages. Language proficiency may be indicated through one or more of the following: (1) Demonstrated involvement in translation and interpreting within the community; and/or (2) A satisfactory rating in English and/or foreign language proficiency test; and/or (3) A pass in a Language Aide test in the language in which testing is required.

- *Professional Translator*: Candidates must have either general education to degree or diploma level in any field and/or NAATI accreditation as a Paraprofessional Translator in the language they are seeking accreditation in; or have work experience in translation to which an employer has attested; or have evidence of relevant post-secondary studies.

- *Advanced Translator*: Candidates must hold a degree in any subject from a recognized higher education institution and must be accredited by NAATI at the professional level of Translator and/or Interpreter. NAATI accreditation must be in the appropriate skill relevant to the application. The requirement of a degree may be waived for those who demonstrate equivalent professional knowledge and experience in the appropriate skill relevant to their application. Candidates are required to provide an employer's reference as proof that they have worked regularly as a Translator and/or Interpreter for a minimum of two years. Practitioners who are self-employed are required to provide a statutory declaration as proof of the above.

- *Advanced Translator (Senior)*: Candidates must satisfy all the requirements of the Advanced Translator and Conference Interpreter category and meet certain requirements of demonstrated experience. Accreditation at this senior level is not available through NAATI testing. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted to and evaluated by NAATI's Qualification Assessment and Advisory Committee.

The formats for the three levels (Paraprofessional Translator, Professional Translator and Advanced Translator) of tests are as follows:

- *Paraprofessional Translator*: The exam is two hours and ten minutes in length, including reading time. There are three sections: (1) Translation from English (45 minutes and 45 marks): Two passages of 120–140 words each in English in contrasting subject areas, one of which is selected and translated into the language other than English. The passages are of moderate complexity and in a non-specialist subject area. Neither passage is drawn from the field of creative literature; (2) Translation into English (45 minutes and 45 marks): Two passages of 120–140 words each in the language other than English, in contrasting subject areas, one of which is selected and translated into English. The passages are of moderate complexity and in a non-specialist subject area. Neither passage is drawn from the field of creative literature; (3) Ethics Questions (30 minutes and 10 marks): Three questions on ethical issues are asked, two of which are to be answered by candidates. Answers should be clear and concise, averaging no more than 150 words. Answers may be written either in English or the other language.

- *Professional Translator*: The exam is two and a half hours in length, plus 20 minutes reading time. There are three sections: (1) Translation from English or

from a language other than English (45 + 45 = 90 marks): Three passages of approximately 250 words each in English, in different styles and subject areas, two of which are to be selected and translated into the language other than English. The passages may be drawn from subject areas including culture, science, technology, health, law, commerce and related fields all aimed at the non-specialist reader; or, Translation into English (45 + 45 = 90 marks): Three passages of approximately 250 words each in the language other than English in different styles and subject areas, two of which are to be selected and translated into English. The passages may be drawn from subject areas including culture, science, technology, health, law, commerce and related fields all aimed at the non-specialist reader; (2) Ethics of the Profession (10 marks): Three questions on ethical issues are asked, two of which are to be answered by candidates. Answers should be clear and concise, averaging no more than 150 words. Answers may be written either in English or the other language, no matter which direction the candidate sits. In Greek, a passage in Katharevousa is compulsory. In Modern Standard Chinese (Mandarin), candidates select one passage from two printed in the traditional full form and one from two printed in the simplified form.

- *Advanced Translator*: Accreditation at this level is always one-way, reflecting common professional practice. Candidates seeking two-way accreditation are required to sit for a separate test in each direction. The same applies to each additional language. One language must always be English. Advanced Translator Tests are available in either language direction in combination with English in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. For whichever language direction the candidate has applied, he or she is required to translate three texts, one in Section 1 and

two in Section 2, of 400 words each. Section 1 consists of a passage of an intellectually demanding but non-technical nature on a political, diplomatic or cultural theme. Section 2 consists of four passages of a highly technical and intellectual nature, drawn from the following four subject areas: legal, economic, medical and scientific. Section 1 of the test entails no choice: one (1) compulsory passage is given. In Section 2 of the test, candidates are required to select two of the four passages given. Candidates are advised of the specialist subject area and an indication given of the topic and general source area of all passages one week before the test date. Candidates are allowed a total of eight hours from 9 am to 5 pm to produce their three translations. Candidates are free to organize their time as they wish and are allowed meal/coffee breaks, etc. However, examination conditions apply throughout the eight hours. Candidates are allowed to use dictionaries and all types of reference materials, such as encyclopedias, handbooks, technical and scientific journals, terminology lists and private notes. Consultation with other candidates is not permitted during the eight-hour period of the test.

4.3.2 Smaller or emerging certification systems

Finland

The Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters (*Suomen kääntäjien ja tulkkien liitto* or SKTL) is a professional organization that was founded in 1955. It has about 1,800 members grouped into five sections: literature translators, document translators, audio-visual translators, interpreters, and teachers and researcher The association's objectives include:

- to advance the professional interests of translators and interpreters;
- to promote national and international co-operation within the sector;

- to foster the education and training of translators and interpreters, thereby contributing to improved quality within the sector; and

- to promote compliance with international recommendations concerning translation and interpreting.

Scientific, technical or commercial translators who want to join SKTL and become members need to fulfill one of the following criteria:

- pass the authorized (licensed) translator's test

- hold a university degree in Translation or a similar diploma from the former language institutes, or a corresponding diploma in translation studies or interpreting granted abroad

- hold a university-level degree in languages and work as a professional translator

- work as a translator in civil service or in business, or continuously as a freelance translator for at least two years

Sweden

In Sweden, the translator authorization tests used to be administered by the Chamber of Commerce, but the responsibility was taken over by the state at the beginning of the 1960s, originally by the Swedish Board of Trade and now by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet). The agency is an advisory body for translation and interpretation-related matters and deals in their semi-annual meetings with standards, integration of standards, problems with the test procedures and other related questions.

To qualify for authorization as a translator, individuals must:

- Reside in Sweden or any other state with the European Union;

- Be 18 years of age and not under the legal guardianship of an administrator or be

71

subject to any similar restrictions in another state;

- Be of known personal integrity and otherwise be suitable to work as a translator; and

- Have passed the proficiency examination as set down by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency

If special grounds exist, individuals residing outside the EEA may also qualify for authorization. In the authorization examination, candidates need to translate from one language into another language only. One of these languages must be Swedish. Once authorized, translators have their own individual stamp and are entitled to vouch for the accuracy of their translations. Authorization is a requirement for some translation posts within the Swedish civil service and for inclusion in some of the framework procurements of translation services by state agencies. Some authorized translators are authorized to work from more than one language into Swedish, and some are authorized to work both to and from Swedish into another language, but most of them are authorized in one direction only.

Norway

In Norway, the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration administers a stringent examination for linguists who want to become government-authorized translators. Authorization is subsequently awarded by the Norwegian government. All those who pass the examination can join the Association of Government Authorized Translators (Statsautoriserte Translatørers Forening, or STF). Founded in 1913, STF is one of the oldest translators' associations in the world and has about 210 members. Its mission is:

- seeking greater recognition for government-authorized translators as highly skilled

professionals;

- promoting good translation practices and supporting its members by providing guidance and information;

- working for greater understanding of the importance of quality translations among the authorities and relevant user groups; and

- strengthening the links among colleagues and promoting high professional standards and work ethics.

The STF members are authorized in 18 languages: 15 European languages plus Chinese, Urdu and Vietnamese. Because of the difficulty of the examination, only a handful of members are authorized in more than one language pair. English dominates, but there are also a number of German translators. The majority of STF members are self-employed freelancers, but some work in translation companies as in-house translators.

STF members have passed a very demanding translation examination, written and oral, into and/from Norwegian and the foreign language concerned. This "Translatøreksamen" represents the highest Norwegian qualification for written translation to and from Norwegian of specialized texts (economic, administrative, legal, mercantile and technical). As a result, successful candidates are authorized to place their stamp and signature on their work, along with the words "True Translation Certified".

The "Translatøreksamen" is organized by the Department of Languages of the Norwegian School of Economics and Business, the leading business school in Norway. In 1986, the department was given the responsibility of administering the national translators' examination. The objective of this examination is to authorize individuals who are capable of carrying out translation work for the public and private sectors. Each year about 50 candidates sit for this test, and the failure rate is about 80%. The

eligibility requirements for taking the test include a minimum of three years of relevant university education. The written test takes eight hours. For those who pass, there is also an oral examination. Those who fail are allowed to try again up to three times. A pass means that that the candidates have shown an excellent command of legal, financial and technical subjects and are able to translate such texts. The written part of the examination consists of two independent tests:

(1) Translation from Norwegian into the foreign language of:

- A general text of about 350 words;

- An economic/administrative text of about 250 words;

- A legal text of about 250 words; and

- A technical text of about 250 words

(2) Translation from the foreign language into the Norwegian of the same subject matter and size as for the above.

Denmark

Translator authorization in Denmark is administered by the Danish government and granted to students who have successfully completed five years of in-depth studies in Translation. Authorization is granted to translators and interpreters after they have obtained an MA degree in Translation and Interpretation from either the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) or the Ấrhus School of Business. Studies in English, French, German, Spanish and, to a limited extent, Italian and Russian are offered by the business schools as full-time academic programs. In languages other than those mentioned, candidates may register for a special translator's examination administered by CBS. Foreigners in Denmark who want to translate into and from their mother tongue may choose this option. It is also suitable for Danes who want to obtain authorization to perform certified translations into and from these languages. The

examination is both written and oral and is conducted more or less along the lines of the MA program. In other words, candidates have to demonstrate an ability to translate complex and current texts of a legal, technical and economic nature which represent realistic text types from the Danish market for freelance translation services. Each text is about one page long. Dictionaries and other aids except Internet access are allowed. Currently, the test costs about €1,800. When candidates have successfully completed an MA degree from either of the two business schools or passed the special translator's examination at CBS, they are eligible for "state authorization" from the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency under the Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs.

Japan

The translator certification systems in Japan are run by professional and educational organizations. Most of them do not have eligibility requirements, and there are several levels of certification ranging from elementary knowledge to expert translation capability. The translator certification systems are offered by three organizations, Japan Translation Federation (JTF), Japan Translation Association (JTA) and Babel University.

(1) *Japan Translation Federation*: Founded in 1981, JTF is a non-profit industrial organization striving to promote translation business through the implementation of research studies, seminars, the training of skilled persons and participation in international conferences related to translation. The Honyaku Kentei (Translator Qualification Examination) was first launched in 1986. In 1992, JTF launched an online version of the Honyaku Kentei examination.

The objectives of the Honyaku Kentei examination are to foster industrial translators and to maintain and improve the quality of translation, thereby contributing

to the promotion of language services to the industry sectors requiring translation. In order to achieve these objectives, practical use level and basic level examinations were established. The practical use level examination is designed to certify the ability of the examinee as a professional translator. The basic level examination is designed to develop promising future translators. The examinations are open to all, and there is no discrimination based on academic credentials, age, sex or nationality.

The level, fields of specialization, time allowed and examination fee are as follows for each level:

- For the practical use level, the examination consists of two parts, English into Japanese and Japanese into English. The fields of specialization are politico-socio-economic, science and technology, finance and securities, medicine and pharmacology, information processing and patents. The examination time is two hours for each part. Candidates sitting for just one part pay a fee of JP¥10,000 (€65.4) and both parts for JP¥15,000 (€98). There are three grades in this level, from first grade to third grade.

- For the basic level, the examination consists of two parts, English into Japanese and Japanese into English. The examination time is one hour. There are two grades in this level, fourth and fifth. The examination fees for fourth grade and fifth grade are JP¥6,000 (€39.2) and JP¥5,000 (€32.7).

The number of candidates taking the tests increased from 958 in 2003 to 1,238 in 2007. In 2007, 79% of the candidates took the online version of the Honyaku Kentei examination; the rest took the conventional version.

(2) *Japan Translation Association*: Founded in 1987, JTA aims to objectively measure the knowledge and technical skills of translators in the industrial era. JTA used to offer a Translator Qualification Examination which consisted of four levels. These

were to be replaced by the JTA Certified Professional Translator Qualification Examination in December 2008. The examination is open to any JTA member. The registration fee to become a JTA member is JP¥6,000 (€39.2). The language pairs available are Japanese/English and Japanese/Chinese. There are four papers to be tested in each language pair:

- *Language and culture*: Basic skills in source language, translation skills, comprehension of cultural background and language expression;

- *Expert competence*: Specialized knowledge, practical writing, stylistics, and terminology and editing;

- *IT competence*: ability to use IT, information searching and collection, using computer software packages to assist translation;

- *Managerial competence*: Translation business management ability, professional ethics and self-management skills.

The candidates can take the test at home using the Internet. The time limit is 5 hours including rest and lunch time. The examination fee is JP¥21,000 (including tax). Candidates who pass all papers and have more than two years of professional experience are recognized as Certified Professional Translators. The qualification is valid for a period of five years.

(3) *Babel University*: The Babel University Professional School of Translation was opened in January 2000 and was the first translation graduate school in the world to base its learning system on the Internet. The mission of the Babel University Professional School of Translation includes:

- To further the science of translation and enhance the skill level of translators

- To introduce new innovations to the translation field

- To develop translation technology

- To promote the professionalism of translators.

Babel University offers a Babel Professional Translator Test designed to evaluate the competence of professional translators. Although individual examination papers differ with each category, each test comprises approximately 1,000 words. The Babel Professional Translator Test has two features. The first is "grade evaluation". Based on test results, examinees are given grades from 1 to 5. Grade 2 means that an examinee possesses enough knowledge and technique to work independently as professional translator. The other feature is "skill analysis". Examinees receive an assessment sheet which clearly points out their deficiencies, to provide guidance for further study after taking the test. The five categories of the Babel Professional Translator Test available in October 2008 included English-Japanese translation of fiction, non-fiction, law- and computer-related texts, as well as French-Japanese translation of non-fiction. Candidates take the test at home using the Internet. The examination fee is JP¥15,000 (€98.1). The students and staff of Babel University enjoy a discount rate.

South Africa

The South African Translators' Institute (SATI) is the largest association in South Africa representing translators, interpreters, editors, proofreaders, text reviewers, terminologists, copywriters and anyone else involved in the language practice industry. The SATI was founded in 1956 and there are about 700 members in 2008. SATI's stated purpose is to promote the interests of the translation profession in South Africa, chiefly through:

- undertaking, promoting and/or publishing research;
- publishing a journal and various language and translation guides;
- enforcing a code of ethics for translators;

- co-operating with other organizations and institutions to promote the profession;

- lobbying for proper training facilities for translators; and

- at some future date, limiting membership to those who had passed an examination.

Other developments through which SATI contributes to translation in South Africa, include:

- administering a system of accreditation based on set examinations;

- granting bursaries to students of translation each year;

- awarding a cash prize for outstanding translation in various fields every three years;

- maintaining a database of freelance translators, interpreters and editors, which is accessible to the public; and

- representing South African interests internationally as a member of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

SATI has been offering an accreditation examination to members since 1990, in an effort to improve the standing of language practitioners in the community and to assure clients of a certain level of competence in the language that practitioners employ. Members of SATI are encouraged to gain accreditation, but it is currently not required for membership. In fact, membership is open to anyone from any country in any profession. The only requirement for membership is that new members must agree to adhere to the SATI code of ethics and pay an annual membership fee. However, accreditation is required of members of the SATI executive committee and the executive committees of both formal and informal chapters of the institute.

SATI offers accreditation for general translation, sworn translation, language

editing, simultaneous (conference) interpreting, terminology and corporate accreditation (for language agencies and language offices). The discussion here concentrates on the translation accreditation test. Translation accreditation is available in combinations of all eleven official languages (Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga), as well as some foreign languages that include French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. The cost for the translation accreditation test is R550 (€47.70) per language combination in 2008.

The translation accreditation examination is a written examination. Candidates need to answer three questions out of approximately eight which cover a variety of fields. One question involving a general text is compulsory. The main objective is to test the final translation product that the candidate can present. Candidates are allowed 24 hours to complete the exam and can use any sources available to them. They may not, however, consult another person.

Translation accreditation is operated on a distance basis. This means the following:

- Candidates must provide the name of a responsible person to act as invigilator (any responsible adult who is not related to or living with the candidate; this can be a colleague, a superior at work, a lecturer, a neighbor, etc.);

- The examination paper is sent to the invigilator. When it has been received, the invigilator should inform the candidate and agree on a day when the exam will be written;

- The invigilator does not need to sit with the candidate throughout the exam. The invigilator must break the seal on the exam in the candidate's presence, give the exam to the candidate and ensure that the candidate returns the completed exam within 24 hours. The invigilator must then witness the statement (included in the

package) by the candidate to the effect that he or she has complied with the requirements and seal the script and other documentation in an envelope in the candidate's presence, ready for return to the institute;

- Candidates may work on the examination for up to 24 hours. They may not have the examination paper in their possession for more than 24 hours;

- The invigilator must post the completed exam to the examinations officer. An electronic copy of the translations should also be submitted if at all possible (by e-mail); and

- The completed examination must be returned within one month of being posted to the invigilator.

Hong Kong

Founded in 1971, the Hong Kong Translation Society (HKTS) is the only body for translators and interpreters in Hong Kong with an objective to enhance the standard and professionalism of translation in Hong Kong. The HKTS launched Diploma and Advanced Diploma Examinations in Translation in 1991. Although the examinations ceased to operate in 1994, they are included here for the sake of completeness. Because the information no longer exists on the Internet, the discussion here is based on Liu's (2001) historical account of the HKTS between 1971 and 1999.

The Diploma examination was a bilingual test of translation skills with the following objectives: (1) To test written fluency in English and Chinese within a contemporary context; (2) To test accurate translation of the written language from and into each language; and (3) To demonstrate an awareness and knowledge of areas of cultural and topical relevance within Hong Kong, China and the broad spectrum of international affairs. It was set at a level of translation skills commensurate with the level attained by an undergraduate at the end of the first year of a translation degree or

diploma course. There are three modules in this examination. The details are as follows:

- *Module 1*: Translation from Chinese to English (3 hours): Candidates are required to translate two texts into English. One text reflects an area of current interest in Hong Kong. The other reflects an area of current interest in China. Traditional or simplified Chinese characters may be encountered. Each passage contains about 500 Chinese characters.

- *Module 2*: Translation from English to Chinese (3 hours): This model has an identical structure to that of Module 1. The source texts are in English. Each passage reflects an area of current international interest and contains not more than 500 words. Candidates may use both traditional and simplified Chinese characters.

The Advanced Diploma examination is a highly specialized test of a candidate's specific translation skills. The objective is to test performance at an advanced level in an area of specialist knowledge of skill involving translating from Chinese to English and English to Chinese. The examination offers a choice of eight modules enabling candidates to choose one as their own area of specialization:

- Module 3: Translation from Chinese to English (Arts)

- Module 4: Translation from Chinese to English (Social Sciences)

- Module 5: Translation from Chinese to English (Science and Technology)

- Module 6: Translation from Chinese to English (Business and Management)

- Module 7: Translation from English to Chinese (Arts)

- Module 8: Translation from English to Chinese (Social Sciences)

- Module 9: Translation from English to Chinese (Science and Technology)

- Module 10: Translation from English to Chinese (Business and Management)

Each module lasts for three hours and tests translation skills at an advanced level. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their familiarity with the subject matter and to produce translations which accurately reflect the content and style of the original passages. Traditional or simplified Chinese characters might be encountered or used. The passages contain about 1,000 Chinese characters or not more than 1,000 English words. Dictionaries are permitted in the examination.

On successful completion of both modules in the Diploma examination, candidates are eligible to apply for Associate Membership of the HKTS. Those who pass the Advanced Diploma examination are eligible to apply for Membership. From 1991 to 1993, a total of 204 and 219 candidates took Module 1 and Module 2 of the Diploma examination respectively, but only 39 diplomas were awarded. For the Advanced Diploma examination, between 1992 and 1994, a total of 49 candidates took the test; the pass rate was around 55–60%. The two examinations ceased to operate in 1994 because there was an insufficient number of candidates and the cost incurred was not justified.

Ukraine

The Ukrainian Translators Association (UTA) was founded in 1999 in response to the urgent need to provide due quality of translation and interpreting services. In its activities, the UTA relies on domestic and international experience and strives to co-operate with organizations which unite translators and interpreters worldwide. The general objectives and goals of the UTA are as follows:

- To facilitate development of the best standards of translation and interpreting;

- To protect rights and interests of translators and interpreters;

- To provide certification of translators and interpreters;

- To expand the visibility of translation and interpreting;

- To provide conditions for fair competition in Ukraine;

- To specify consistent requirements applicable to rendering of translation and interpreting services;

- To represent interests of translators and interpreters internationally;

- To participate in activities of international organizations, associations, and unions;

- To provide experience sharing between translators and interpreters;

- To provide expert examination of translations and settlement of disputes between customers and translators/interpreters;

- To publish the lists of Certified Translators/Interpreters, full members of UTA and translation and interpreting service providers compliant with the requirements laid down in standards STTU UTA 001-2000 and STTU UTA 002-2000;

- To hold tenders among translators and interpreters (service providers);

- To render advice on translation and interpreting;

- To search for optimal solutions based on specific translation/interpreting project amount, subjects, objectives and customer requirements; and

- To organize science and practice seminars, conferences and other activities.

As of 3 April 2008, UTA has 4 collective members and 29 individual members (19 of which are translators and 10 are interpreters). Freelancer translators are admitted to UTA as full members only after having passed the certification examination. To become full members, individuals must be at least 21, reside in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, meet the UTA certification requirements and follow the UTA Code of Professional Conduct. Those who reside outside the city Kyiv and fulfill all these requirements can become correspondent members.

The three-hour certification examination is in a specific language pair. The

candidate is not expected to produce a highly refined and polished translation. The written test consists of five passages of approximately 250–300 words, one in each of the following categories: general, medical/scientific, semi-technical, legal/business and literary. The candidate selects at least three passages and must satisfactorily translate at least three. The candidates may use dictionaries and other reference but will not have access to the Internet.

The certificate is valid for three years. In order to extend the certificate for another three-year period, the certificants must show evidence of their continuing performance in the area of translation. If the certificants fail to produce such evidence, they must take the certification examination again.

Arab countries

The translator certification examination of one of the Arab professional translator associations, the Arab Translators Network, is described in some detail here. The World Arabic Translators Association also mentions that it will launch a certification examination soon and is briefly discussed.

Headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon, the Arab Translator Network-Arab Professional Translators Society (ATN-APTS) is a virtual professional society operating through the Internet to help its members improve their skills, efficiency and income. It was founded in 2000 to facilitate the interaction between Arab freelance translators, translation agencies and their clients through providing support such as certification examinations and technical assistance.

The ATN-APTS offers certification examinations in the following languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Turkish, both into and from Arabic. A written test is administered by the ATN-APTS's representative nearest the candidate's location. The purpose of the test is to assess the candidate's ability to

translate from and into the selected language combination. Candidates are permitted to use a computer, dictionaries, glossaries and other reference materials but need to complete the test within four hours. Successful candidates become certified members of the ATN-APTS, and the "ATN-APTS" mark can be placed on the member's business cards. Such persons will be recommended to any party contacting ATN-APTS in search of a translator. All registered members of the ATN-APTS are eligible to take the test by paying a US$25 (€17.6) testing fee.

The World Arabic Translators Association (WATA) was founded by Amer Al Azem and registered in Switzerland with operational headquarters in Qatar. Its mission is to spread the use of Arabic language and introduce Arabic culture and civilization worldwide. According to the website, which is still under construction, WATA seems to have a large number of goals, one of which is to organize accreditation and certification sessions and examinations in Arabic-speaking countries.

Czech Republic

The Czech Council for Translation and Interpreting (ČERAPT) is a professional body composed of the Union of Translators and Interpreters of the Czech Republic, the Institute of Translation Studies of Charles University in Prague, the Association of Conference Interpreters of the Czech Republic and a major translation company based in Prague.

ČERAPT launched a translator certification examination in 2000. It is designed for both beginning and accomplished translators and interpreters. The texts used in the translation tests are authentic, in order to test the candidates for a professional level of translation skills. Candidates used to be tested in bi-directional translation, i.e. both from and into their native language. However, according to one informant, since 2003, candidates are not tested in translation into English if English is not their mother tongue.

86

The first part of the test involves the translation of a general but difficult text from a foreign language into Czech. Candidates may write a commentary to explain their translating decisions. The text length is about 350 words. The second part involves specialized translation. Candidates can select one text in the field of social sciences and one in the field of natural and technical sciences. Dictionaries and references provided by the candidates are allowed. The examination fee is about CZK5,000 (€205.9).

Brazil

The Brazilian Association of Translators, ABRATES (Associação Brasileira de Tradutories), is an association of translation professionals that has the objectives of professional development and interaction and co-operation among translators, translation teachers and translation students, and the promotion of the value of the profession and its professionals.

With the aim of giving recognition to and ensuring a high standard of quality among its associates, ABRATES implemented an accreditation program in 2001 that formally recognizes the professional competence of its associates in the translation of one specific language to another. Accreditation is available for professionals who are ABRATES associates. There are no restrictions on the participation of foreigners in the accreditation program, provided that they have enrolled as ABRATES members. To be a member of ABRATES, a translator must produce evidence of graduation in specific and recognized translation courses, or effective and proven experience working as a fully qualified professional translator.

Up to the present, ABRATES has been holding tests for the following language pairs: English into Portuguese, Spanish and Portuguese, French into Portuguese, German into Portuguese and Portuguese into English. Other language pairs will be added, in accordance with the demand. The examination fee is currently R$200 (€74)

per language pair to cover the administrative expenses related to the application of the tests.

The translation test lasts for three hours and thirty minutes and consists of five texts of approximately 300 words each. The candidates should choose just three texts to translate. The texts are in the following fields: general, technical, legal, medical/scientific and literature (in the case of a test for a foreign language into Portuguese) or journalism (in the case of a test for Portuguese into a foreign language). The tests must be completed by pen; any electronic means of text processing is not permitted. During the test, the candidate may consult as many dictionaries as possible.

Translators who pass the examination are entitled to a certificate and can refer to their accreditation on résumés, business cards, home pages and other promotional materials but should always indicate the specific combination of languages. Accreditation has a validity of up to ten years. If the candidate's affiliation is terminated within this period, the accreditation is automatically cancelled.

China

Currently, there are two nationally recognized translator certification examinations in China: China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI) and National Accreditation Examinations for Translators and Interpreters (NAETI). CATTI was first introduced in 2003 and called the China Aptitude Test for Translators and Interpreters before 2008. CATTI is designed to meet the needs of a socialist market economy and China's accession to the World Trade Organization, build a large pool of translators and interpreters in China, appraise their proficiency and competence scientifically, objectively and fairly, and better serve the opening up of the Chinese economy.

The China International Publishing Group is responsible for organizing, implementing and administering the test under the guidance of the Ministry of

Personnel of the People's Republic of China. If examinees pass the test, they are awarded the Translation Proficiency Qualification Certificate of the People's Republic of China. The certificate is valid throughout China and is one of the prerequisites for professional translator positions. According to government regulations, this qualification has been incorporated into the national system of professional qualification certificates.

The languages to be tested in the CATTI examination include English, Japanese, Russian, German, French, Spanish and Arabic. Chinese is always one of the languages in the language pairs, and the examination test candidates' ability to translate into and from their mother tongue. The examination is open to the general public without limitations on applicants' educational background and professional experience. Foreign nationals residing in China and residents of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan are eligible to take the test. In 2008, the fees for Translator of Level Two and Translator of Level Three examinations (the other two levels are acquired through appraisal; details follow) are RMB 610 (€62.6) and RMB 520 (€53.4) respectively, plus RMB 10 (€1) registration fee.

CATTI sets four proficiency levels. The professional competence represented by each level is as follows:

- *Senior Translator*: Candidates have been engaged in translation for a long time, have extensive scientific and cultural knowledge, reach advanced level in bilingual translation, can solve difficult problems in the translating process and make great contributions to the translation profession in both theory and practice.

- *Translator of Level One*: Candidates have rich scientific and cultural knowledge and a high competence for bilingual translation, can be qualified for high-level translation assignments, solve difficult problems in the translating process and

89

are capable of finalizing translations.

- *Translator of Level Two*: Candidates have some scientific and cultural knowledge, have good competence for bilingual translation and are capable of completing translation assignments in some specialized areas which are rather difficult.

- *Translator of Level Three*: Candidates have rudimentary scientific and cultural knowledge and a general competence for bilingual translation and can accomplish general translation work.

The title of Senior Translator is acquired through appraisal. Candidates for Senior Translator must obtain the Translation Proficiency Qualification Certificate for Translator of Level One. The title of Translator of Level One is acquired through the method of testing and appraisal.

The tests for Translator of Level Two and Translator of Level Three consist of two parts: Translating Comprehensive Competence (2 hours) and Translating Practice (3 hours). The first part is made up of objective questions in the form of vocabulary and structure, reading comprehension and cloze. For the Translator of Level Three test, candidates are required to translate two passages, one for each direction (into and from the mother tongue). For the Translator of Level Two test, candidates need to translate four passages, two from the compulsory section and the other two from the optional section. Candidates can bring two dictionaries into the examination hall, one from Chinese into the target language and the other from the target language into Chinese.

Candidates must pass both parts of the tests in one sitting in order to obtain the Translation Proficiency Qualification Certificate. The system of registration is implemented for the certificate, and registration is handled every three years. The bearers of the certificate need to show evidence of continuing education or professional

90

training at the time of re-registration.

NAETI (National Accreditation Examinations for Translators and Interpreters) was first launched in 2001 and organized and sponsored by the National Education Examinations Authority and Beijing Foreign Studies University. The examination is also open to the general public and there are no limitations on applicants' educational background and professional experience. The language pairs available for testing are Chinese/English and Chinese/Japanese.

NAETI offers four proficiency level examinations. Level One is the highest and Level Four the lowest. Level Four is to be first launched in October 2008. The competence represented by each level is as follows:

- *Level One Translator*: Certificate holders are able to translate difficult texts of different types and are competent in completing, vetting and finalizing translation texts in different conferences, corporations and organizations.

- *Level Two Translator*: Certificate holders are able to translate rather difficult texts of different types and are competent in completing, vetting and finalizing translation in technical, legal, financial and business-related texts in corporations and organizations and general texts in different international conferences.

- *Level Three Translator*: Certificate holders are able to translate texts of moderate difficulty and are competent in translating general and business-related texts in different corporations and organizations.

- *Level Four Translator* (only for Chinese/English): Certificate holders are able to accomplish basic translation tasks. Candidates are expected to have built a vocabulary of about 6,000 English words.

The fees for students taking these examinations are: RMB 840 (€86.3) (Level One Translator), RMB 420 (€43.2) (Level Two Translator), RMB 280 (€28.8) (Level Three Translator), RMB 140 (€14.4) (Level Four Translator). Individuals other than students

need to pay higher fees: RMB 1,200 (€123.3) (Level One Translator), RMB 600 (€61.7) (Level Two Translator), RMB 400 (€41.1) (Level Three Translator), RMB 200 (€20.6) (Level Four Translator).

The formats for the four levels of Translator tests (Chinese and English) are as follows:

- *Level One Translator*: There are two parts. The first part is translation from English into Chinese. Candidates need to translate three passages of about 400 words each. The second part is translation from Chinese into English. Candidates also need to translate three passages of about 400 words. The time allowed is three hours for each part.

- *Level Two Translator*: There are two parts. The first part is translation from English into Chinese. Candidates need to translate three passages of about 300 words each. The second part is translation from Chinese into English. Candidates also need to translate three passages of about 300 words. The time allowed is two hours for each part.

- *Level Three Translator*: There are two parts. The first is translation from English into Chinese. Candidates need to translate three passages of about 250 words each. The second part is translation from Chinese into English. Candidates also need to translate three passages of about 250 words. The time allowed is one hour and thirty minutes for each part.

- *Level Four Translator*: There are two parts. The first is translation from English into Chinese. Candidates need to translate three passages of about 200 words each. The second part is translation from Chinese into English. Candidates also need to translate three passages of about 200 words. The time allowed is one hour and fifteen minutes for each part.

Candidates taking the NAETI examinations are not allowed to use dictionaries.

The certificates are issued by the National Education Examinations Authority and Beijing Foreign Studies University. There is no time limit to the validity of the certificate earned.

Malaysia

The discussion on Malaysia is based on an article by Singh (2005) titled "Translation Accreditation Boards/Institutions in Malaysia". There are at present no translation accreditation boards in Malaysia. However, translators who are registered with the Malaysian National Institute of Translation (ITNMB) have to take a test. The test evaluates candidates' skills in translating documents from English into Malay. This is a new system that was implemented in 2005 to fulfill the ITNMB's need to identify translators for translating books. Translators must sit for a short examination in the general and specific fields in which they intend to translate.

The short examination is divided into three parts:

- Malay Grammar (10%): There are 100 objective questions.

- General Text Translation (45%): Candidates are required to translate a general text of about 500 words if it is a document and about 8–10 pages if it is a book.

- Special Text Translation (45%): This part deals with texts in a specialized field. Candidates are required to translate a text of about 500 words for a document and about 8–10 pages if it is a book relevant to the candidates' field of specialization.

Ireland

Founded in 1986, the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association (ITIA) is the only professional association in Ireland representing the interests of translators and interpreters. Apart from earning Professional Membership status, individuals can take the translation test and become ITIA Certified Translators. This translator certification

test was introduced in 2006 and is open to all ITIA Professional members who fulfill specific criteria.

The aim of ITIA in offering its members Certified Translator status is to achieve formal recognition for the profession, to set up a career path for Certified Translators so that they are recognized by the Irish legal system, government departments, state institutions and the business community, and to maintain the standards of professional excellence through continuing professional development programs.

A Certified Translator in Ireland has fulfilled all the certification criteria set by the Certification Sub-Committee of ITIA and whose main area of work covers the translation of legal and official documentation. The main requirements are Professional membership in ITIA and a successful result in two test translations. Professional ITIA members who want to sit for the Certified Translator test should submit an application form to the Certification Sub-Committee of ITIA. If the application is accepted, the applicant receives two test texts per language combination. Translators will be considered for certification of documents that are translated into their native language. In exceptional circumstances, translators with near-native competency may be considered for testing in their chosen language combination.

The translation of both texts, including an affidavit stating that the test translation as submitted is the candidate's own work, are to be returned within one week to the ITIA Certification Sub-Committee. If the candidate passes the test, the applicant will be issued with a certificate with two stamps: a rectangular 'certification' stamp and a round stamp bearing the applicant's given name and surname, the name of ITIA, the words "Certified Translator" and a registration number.

Following the issue of the initial certificate in a particular year, the certificates are renewable annually, subject to the payment of an annual subscription fee of €150. This fee also covers the annual ITIA membership subscription. The Certification

Sub-Committee reserves the right to review any Certified Translator's work every two to three years.

Taiwan

In Taiwan, the Chinese and English Translation Proficiency Examination was first launched in December 2007 and organized by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China Government. Its objectives are to establish an evaluation system for translation personnel in Taiwan and to improve the status of professional translators. According to Hsiang-ping Ma (2008), the Section Chief of the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations, the Ministry of Education, in the first Chinese and English Translation Proficiency Examination, about 700 candidates signed up for the English into Chinese Translation Test and about 400 took the Chinese into English Translation Test. A total of 56 candidates and 20 candidates respectively passed the tests, representing pass rates of about 8% and 5%. The reasons for the low pass rate probably include stringent requirements of the tests and the fact that they are open to anyone over the age of 18.

Candidates taking the English-Chinese Translation Test need to translate two texts of 240–270 English words each. Those taking the Chinese-English test are required to translate two texts of 380–420 Chinese characters each. These passages are non-specialized texts and do not involve specialized jargon, knowledge or concepts. Both texts are mandatory. The subject matter of the first text in each test may include commerce, finance, education and culture. That of the second text may include popular science, medicine and health care and information technology. Candidates have one hour to complete the translation of each text and they are not allowed to use dictionaries or any other reference materials. Candidates can take the English-Chinese Translation Test or the Chinese-English Translation Test or both in one sitting. However, they need

to pass both tests within a period of three years in order to obtain a certificate which is valid for three years. Each part of the tests costs TW$500 (€10.9).

4.3.3 More certification systems in the pipeline

A number of countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East are also seriously considering the idea of establishing their own certification systems.

India

The Indian Translators Association (ITAINDIA) was founded in 2003 by Ravi Kumar, a Spanish-English-Hindi translator and the owner of a location and language consultancy service company in India. ITAINDIA seeks to unite the translator and interpreter community in India on a common platform to address issues for the industry and take steps to ensure that its members provide services meeting professional standards of the industry.

ITAINDIA currently has more than 100 translators and interpreters from all over India as its members. The association focuses on the upgrading of knowledge and skills of its members by organizing workshops, raising quality awareness and creating a code of professional conduct. ITAINDIA membership is open to all individual translators, agencies and institutions that are interested in promoting the translation profession.

The association believes that accreditation is a mark of translators' quality. Accreditation is a benchmark for quality and increases the assurance of clients seeking professional language services. It can enhance translators' credibility and help the translation industry to grow. However, ITAINDIA does not have any specific plans for translator accreditation examinations yet.

Singapore

The following information is mostly based on a speech given by Lim Swee Say, the Deputy Secretary-General of National Trades Union Congress, Singapore, and the Minister of the Prime Minister's Office at the "Localized Economies, Globalized Languages: The Importance of Translation" Seminar on 10 May 2005.

Singapore is a multiracial and multilingual country, and its translation industry is estimated to be nearly S$8 million and employ about 550 full-time translators and interpreters and 500 freelancers and part-timers. The country is close to the emerging economies of China, India and other East Asian countries, and the demand for translation is on the rise.

In 2004, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, the lead agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry responsible for promoting the overseas growth of Singapore-based enterprises and international trade, initiated the establishment of a Translation and Interpretation Steering Committee to set directions for the development of the translation and interpretation industry in Singapore. The committee is chaired by an academic at the Nanyang Technological University and made up of representatives from the Economic Development Board, IE Singapore, Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING) Singapore and a number of industry players. The committee has formulated several strategies. SPRING Singapore was delegated to establish an accreditation system for translators and interpreters.

The Translation and Interpretation Steering Committee has also been instrumental in establishing the Singapore Translators Association (STA) to drive the development of the translation and interpretation industry in Singapore. The mission of STA includes attracting and retaining talented translators and interpreters, training and upgrading its members and raising its members' professionalism.

97

South Korea

In February 2008, the first officially recognized professional association of translators and interpreters, the Korean Association of Translation and Interpretation (KATI) was formed to help upgrade translation and interpretation work and services in the nation. There were about 100 selected members present in its inaugural ceremony in Seoul.

According to Kim Ji-myung, the Chief Director of KATI, one reason for starting the organization is that she has "frequently received complaints from the government and foreign clients about poor interpretation and translation services. It is because they used less skilled and unqualified interpreters and translators. In other words, there was no institute offering information about competent, high-experienced and qualified language experts".

To become KATI members, applicants need to have at least three years' experience in translation in one of the following eight languages: English, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, French, Spanish, German and Arabic. Then they must go through the association's stringent certification process to become regular members. The association is also working to issue an official license for translators and interpreters specialized in law.

Nigeria

As discussed, South Africa already has a translator certification system in place. Nigeria is another country in Africa that is in the process of developing its own translator certification examination. The Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters (NITI) is an offshoot of the Nigerian Association of Translators and Interpreters (NATI) which was established in 1978. NATI was founded by a group of professionals and professors who were involved in the study of linguistics. NITI was created in 1996, and the NITI

Bill was submitted to the National Assembly of Nigeria for enactment in 2001. It has been reported on the NITI website that the bill would make the practice of translation and interpretation regulated in such way that it would be an offence for those not authorized to claim to be members of the profession to practice, as in other professions such as accountancy, law, medicine and engineering. The bill passed its second reading on 8 May 2008 and should become law soon.

At the 8th NITI Congress and Workshop held in August 2008 in Abuja, Nigeria, and the theme was "Translation and Interpretation in West Africa Today and Tomorrow". One of the resolutions of the congress was to introduce admission examinations for new members which will be co-ordinated by Tundonu Amosu, the NITI National President and is envisaged to start in December 2008.

Israel

Founded in 1985, the Israel Translators Association (ITA) has the goal to enhance the status of translators, to raise professional standards and to provide a forum for professional enrichment. In pursuit of these goals, ITA is dedicated to:

- promoting the translation and interpretation professions;

- increasing public awareness as to what translators and interpreters actually do;

- encouraging practical and academic Translation and Interpretation Studies;

- fostering high professional standards; and

- providing our membership with theoretical and practical information and tools.

ITA has been striving to promote the quality of its members' professional work and the standing of the translation profession in general. At the 2007 Annual General Meeting of ITA, a proposed accreditation program was presented to the attendees. The Association's Accreditation Subcommittee has collected feedback from ITA members

99

and came up with a revised proposal to look at various options for implementing the accreditation system for the benefit of the profession in general and the ITA members in general.

From the above, we can see that there is indeed a proliferation of translator certification systems around the world. Even though translators in a certain country can take a translator certification examination which may be better established and better known, there is a tendency for countries to develop their own system. In addition, translation into non-mother tongues is tested in a number of countries, e.g. China, Japan and Taiwan. Lastly, professional translator associations or testing bodies have integrated information technology into their testing. Japan probably is the most prominent example. Candidates can send in their examination script using electronic mail and are tested on their translation technology knowledge.

4.4 Research questions and research hypotheses

The following questions act as the guiding force behind this research. They are the broader questions this research intends to answer.

(1) Do certification systems have any effect on the pay and work conditions of translators?

(2) Are translator certification examinations perceived to function as effective signals to translation service buyers?

(3) Apart from translator certification, what might be possible signals in the translation market?

To gain a better understanding of the translation profession and translator certification, the following are to be tested in this research:

(1) Certification systems have a positive effect on the pay and working conditions of

translators, and some certification systems have a more positive effect than others.

(2) There is a scale effect for translator certification systems. In other words, certification from a larger professional association is seen as more trustworthy.

(3) A one-off translator certification examination may not function as an effective signal. It has to be complemented with other methods, such as continuing professional development.

The hypotheses suggest a correlation between certification system (size, one-off, or dossier), signaling effect (effective, non-effective), rate of pay (high or low, as compared with the cost of living in a country), expressed satisfaction of translators (perception of rates of pay), and market sectors. The certification system is the independent variable. Rate of pay, expressed satisfaction of translators, and market sectors are the dependent variables.

4.5 Research instruments

A triangulation method is employed in this study to investigate the dependent variables, using a number of research procedures (corpus analysis, questionnaires, an experiment using fictitious résumés and interviews). Triangulation here means that a multi-method approach is used to investigate the same dependent variables. Its purpose is to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives. The point at which the perspectives converge is seen to show a representation of the reality. This approach has the advantage of enhancing the validity of research findings.

4.5.1 A corpus of job advertisements

A corpus of job advertisements is used to investigate the ways qualifications, certification, and work experience signal the skills of a translator. A variety of translation-related positions that were advertised in 2006 were analyzed. Based on empirical evidence collected from the corpus, the aim was to collect some background information about the current state of the translation profession in Hong Kong. The case of Hong Kong was used because of the complexity of the factors in the translator hiring process, the use of a case study might provide a clearer picture of the various inter-relationships involved in the translation market.

The job advertisements were taken from two sources: (1) JobDB.com. JobDB.com is one of the leading online recruitment networks in the Asia-Pacific region. It was founded in 1998 and has a large and comprehensive database with over 8 million job seeker members and over 140,000 corporate clients (www.jobdb.com.hk); (2) *South China Morning Post*. South China Morning Post (SCMP) Publishers Limited publishes the *South China Morning Post* and the *Sunday Morning Post*, the English language daily and Sunday newspapers with the highest circulation and readership in Hong Kong. SCMP is the only newspaper in Hong Kong whose job advertisements are included in the Robert Walters Asia Job Index to tracks advertisement volumes for professional positions in the Asian region (Japan's Corporate News 2008). Since this corpus analysis is predominantly a case study of Hong Kong, only Asian resources have been used. It needs to be noted that other classified posts in Hong Kong such as *Jiu Jik* (literally means "recruit professions") *Recruitment Guide* and *Recruit Magazine*, which contain predominantly job advertisements in Chinese but enjoy a much wider circulation, are not included because they mainly cater for clerical, technical and service-related positions.

Some of the jobs were advertised in more than one source simultaneously. Every effort was made to avoid duplication of advertisements in the database, which meant

that if a job was advertised in more than one source, only the first encounter was added to the database.

4.5.2 A survey of the certification of professional translators

The population of the survey of the certification of professional translators (CPT) is the professional translators working in different countries. The sampling procedure is not random. Instead, non-probability convenience sampling (Gillham 2008) is used. This sampling method, as known as accidental sampling, is a non-probability sampling procedure that involves the selection of the most readily available people or objects for a study. This sample will be compared with some wider surveys in the discussion of research findings.

The convenience sample of this questionnaire is based on a selection of cases which are readily accessible to the researcher. In the pilot stage of CPT, the students enrolled in the 2003 and 2004 International PhD Programs in Translation and Intercultural Studies in the Universitat i Virgili at Tarragona, Spain, were used as part of the sample for this questionnaire. The email questionnaire and a cover letter with instructions for completing the questionnaire were sent to the PhD program mail lists on 11 May 2005 (Appendices A and B). The questionnaire was completed on a voluntary basis and the names were not made public. Most members of this group are translators or translator trainers who have worked as part-time translators for many years. Also, as these international doctorate students come from different countries (Argentina, Croatia, Japan, Spain, etc.), the sample may represent a high level of independent variable variance.

Besides, between June 2005 and August 2006, the survey was posted on a number of translators' discussion lists and freelance translators' portals. With the help of

Anthony Pym, Teresa Lagos and Marta Rosas, the questionnaire was also put up on the ITIT (Innovations in Translator and Interpreter Training) discussion list hosted by Universitat Rovira i Virgili at Tarragona, Spain, founded in 2000, with 564 registered members at the time of writing, TRADUCCION (a discussion list on REDIRIS [Spanish National Research Network] which has 700 members all over the world), Literatti (a list for Brazilian Portuguese translators which has 632 members), and Babelport.com (a portal for freelance translators). Also, with the help of Jiri Stejskal, the survey was sent to the members of the American Translators Association who were listed on its website.

The snowball sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981) technique was used to some extent in this study. This sampling technique is a special non-probability method used when it may be extremely difficult or cost-prohibitive to locate respondents. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. Through snowball sampling, the researcher obtained help from some of the respondents to supply details of further cases. Of course, it needs to be borne in mind that this technique is likely to reduce the likelihood that the sample will represent a good cross section from the population.

For this survey, a semi-structured online questionnaire with a mixture of closed and open questions was sent to professional translators to collect data about the working conditions of translators and about the translator certification systems. The dependent variable is the perceived pay and working conditions. The main independent variables are certification systems and signaling effects.

The CPT questionnaire is relatively short and contains only ten questions. A shorter questionnaire may yield a higher response rate and more valid responses than a longer questionnaire, for which the response rate may be low. The response rate is a particular concern in this research, as professional translators are generally perceived to be busy

and overworked people.

Most of the items in the CPT questionnaire are open-ended questions that do not have a range of responses to choose from. Respondents are free to give their answers in their own words. This survey also includes two questions which require scaled responses (Question 3, "In general, how are translators paid in your country [1=extremely underpaid, 5=reasonably paid, 9=extremely well paid]?"). The response scale in these two questions has more points than the usual five-point Likert scale. A greater number of scale points is used because they are likely to produce greater variation. For example, if Question 3 had been asked with a five-point Likert scale (1=extremely underpaid, 2=underpaid, 3=reasonably paid, 4=well paid, 5=extremely well paid), most answers would likely cluster around 2 (underpaid).

The questionnaire in this survey was self-administered through email, which requires considerably less time and money than postal mail. There is virtually no bias against non-Internet users as some researchers (for example, Selwyn and Robson 1998) may suggest for email questionnaires. The reason is that, nowadays, almost all translators use the Internet as their main communication and research tool. A cover letter and instructions for completing the questionnaire were attached.

Descriptive and some inferential statistics are used here for quantitative data analysis. Qualitative analysis is also used for questions which ask respondents to provide additional information.

4.5.3 Translation industry certification survey: A survey of translation companies on translator certification and the translation profession

The population of the translation industry certification survey (TIC) is the vendor managers, i.e., the persons who are responsible for hiring translators in translation

companies. Stratified sampling is used in this case. In other words, translation agencies of different sizes are included in this survey. In July and August 2006, about 375 email messages were sent to vendor managers listed on ProZ and TranslatorsCafé, two largest online portals for translators according to Table 1, to ask for their assistance in completing the questionnaire on my3q.com. This is a popular and stable platform for online questionnaires and respondents should be able to access this site and complete the survey easily. For ProZ, translation companies are classified into: fewer than 5 in-house employees, 6–10 on-site staff, 11–20 on-site staff, 21–40 on-site staff, and more than 40 on-site staff. For TranslatorsCafé, translation agencies are classified into small, medium, and large, based on a number of criteria like the number of offices the agency has in various countries, the number of working languages of the agency, how actively the agency seeks translators (provides special email or online application form), etc. It is worth pointing out that many links to the translation agencies on ProZ and TranslatorsCafé are broken. This, to a certain extent, re-affirms the free entry and exit nature of translation market.

In addition, emails were sent to translation agencies around the world, using the American Translators Association List of Translation Agencies and Translators' Handbook, from June to August 2006. With the assistance of Jiri Stejskal, the survey was also sent to the translation company division members of American Translators Association in June 2006.

The TIC questionnaire contains 34 questions. The first part asks the respondents to provide information about themselves and their company. The second part is to elicit responses from the vendors regarding their perceived effectiveness of translator certification. Research subjects were asked whether they agree with some statements related to translator certification on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=strongly

agree). The cover letter and the questionnaire are reproduced in Appendices C and D.

Descriptive statistics is used for the quantitative data analysis.

4.5.4 Face-to-face interview: An experiment with the use of fictitious résumés

An experiment was also used to investigate the hiring behaviors of translation agencies and potential service buyers in Hong Kong. The aim was to examine the signaling power of translator certification. The experiment resembles Barlett's (2004) research on the signaling influence of occupational certification in the automobile service and information technology industries in the United States. Other studies that have adopted a similar approach are also briefly discussed in the following.

A consent form (Appendix E) was used, and a series of fictitious résumés (Appendix F) were developed using popular guidebooks for job seekers in Hong Kong (Chen 1997; Lam 2002), and about 20 authentic résumés of freelance translators collected by the author. These were then revised in consultation with a number of vendor managers in translation companies and translation teachers. The final 12 typical résumés represented applicants who differed in educational/professional qualifications and years of job experience. Other known variables that may influence the hiring process (including, but not limited to, age, gender, and prestige of the degree-granting universities) were either omitted or controlled. Variables such as the prestige of the degree-granting universities are controlled, meaning that those parts of the experiment remain the same. To be more specific, the Translation degrees granted by the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong are excluded, as they are the two most prestigious universities in Hong Kong (Public Opinion Programme, University of Hong Kong 2007).

Research using a similar experimental approach and fictitious résumés to explore the signaling power of various parameters in the hiring process emerged as early as the

mid-1970s. Dipboye, Fromkin and Wiback (1975) examine the variables of gender, physical attractiveness, and scholastic standing in the recruitment screening process. University students and professional recruiters were invited to rate a number of fictitious résumés which were manipulated to present combinations of the three variables. Experiment results showed that the university students rated job applicants more favorably than did the professional managers. Male candidates were rated more favorably than were female candidates. Physically attractive students and academic high-flyers were also rated more favorably than were others.

Additional applications of this method were used quite frequently in the 1980s. McIntyre, Moberg and Posner (1980) evaluate the treatment given to African American and female applicants in the employee selection process. Batcherlor, Bedenbaugh, Leonard and Posner (1987) explore the influence of personal attributes and academic background on the hiring of secondary school principals.

An innovative use of fictitious résumés is the research of Bertrand and Mullainathan (2003) to measure racial discrimination in the labor market in the United States. A number of fictitious résumés were designed and sent in response to newspaper job advertisements. Each résumé was assigned either a very African-American-sounding name or a very Caucasian-sounding name. About 5,000 résumés were sent in response to more than 1,300 job advertisements in Boston and Chicago. A record was kept of the number of telephone callbacks or email replies sent to an answering machine or email account listed for each fictitious résumé. The experiment results showed a significant negative discrimination effect against African-American-sounding names; Caucasian-sounding names received 50% more callbacks or email responses for interviews. This studies show that the use of fictitious resumes as a research instrument may generate interesting and useful insights about the recruiting behaviors in job market.

To be more specific, the research methodology of my experiment is based on a study of the signaling power of occupational certification in the United States carried out by Bartlett (2004). Barlett was interested in the message or signal an occupational certification sends to employers of entry-level workers in the automobile service and the information technology industries, as compared with the traditional academic qualification of a two-year community/technical college degree in the United States.

The respondents for my experimental study are the vendor managers or persons who are responsible for hiring translators in the translation companies in Hong Kong. ProZ, TranslatorsCafe and Yellow Pages Hong Kong were used to approximate a population for sampling. A stratified sampling of managers responsible for hiring freelance translators was drawn. The sample includes companies of various sizes.

The variables used in this study are briefly discussed here. The dependent variable is the perceived suitability for employment in the respondent's firm. But this construct is ambiguous, so it is explained to respondents in two ways. Managers are first asked if the individual represented by the résumé would be suitable for the post of a freelance translator in the respondent's organization. Second, managers are asked what additional educational or professional qualifications the applicant would need in order to be considered hirable.

The independent variables in this study are educational/professional qualifications and level of previous work experience. There are four categories for educational qualifications. The fictitious résumés represent applicants with and without translator certification and with and without a bachelor's degree in English. To be more specific, the four treatment conditions are: (1) neither professional translator certification nor university degree in English; (2) professional translator certification but no university degree in English; (3) university degree in English but no professional translator certification; and (4) both professional translator certification and university degree in

English.

Previous work experience is the other independent variable used in this study. Based on the questionnaire results conducted by this author, this variable is divided into categories representing most applicants for freelance translators. Levels of previous work experience are: (1) no work experience; (2) 3 years or less (fewer than 35 months) of freelance translation experience; (3) more than 3 years but less than 8 years.

Treatment variables are those that are manipulated on the fictitious résumés. In this study, they are considered to be the absence, presence, or combination of the two independent variables mentioned above. The combination of variables translates into 12 variations, representing 12 different résumés and this is shown in Table 3.

The semi-structured interview method was used to collect data. Semi-structured interview is an interview technique to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation that allows a respondent the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. Open-ended questions are used to understand the respondent's point of view.

For this semi-structured interview, a minimum target of 8 respondents was set. They are managers responsible for hiring freelance translators in Hong Kong.

Table 3: Variables and cell analysis matrix for fictitious résumés

1 Qualifications: Secondary School Cert. Experience: None	2 Qualifications: Secondary School Cert. Experience: Less than 3 years	3 Qualifications: Secondary School Cert. Experience: 3–8 years	4 Qualifications: Degree in English Experience: None	5 Qualifications: Degree in English Experience: Less than 3 years	6 Qualifications: Degree in English Experience: 3–8 years
7 Qualifications: CIoL's Diploma in Translation Experience: None	8 Qualifications: CIoL's Diploma in Translation Experience: Less than 3 years	9 Qualifications: CIoL's Diploma in Translation Experience: 3–8 years	10 Qualifications: Degree in English and CIoL's Diploma in Translation Experience: None	11 Qualifications: Degree in English and CIoL's Diploma in Translation Experience: Less than 3 years	12 Qualifications: Degree in English and CIoL's Diploma in Translation Experience: 3–8 years

Key:

Qualifications

None   Holds neither Chartered Institute of Linguists' Diploma in Translation nor a

	degree in English language
Degree in English	Holds a bachelor's degree in English language only
IoL's Diploma in Translation	Holds a Chartered Institute of Linguists' Diploma in Translation (with English as the source language and Chinese as the target language)
Degree in English and IoL's Diploma in Translation	Holds both a bachelor's degree in English language and a Chartered Institute of Linguists' Diploma in Translation

Experience
- No work experience in translation
- Less than 3 years of work experience in translation
- 3–8 years of work experience in translation

Interview participants are first asked to read and sign a consent form (Appendix E). They are then required to complete a short form intended to gather facts about their personal information and the characteristics of their firm. The one-to-one interview begins with an overview of the interview structure. Vendor managers are then asked to imagine that their firm had published an advertisement for a freelance translator in a newspaper or on a website. In response, they had received 12 résumés. No cover letter or other information is provided about the applicants. They need to rank the résumés from 1st to 12th, based on their view of each applicant's suitability for the job of a freelance translator in their company.

After the most suitable candidate has been chosen, respondents are asked: (1) What characteristics of this résumé appeal to you? (2) What specific features of the résumé indicate to you that this person would be suitable for the job of a freelance translator in your firm? (3) How do these characteristics make the applicant the most suitable for the job?

The résumés are then set aside and managers are asked to consider a hypothetical situation wherein they are considering two applicants identical in every way except for the educational/professional qualification. One applicant is described as holding a university degree in English language and no professional translator certification. The

other applicant holds professional translator certification but no university degree. This question seeks to provide an additional direct measure of the signaling power of the two educational/professional qualifications under study. "Experience" is also included in the résumés, to elicit the respondents' views on the variable.

To determine the appropriateness of the fictitious résumés and the research design, a pilot test was conducted in January 2007. Two vendor managers were selected. They were asked to provide detailed feedback on each résumé and the research method.

After the research methodology had been discussed in detail, the next chapter provides an analysis of the research findings.

5. Research findings

The research findings obtaining from the research instruments (a corpus of job advertisements, questionnaires, an experiment using fictitious résumés and interviews) are presented in Section 5.1 to 5.4.

5.1 A corpus of job advertisements

This corpus of job advertisements contains mostly qualitative data such as types of jobs, types of companies seeking translators, language pairs and the level of fluency required, academic qualifications, translator certification and other requirements. The relatively small number of adverts (66) means that the analysis is descriptive rather than inferential. In other words, data have been just summarized or described, and extreme caution has been taken when making any inferences or generalizations about the population. The job adverts included in this corpus were read repeatedly and analyzed critically by the researcher, following the strategies of analytic induction recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Smelser and Baltes (2001). During this process,

recurrent themes and salient comments were identified.

The focus of this research is to investigate the ways academic qualifications and professional certifications signal the skills of a translator from the perspective of those who employ translators or translation-related professionals. This survey attempts to provide a snapshot of the current state of the translation profession in Hong Kong. The translation profession as it is portrayed in this corpus of job adverts reveals the attitudes and expectations held by employers, which might not be the same as those held by professional translators (dealt with by another research instrument). Although the corpus covers only the translation market of Hong Kong, it may show some general situations in other bilingual countries and regions.

Before interpreting the data, it is worth pointing out some of the possible limitations of the corpus. First, this corpus can be said to be a "truncated" sample. In statistics, this means that the sample is drawn from a distribution that is cut at a certain point called the truncation point, and only observations below or above that point (Cohen and Cohen 2001) can be revealed. In other words, this corpus of job adverts does not provide a comprehensive coverage of the job market for translators in Hong Kong. As translators' online marketplaces such as ProZ and TranslatorsCafé have become more popular, it is believed that quite a number of translation assignments are allocated through these electronic marketplaces rather than through the more traditional channel of classified job adverts in a newspaper. However, since the job postings on electronic translator marketplaces reveal mostly information about the requirements of the translation tasks concerned rather than what signals translation companies look for when recruiting translators. Therefore, ProZ, TranslatorsCafé and other online platforms are not included in this survey. The more "traditional" job adverts used in this research may not be a true and complete reflection of the situation in the translation market.

Another limitation of the corpus is that it can only provide information about jobs

113

that have been advertised. In other words, positions exist but that have not had a turnover in personnel are not represented. For example, in Hong Kong, the turnover of Chinese Language Officers (despite the name, the position holders are mainly responsible for supporting the translation work of various government bureaus and departments) in the government has been low (Civil Service Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government 2003). In addition, jobs that are not advertised, such as the positions for which employers communicate directly with candidates, are not represented in the corpus.

Finally, even though a job advert lists desired skills, it is not possible for us to know whether the successful candidate actually met these criteria. It may be that the organization concerned was, for various reasons, willing to settle for a candidate with lesser qualifications, or the company may have been fortunate enough to hire a candidate who surpassed the minimum advertised qualifications. It may even happen that the position was not filled at all.

In spite of the limitations of the corpus outlined above, these job adverts can still offer some interesting insights into the current state of translation, as well as the types of skills and qualifications that are in demand by employers in Hong Kong. The following sections present and discuss data from the corpus under the following headings: number and types of jobs, types of companies, languages, academic qualifications, translator certification and other requirements.

5.1.1 Number and types of jobs

As stated in the section on research methodology, the total number of job adverts in the database is 66. Thirty-one (47%) of them were taken from online job recruitment websites, and 35 were collected from one of the most popular classified posts in Hong Kong, *South China Morning Post* (SCMP 2007). Forty-six or 69.7% of these job adverts

stated that they were specifically looking for translators of various types and language pairs. The remaining job adverts either mentioned "translation" as one of the job duties or said that they would like people majoring in Translation to apply for the openings. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the job adverts for translators and translation-related positions.

Table 4: Summary of job adverts for positions requiring translation work

Job type	Number of adverts in corpus	Percentage
Translator	46	69.7%
Editor	7	10.6%
Corporate communication officer	3	4.5%
Manager/Administrator/Project coordinator	3	4.5%
Publishing officer	2	3%
Reporter	1	1.5%
Copywriter	1	1.5%
Writer	1	1.5%
Translation resource centre administrator	1	1.5%
Teacher	1	1.5%
TOTAL	**66**	**100%**

Nearly 70% of the job adverts were looking for translators with various specializations (financial, legal and marketing-related) and language pairs (English/Chinese, Japanese/Chinese). Although the remaining job adverts did not specifically mention the job title of translator, translation is mentioned explicitly in the job requirements, or a degree in Translation was listed as one of the academic qualifications. This requirement shows that bilingual skills are in great demand for quite a number of job openings in Hong Kong and, in the eyes of employers, the possession of a university degree in Translation might be an indication of the language skills of the holders. Take the publishing industry as an example. A degree in translation studies may merely indicate the holders are well equipped with good written language skills.

Although localization is one of the fastest growing fields in the language industry, only one related job advert specifically looked for a project coordinator to manage

115

language translation and localization projects. The job was offered by a large translation company whose headquarters is in Switzerland. According to the US-based research and consulting company, Common Sense Advisory (2007), this company is one of the top ten LSPs (language service providers) in the world. As stated in this advert, the successful applicant would work "as part of an international team". This partly reflects the reality that localization projects are almost always initiated in North America and Europe but, because of economic considerations, some translation and localization projects are carried out in mainland China or other developing countries with lower labor costs (Arora and Gambardella 2004). Though it seems that exact figures on how much localization work has been carried out in mainland China cannot be found, the fact that LISA Forum Asia 2008 "Outsourcing Globalization and IT Services to China" is held in Beijing shows to some extent the importance of mainland China as an Asian localization centre.

5.1.2 Types of companies seeking positions requiring translation work

Table 5: Summary of types of companies seeking positions requiring translation work

Type of company	Number of adverts in corpus	Percentage
Financial translation companies and language service providers	13	19.7%
Public relations, marketing, advertising and management consultancy	10	15.2%
Government departments and non-profit organizations	9	13.6%
Recruitment agencies	7	10.6%
Telecommunications, IT and engineering companies	6	9.1%
Publishing companies	5	7.6%
Banks and insurance firms	3	4.5%
Japanese companies	3	4.5%
Multinational corporations	3	4.5%
Educational institutions	2	3.0%
Audio and visual companies	2	3.0%
Law firms	1	1.5%

116

Cosmetics companies	1	1.5%
Not known	1	1.5%
TOTAL	**66**	**100%**

These job adverts show that the translation market is highly diverse and segmented. This diversity echoes other surveys showing that the translation market remains very fragmented (for example, Boucau 2006). Perhaps not surprisingly, about 35% of the job adverts looked for financial, legal and business-related translators. This is in line with other surveys of translators. For example, according to the *Canadian Translation Industry Technology Roadmap 2003–2007*, the current and future needs for translation are greatest in the areas of business and finance. This is true for Canada and quite likely for other markets as well.

One company's description reads something likes this:

[A] leading financial printer with 24-hour in-house fill service capacities integrating typesetting, translation and printing services with design and advertising. With over 20 translators, Company X is the largest translation house in Hong Kong specializing in the translation of financial and legal documents.

Although the job advert claims that "very attractive packages and excellent opportunities are now offered to candidates… [who] would like to seek long-term career development of the translation industry", the company accepted applicants from a wide range of disciplines like Communication and Business Administration in addition to Translation.

This job advert shows that translation companies have the perception that virtually anyone with a university degree can become a translator. What is illustrated in the job advert might be a result of the high turnover of translators. However, hiring anyone who has knowledge of two languages, and perhaps a university degree, might

not solve the problem of the shortage of translators. Worse still, it may do a disservice to the status of translators.

The description of one small translation company showed that it was looking for "a master of all trades": "We are a small organization looking for someone who will not only be responsible for Chinese translations, but will also be responsible for running the office, and for extending the businesses". This may illustrate the fact the modern corporations requires their employees who are flexible and able to multi-task. However, as the application of a specialist skill has long been seen as one of the important characteristics of a profession (Monopolies Commission 1970; cited in Becher 1999), this job advertisement provides some evidence to the fact that translation cannot be considered as a full-fledged profession yet.

The description of one of the companies also shows another trend in the translation business: more and more translation service providers have become clicks with, or even without, bricks and mortars. Another description of an employer states: "[A] provider of online language solutions to corporations and individuals. Our online services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all over the world". This quotation not only highlights the importance of the Internet to both translation buyers and sellers but also supports the importance of globalism in which "boundaries are ignored and place and time are transcended" (Schaeffer 2000).

5.1.3 Language pairs

Perhaps not surprisingly, a great majority of these job adverts in Hong Kong looked for English/Chinese translators. Although the Chinese language did not achieve official language status under the Hong Kong Basic Law until 1990, Hong Kong was a *de facto* bilingual colony during the 154 years of British rule. Since the handover in July 1997, Chinese has been in much wider use in Hong Kong. According to the survey done by Li

118

(1999), there are now more documents written in Chinese, both in government and commercial sectors. In particular, in recent years, there has been a surge of listing activities of Chinese enterprises in the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. As the listing documents are required to be provided in both Chinese and English, the demand for translation services, especially Chinese-English translation, has risen.

Therefore, although most translation students in Hong Kong receive more training in translation from English into Chinese, today translators in Hong Kong need to translate from Chinese into English, contrary to what they had to do when Hong Kong was under the British governance. They need to write better English than most of them had previously thought, thus making it necessary for them to change from English as a passive language to English as an active language.

This is to some extent against the conventional wisdom that professional translators should translate into their mother tongue or language of habitual use only. In this corpus of job adverts, 19 or 29% explicitly require the applicants to translate both ways, English into Chinese as well as Chinese into English. For example, one job advert stated that one of the job duties was to "translate and proofread financial, legal and commercial documents from Chinese and English and vice versa". This echoes Campbell's (1998) observation of the Australian case in which commercial interests call for translators working into the second language. In fact, translation in second language is not only "common in languages with restricted distribution" (Pokorn 2005:37) but also "in larger linguistic communities which are pushed into a peripheral position because of the global distribution of power and in major-language societies when communicating with ethnic minorities. Snell-Hornby (1997; cited in Kelly et al. 2003: 26) summarizes this succinctly, "[T]ranslation into English non-mother tongue is a fact of modern life". A comprehensive literature of the pervasive phenomenon of translation into second language can be found in Pavlović's (2007) unpublished PhD thesis.

This job requirement of translating in and out of English could also be found in government organizations of Hong Kong. For example, the Official Language Division of the Civil Service Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Independent Commission Against Corruption stated that the prospective employees need to "translate into English and vice versa".

Only one job advert looked specifically for "native foreign translators (European and Asian languages)". It was stated that a language management consultancy company was looking for "good native translators to join [its] translators' team who can read and write foreign languages including French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, Japanese, Korean, etc. All translators must be native speakers or living in that particular country for more than 5 years".

Although no hard data exist to support the claim that it is impractical to find sufficient native English speakers to do the Chinese-English jobs in Hong Kong, according to this researcher's experience in the field, it is common to find a bilingual Chinese person to first do the Chinese-English translation work and then let a native English speaker edit the draft. This practice has been followed elsewhere. For example, according to Lise (1997):

> Contrary to the common wisdom outside Japan, almost all of Japan's Japanese-English translation is done by Japanese writing English as a foreign language, which is then the object of heroic damage-repair efforts by foreign rewriters. (27)

Campbell cited a somewhat dated argument of Ahlsvad (1978) in which he discusses, from the viewpoint of the translation of Finnish forestry texts into English, four grounds on which it is unreasonable or undesirable to insist that translators work into the mother tongue: (1) It is impossible to find sufficient foreigners in Finland able to work as

translators, and in any case, foreigners seldom acquire a good enough passive command of Finnish; (2) In technical translation, accuracy is more important than felicity of style; (3) It is more important for the translator to know the subject matter than to be a native speaker of the target language; and (4) It is claimed that proper training can produce competent non-native translators, whose work will be checked by native speakers anyway. More recently, referring also to the Finnish case, McAlester (1992: 92) noted that the "volume of work exceeds the number of available translators who are major language native speakers". McAlester reaches a conclusion similar to Campbell's, that is, most of translation out of "minor" languages (such as Finnish) is inevitably done by native speakers of those languages.

It is interesting to note that nine job adverts (13.6%) involved Japanese. The reason is that Japanese business and culture have a strong presence in Hong Kong (Lee 2006). Japan is Hong Kong's third largest trading partner after mainland China and the United States, and there are approximately 2,100 Japanese companies with offices are in Hong Kong. There are also many Japanese comic books, television series and other cultural artifacts which need to be translated into Chinese for local consumption.

5.1.4 Academic qualifications

Of the job adverts, 77.4% (51) specified that candidates should hold a university degree. Only one (0.02%) stated that a higher diploma would suffice. Of the remaining 12 (18.2%) that did not specify any academic qualification requirements, 8 were looking for Japanese translators.

In Hong Kong, the overall post-secondary participation rate for the 17 to 20 age group is 66% in the 2005–06 academic year (Hong Kong SAR Government 2005). Regarding the Translation degree programs, eight higher learning institutes offer post-secondary-level academic programs in Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong,

Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, City University of Hong Kong, Baptist University, Lingnan University, The Open University of Hong Kong and Caritas Francis Hsu College (for a survey of the translation courses in Hong Kong, see Liu 1998 and Li 2005). The data in the corpus seem to indicate that employers recognize and demand a post-secondary level of education.

5.1.5 Translator certification

Of the 66 employers in this corpus of job adverts, only one indicated that it would consider professional qualifications equivalent to a recognized degree in translation. Although Hong Kong does not have a professional association dedicated to translation, Hong Kong residents can take the examinations offered by the Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, locally. For instance, the Institute's Final Diploma in English and Chinese (to be replaced by International Diploma in Bilingual Communication in 2008) is recognized as equivalent to a bachelor's degree by the Hong Kong government, and the Diploma in Translation is commonly believed to be equivalent to a vocational Master's degree.

In the publishing, corporate communication and public relations industries, although translation and bilingual capabilities are one of the key skills, employers have little interest in any professional qualifications from within the translation profession, as they are not looking for a translator and they might have little understanding of the translation process. What is more striking and worrying is that, in this corpus, even among those companies providing translation and language services, translation certification was never mentioned as one of the requirements.

One interesting point is that a language examination is often mentioned in job adverts looking for Japanese translators: Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). Although no translator certification examination is mentioned in these adverts, a pass in

JLPT Level One (the highest level that can be attained in the test) is listed clearly in all adverts looking for a Japanese translator. The proficiency test examines the test takers' writing, listening, reading, vocabulary and grammar, but no translation is involved (Society of Japanese Language Education Hong Kong 2007). This reflects the employers' perception that employees with a high Japanese proficiency, rather than bilingual capabilities, can perform the tasks of translation well and that this test can act as an effective indicator for good Japanese translators.

5.1.6 Other requirements

Experience is often cited as the essential difference between a professional translator and a person who is not yet a translator. As Robinson (2003) aptly puts it: "A translator has professional experience; a novice doesn't". The job adverts in this corpus look for different levels of translators from junior translators with a minimum of one year's experience to senior translators with four or more years of experience.

Another job requirement that is often listed in other surveys of translator job adverts is a command of information technology. Bowker's (2004) survey of translator job adverts in Canada shows 60.5% of them required computer literacy and 18.3% required knowledge of specialized translation memory tools. O'Hagan (1996) also points out that, as a result of the introduction of information technology into translation, computers have become an indispensable part in the translators' toolbox.

However, perhaps surprisingly, only 25 (38%) of the job adverts did mention that the applicants should be computer literate and able to handle Chinese/Japanese word-processing software packages. Only 2 (3%) specified the need to be able to handle more sophisticated publishing software such as PageMaker and translation memory tools.

The computer software packages mentioned include Microsoft Word, Excel,

PowerPoint, Adobe Acrobat and Outlook. In addition, fast and accurate Chinese typing skills are essential if translators deal with English-Chinese translations. Chinese characters are inputted by means of pronunciation, the structure of the characters or a combination of both. Currently, there are 21 Chinese input methods for computers. A standard input method has not yet evolved. Therefore, fast Chinese typing skills are essential to the work of English-Chinese translators. The case for Japanese is simpler. There are two main methods of inputting Japanese on computers. One is via a romanized version of Japanese called Roman letters, and the other is via keyboard keys corresponding to the Japanese *kana*.

Being able to deal with traditional Chinese and simplified Chinese characters is highlighted in a few job adverts. The technical aspect of this is relatively easy, but there are still terminological differences in different Chinese locales. For example, *quality* is usually rendered as *pinzhi* in Taiwan, *suzhi* in mainland China and *zhisu* in Hong Kong. Also, since the signing in 1984 of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong, Hong Kong has been receiving more influence from mainland China. More businesses are connected with mainland China today than ever before (Lie 1995). Translators in Hong Kong now have to translate more China-related documents.

The translation memory tools listed include Trados, SDLX and Wordfast. In these tools, the translated texts are stored with the corresponding original texts and the texts are stored in translation units or segments. Two possible reasons might be used to explain why there is scant evidence of the requirements for the mastery of translation memory tools. One is that translation memory tools are not popular in Hong Kong's translation companies, which tend to be small- to medium-sized. The other might be that the sample of this corpus of job adverts includes most companies that do not require translation memory tools.

According to this author's experience in the translation field, in Hong Kong the

financial translation market is dominated by a few multinational translation and printing corporations, and in this corpus their presence is not significant. These companies use translation memories extensively to deal with the translation of prospectuses and annual reports, which contain a huge amount of repetitive elements. Sometimes, the cost of purchasing translation memories is partially shifted to freelancers as translators have to pay for the translation memories themselves.

However, in this corpus, a predominant proportion of job adverts belong to small- to medium-sized translation companies, government departments or public corporations and companies hiring language professionals who have many language and administration-related duties other than translation. It is quite unlikely that these organizations utilize translation memories, because the nature of their translation work is more ad hoc.

5.2 Research findings—A survey of the certification of professional translators

This survey of professional translators contains both quantitative and qualitative data. The sample has 55 respondents, and descriptive and some inferential statistical analysis is used. It needs to be stressed that the results from this relatively small sample are to be compared with wider surveys in the following discussion. The channels through which the subjects were collected have been thoroughly discussed in Section 4.5.2.

5.2.1 Translators in the intercultures

The sample covers respondents from different continents: Europe—12 countries, 27 respondents (Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom), North America—1 country, 12

respondents (United States, including Puerto Rico), Latin America—3 countries, 8 respondents (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico), Australasia—1 country, 2 respondents (Australia) and Asia—2 countries, 6 respondents (China, including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and South Korea).

The countries are of different population sizes (China has a population of about 1.32 billion; Estonia has 1.3 million people as of July 2007 [est.]) and at different stages of economic development (Australia, which is a developed country, had an estimated GDP per capita of US$37,500 in 2007 after adjusting for purchasing power parity; while China, which is a less developed country, had US$5,300). With regard to translator certification systems, Australia has a well-developed system, established in 1977 and run by NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters). China introduced translator and interpreter certification tests only in 2003, through the Ministry of Personnel (for details see Xu 2005 and Zhang 2006).

Table 6 shows the breakdown of respondents by country according to their answers to Question 1 in the questionnaire: "Which country are you currently working in?"

Table 6: Country respondents currently working in

Country/Region	Number of respondents
United States	10
United Kingdom	5
Spain	5
Brazil	4
China	3
Croatia	3
Argentina	2
Australia	2
Finland	2
Hong Kong SAR	2
Italy	2
Mexico	2
The Netherlands	2
Portugal	2
Puerto Rico	2
Romania	2
Estonia	1
Germany	1
South Korea	1

Sweden	1
Turkey	1
TOTAL	**55**

At first glance, the question seems to be straightforward and unproblematic, but one respondent pointed out that it was difficult for her to answer. She said, "[It is d]ifficult to say, in my case, I work from Brazil, Ireland, Spain and now Italy. My steady clients are based in Brazil, Ireland and Switzerland. I have some 'unsteady' clients in the US and Spain." She finally decided to put down Brazil as her country. One respondent from Puerto Rico stated, "Puerto Rico is my home country but I also have clients in Europe, the USA and Mexico." Another remarked that she was "formerly in Mexico" before moving to Finland.

We note that the clients of the translators in this survey are from five continents—Australasia, Asia, Europe, South America and North America—a common phenomenon for professional translators in today's global village. This reflects an era of globalization when translation and localization assignments are increasingly delivered through the Internet and people's mobility is ever increasing. For this reason, it is rather difficult to restrict the work of freelance translators to a specific country. As Pym (1993) points out, "The market is increasingly decentralized, becoming national and international rather than intra-city". He suggests that translators should better be viewed as an "intercultural community". They are becoming "nomadic, especially as assisted by electronic communication" (Pym 2000).

4.2.2 Translators wearing many hats

As shown in Table 7, the respondents in this survey have many years of experience working as translators:

Table 7: Years of experience working as a translator

Years of experience	Number of respondents	Percentage
5 or under	7	14%
6 to 15	22	44%
16 to 25	10	20%
More than 25	10	20%
Not answered	1	2%

From Table 7, we can see that most translators in this survey are experienced to very experienced. The arithmetic mean is 15.64 years. The experience distribution of this sample is in line with that of larger-scale surveys. For example, there were 1,509 respondents in the 2005 ATA's Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey (Six 2006) and the experience distribution is similar (0–5 years, 20.7%; 6–10 years, 23%; 11–15 years, 20.6%, 16–20 years, 13.4% and 21+ years, 22.3%).

It is well known that translators usually wear many hats. In a survey initiated by the Language National Training Organisation of the United Kingdom (Schellekens 2004), which has 305 individual translators and interpreters as its sample, just over 50% of the respondents stated that they worked in another capacity in addition to working as translators/interpreters. The most common jobs they have taken up are language-related, such as lecturer/teacher/tutor and writer/journalist. (Interestingly, in the British survey, one respondent works as an agricultural laborer and another as a window cleaner.) In Fraser and Gold's (2001) analysis of 253 United Kingdom-based freelance translators as an "ambiguous group", their work may include freelance editing, indexing and proofreading.

Our survey, to some extent, echoes the finding that translators usually wear many hats. A typical example is a respondent from Spain who works as a translator, an interpreter and a university lecturer. There are also interpreters who report doing translation work as a sideline. A respondent from Italy stated that he had worked as a translator for "about 15 [years] but marginally" as he preferred to work "as an

interpreter". A university teacher in Mexico has worked part-time as a translator for 10 years, and another respondent from Mexico reported that she has worked "on and off" in translation for twenty years.

Many translators work part-time or as freelancers. It is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify exactly the size of the pool of freelance translators. According to the estimate given by Boucau (2005), "There are 100,000 freelance translators in Europe and over 200,000 in the world". This "veritable proliferation in the amount of freelance work carried out by both part-time and freelance translators" (Verrinder 1989: 29) is because of the changes in the employment patterns of translators due to globalization and shifts in management theory and practice. As Fry (1995: 3) notes, "[Translation]—like sales—is a profession which is traditionally open to all comers. In many countries, be they developed (like England or Germany) or developing (like the Central European republics), anyone can call themselves a translator—and many frequently do".

5.2.3 Are most translators underpaid?

This survey asks translators to report on how well they are paid. This is by all means a subjective question, and the answer is to some extent predictable: all of us would like to earn more and have a better material life. However, this question is worthwhile because it might elicit answers that are contrary to the belief that most translators are underpaid. Such answers may reveal idiosyncratic information about translators and the translation profession in different countries.

In fact, the instances of well-paid translators have been reported and quite often in a high-profile manner. As Inglis (2000) points out, "[In] the globalized market, many interpreters and a smaller (but significant) group of translators in the private sector are earning 6-figure [US] dollar incomes". According to the Summary of American

Translation Association's Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey 2005, the highest gross income earned by a full-time independent translation service contractor was US$54,205 (Six 2006). However, these would seem to be exceptions rather than the rule. According to a recent unpublished M.Sc. thesis (Leech 2005), which provides some evidence to this author's discussion of "low income and asymmetric information" (Chan 2005), "[T]ranslator respondents disliked being expected to haggle over their rates, yet a staggering 81% confirmed that they are willing to cut their rates" (75). Table 8 shows the perception of the 55 respondents on how translators are paid in general.

Table 8: How well translators perceive themselves being paid

How are translators paid?	Number of respondents	Percentage
1=extremely underpaid	8	14.55%
2=very badly paid	4	7.27%
3=badly paid	7	12.73%
4=quite badly paid	14	25.45%
5=reasonably paid	14	25.45%
6=quite well paid	3	5.45%
7=well paid	3	5.45%
8=very well paid	0	-
9=extremely well paid	0	-
Other answers	2	3.64%

As shown in Table 8, 60% of the respondents believe that translators are underpaid, but only about 15% feel that translators are "extremely underpaid". One respondent points out that the "*general perception* by translators (on mailing lists and the like) *seems* to be that they are underpaid" (my emphasis). This highly qualified statement suggests that the situation in the real world may be more complicated and not accurately depicted by a sweeping statement like "translators are underpaid".

A university lecturer in Brazil who works part-time as a translator states that the pay of translators "varies enormously'. This may be a more accurate reflection of the real situation. In a survey of employment conditions among interpreters and translators in Britain, conducted by Amicus in September 2004 (*What do Interpreters and*

Translators Talk About Among Themselves?), translation rates (interpretation included) can be as high as £54.00 or as low as £4.00 per hour (which is below the British national minimum wage of £4.10 in 2004).

Some respondents point out that "How are translators paid?" is a difficult question to answer because there are a number of other variables affecting the pay of translators. According to one respondent, it depends on whether one works for translation bureaus or as an independent contractor: "People working for translation bureaus [are] between underpaid and reasonably paid, depending on their qualification and task. People working as freelancers and contacted directly by the client [are] reasonably paid to extremely well-paid".

Fourteen respondents, from Australia, Croatia (2), Finland, Hong Kong SAR, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States believe that translators are reasonably paid. One may wonder whether this is because of the existence of a translation certification system in these countries. Indeed, in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, the translator certification systems are quite well developed. NAATI has been developing translation professionalism in Australia for more than thirty years. ATA, the American Translators Association, the largest professional association of translators and interpreters in the United States, has offered a certification examination program since 1973. On the other shore of the Atlantic Ocean, the Chartered Institute of Linguists (IoL) and the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI), the two major professional translator organizations in the United Kingdom, have been providing certification examinations of various language pairs and are working together on the establishment and administration of the new designation of Chartered Linguist.

The two respondents from Croatia said that translators are reasonably paid. They are subtitlers. One of them said the job of a subtitler in Croatia and in other European

131

countries is more or less the same, judging by "what my colleagues told me at one conference on audiovisual translation I attended in Germany".

The respondents who feel that translators are "well-paid" come from Australia, the United States and Germany. The translator certification systems in these countries are relatively well developed. The respondent from Australia said, "Only accredited translators by this organization [NAATI] are eligible to practice, and translators as freelancers can set their own conditions and price". A translator from the United States noted, "It may be easier to find jobs when you are certified". The translator certification system in Germany is also well developed. According to Schröder (1996), membership in the *Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und ÜberseTzer* (BDÜ), the national translation/interpretation organization in Germany, means something: clients are aware of what the BDÜ is and that its members are well qualified translators. Furthermore, many of the regional organizations within the BDÜ work on negotiating fixed tariffs for freelance translation with the government of different *Länder* (states). This suggests that there is a positive correlation between translator certification and pay/working conditions.

One respondent suggested a way out for his overworked and underpaid colleagues: "I actually think translators (generally speaking) are pretty badly paid in Spain. The only option we have is working for foreign companies or using our language skills in other jobs (marketing, management) or even trying to work at university. If that's the case, salaries go up, but then we are moving away from what we were trained for!" This suggests that translators will leave the field if their pay is low. When problems of asymmetric information cannot be solved, better translators may leave the translation market for jobs in fields like marketing and management. Adverse selection, i.e. "good translators are being driven out", is likely to occur.

5.2.4 Payment per word in different countries

Table 9: Translation payment per word in different countries (in euros)

Country	Rate per word reported by translators	Aquarius rate per word (Accessed 6.2.2008)
Spain	0.04	0.06283-0.25951
Brazil	0.057–1.10 (per character)	0.10227
Croatia	0.05	0.04799–0.36623
Argentina	0.03/0.25	0.14411–0.22595
Finland	0.10	0.03644–0.16148
Mexico	0.03	0.05640–0.13236
Portugal	0.05/0.65	0.10227
Romania	0.005 (per character)	0.09564–0.06228
Australia	0.1–0.15	0.05510–0.05934
China	0.01–0.04	0.06378–0.10993
Hong Kong	0.00035*–0.13	0.05011–0.26204
Estonia	2 (per letter)*	0.02379–0.02940
Germany	0.02 (per character)	0.09674–0.24564
Italy	0.05	0.70539–42.4754*
Sweden	0.15	0.05681–0.13550
The Netherlands	0.15/0.16	0.29910–0.30484
Turkey	0.01	0.21330–0.28495
United Kingdom	0.1–0.134	0.71763–0.83734
United States	0.068–0.11	0.43419–0.66827
Puerto Rico	0.0547–0.1230	0.03692–0.04649
South Korea	0.07	0.1154–0.17652

* Possible error in the reported figure.

In Table 9, the second column shows translation payment per word in different countries and regions (i.e. Puerto Rico and Hong Kong) based on our survey. The third column is the data obtained from the rate survey done by Aquarius, an electronic translation marketplace that has over 37,000 translators. Because the sample size in our survey is relatively small and there may be reporting errors, the rates in Aquarius can serve as a triangulation or check. In other words, we can establish the accuracy of data by comparing different types of independent points of view on data sources on the same findings.

Our survey asks respondents to report the going rate for written translation (translating from the source language of the greatest demand into their mother tongue)

in their country. In Aquarius, the rates are from the English language into the major language in the country of the translator (e.g. Swedish in Sweden).

It seems the rates are similar in columns 2 and 3 for most countries. The rates in Australia, Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and some Scandinavian countries are higher than those in other countries (Australia 0.10–0.15, Hong Kong 0.13, the United States 0.07–0.11, Puerto Rico 0.06–0.123, the United Kingdom 0.10–0.134, Finland 0.10, Sweden 0.15 and the Netherlands 0.15–0.16). As discussed, the translator certification systems in Australia, the United States (Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States), the United Kingdom (Hong Kong residents can take the Chartered Institute of Linguists, UK, examinations and become a member) and Finland are relatively well developed. In Sweden, the translator certification process has been administered by the Swedish Legal, Financial, and Administrative Service Agency (*Kammarkollegiet*) since the 1960s. However, in the Netherlands, the certification system is quite underdeveloped.

It seems there is a positive correlation (though not a strong one) between translator certification and pay, but there are also a couple of points that must be borne in mind.

The first point concerns the difference between languages. A message thread in ProZ deals specifically with the topic of "Rates from Different Source Languages / Document Length Difference between English and Other Languages". German and Scandinavian translators and agencies use rates on the basis of text amount (e.g. number of pages), not words, because the number of words per text can differ significantly between languages. For Finnish, which uses long compound words, the number of words is 65% less than in German. Grosschmid, a contributor to the message thread, conducted a comparison of the texts of the Treaty for the European Union and all its annexes and protocols in English, German, French and Spanish and showed that, for every 100 English words, there are 91.5 German words, 107.3 French words and 101.7

Spanish words. Referring to non-European languages, one contributor said:

> Chinese text does take up much less space on the page, because of the script and because there are no gaps between words. Generally Chinese sentences are longer with more clauses than English ones, but there are fewer sentences per paragraph. So it cancels out. However, in terms of word count, the difference would be that Chinese uses fewer articles, pronouns and auxiliary verbs. (Other than that, it is word for word.) So the Chinese text is a bit shorter than the English one structurally, I think.

Another contributor to the list pointed out the difficulties in defining a word in different languages and his argument is similar to the above.

The second point is that the cost of living in Australia, Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries is considerably higher than in the other countries covered in our survey. Using the Big Mac Index devised by *The Economist* as a proxy of purchasing power, the price of one Big Mac in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia is respectively 2.74, 2.33 and 2.02 euros (figures are not available for Finland and the Netherlands). In comparison, the prices are 0.99 and 1.84 euros in China and Mexico respectively.

In order to see if there is a correlation between purchase power adjusted translation rate and translator certification system, a simple Spearman's rank correlation coefficient analysis has been carried out. The procedures are as follows: (1) For the payment rate, the arithmetic mean of the Aquarius rates and the arithmetic mean of self-reported rates for each country in Table 9 were reduced to a figure; (2) The Big Mac Indices for different countries are obtained from *The Economist* website; (3) The figures obtained from procedure (2) are divided by the Big Mac Index. When we rank these countries from the highest to the lowest, the purchase power adjusted translation rate for each of

these countries was obtained; (4) For the reports of certification system in Table 11 in Section 5.2.6, points were given and weighted. These countries were also ranked from the highest to the lowest. After these data had been obtained, a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was performed it showed a value of 0.267. In other words, there is a weak evidence of some correlation between purchasing power adjusted translation rate and translator certification system and the value is significant only at the 10% confidence level.

5.2.5 Payment per hour in different countries

We asked respondents to convert their answers concerning payment per word into payment per hour. This enables us to minimize the effect of the difference between languages and see more clearly the relationship between translator certification and translation payment (if there is any).

Table 10: Translation payment per hour in different countries and regions (in euros)

Country/Region	Rate Per Hour
Spain	12–15/25
Brazil	15.5
Croatia	6–25
Finland	40–50/70
Mexico	9–18
Portugal	35–50*
Romania	10–12
Australia	25–35
Hong Kong	0.25*
Italy	2*–12
The Netherlands	45
Turkey	6
United Kingdom	35
United States	10.25–41
Puerto Rico	10.26–44.44

* Possible error in the reported figure.

Disappointingly, many translators did not answer this question or reported that they had no idea or were unable to answer the question. A number of translators pointed out that hourly rates are not applicable or it is hard to evaluate the hourly translation rate.

136

Some said they never charge an hourly rate: "I never invoice on an hourly basis", "Don't have experience with that", "Ignore, don't do it with local clients", "Only paid by quantity of work, not time". It is interesting that some respondents suggested there are other factors affecting pay: "Depending on the type of text…", "Depends on difficulty of text", "It all depends on whether you're working with a (good) translation memory or not".

These factors have been discussed in the Translation Studies literature. Robinson (2003: 28-29) points out that "basically the faster a freelancer translates, the more money s/he makes" and notes that a translator's speed can be affected by a number of factors:

- typing speed;

- the difficulty of the text;

- familiarity with this sort of text;

- translation memory software;

- personal preferences or style; and

- job stress, general mental state.

In view of these factors, the data in Table 10 must be taken cautiously. One respondent points out that in Croatia, "Depending on the type of text, the top hourly rate can range from 6 euros (literary translation) to 25 euros (subtitling)". I am a little skeptical about the hourly rate for Portugal in Table 10, because it does not correspond to the figure provided regarding payment by word. Moreover, there are possible reporting errors in the figures for Hong Kong (0.25 euro per hour) and Italy (2 euros per hour).

According to the survey data, we can say hourly rates in Australia, Finland, the United Kingdom and the United States are higher than in other countries and seem to be

137

the lowest in Turkey.

5.2.6 Translator certification system

Table 11: Translator certification systems as perceived by the respondents

Country/Region	How is translator certification developed?	Certification system	Does certification system have an effect on pay/working conditions?
Argentina (2)	3=underdeveloped 9=extremely well developed	(a) training institutes (universities)	Yes (2)
Australia (2)	7=well developed 9=extremely well developed	NAATI-a limited co. partly funded by federal and state governments	No (1) Yes (2)
Brazil (4)	2=very underdeveloped (1) 3=underdeveloped (1) 6=quite well developed (1) No such thing (1)	(a) training institutes (universities) (c) professional organizations (d) government: sworn translators	Yes (3) No (1)
China (3)	3=underdeveloped (3)	(a) training institutes (universities) (c) professional organizations (d) government	Yes (1) No idea (2)
Croatia (3)	1=extremely underdeveloped (2) 5=reasonably developed	(c) professional organizations (d) government: sworn translators	Not sure/Not answered (2) No (1)
Estonia (1)	1=extremely underdeveloped	(a) training institutes (universities)	Yes
Finland (2)	1=extremely underdeveloped Unable to answer	(c) professional organizations (d) government	Yes (1) Difficult to assess (1)
Germany (1)	7=well developed	(a) training institutes (universities and private schools)	No
Hong Kong (2)	5=reasonably underdeveloped (2)	(a) training institutes (universities) (b) external examining bodies	No (2)
Italy (2)	3=underdeveloped	(a) training institutes (universities) (d) government: sworn translators	No (1) No direct experience (1)
Mexico (2)	1=extremely underdeveloped	(c) professional organization (foreign one like ATA)	No (1) Not answered
Netherlands (2)	2=very underdeveloped 4=quite underdeveloped	(a) training institutes (universities)	Yes (1) Not applicable (1)
Puerto Rico (2)	1=extremely underdeveloped 5=reasonably underdeveloped	(c) professional organizations	Yes
Portugal (2)	1=extremely underdeveloped	(a) training institutes	No (1)

		(universities)	Not answered (1)
Romania (2)	3=underdeveloped 5=reasonably underdeveloped	(a) training institutes (universities) (b) external examining bodies (d) government	No (2)
Spain (5)	1=extremely underdeveloped (1) 5=reasonably developed (3) Unable to answer (1)	(a) training institutes (universities) (c) professional organizations (d) government: sworn translators	No (2) Yes (2) Not answered (1)
Sweden (1)	2=very underdeveloped	(d) government (Kammarkollegiet)	No
Turkey (1)	1=extremely underdeveloped	(a) training institutes (universities) (d) government: sworn translators	Not applicable
United Kingdom (5)	4=quite underdeveloped (2) 5=reasonably underdeveloped (2) 6=quite well developed (1)	(c) professional organizations	Yes (4)
United States (10)	2=very underdeveloped (1) 3=underdeveloped (3) 5=reasonably developed (4) 9=extremely well developed (1)	(c) professional organizations (d) governments: state and federal	No (3) Yes (4) No answer/Don't know (2) Unclear (1)
South Korea (1)	3=underdeveloped (3)	(c) professional organizations	Barely

Table 11 illustrates the translators' views of certification systems in the countries they work in. They were asked the following questions:

- How would you describe the translator certification system in your country (1=extremely underdeveloped, 5=reasonably developed, 9=extremely well developed)? Please give a number.

- The translator certification system of your country is carried out by (a) training institutes (universities, etc.) (b) external examining bodies (c) translators' professional organizations; and/or (d) others (please state: e.g. government)

- Does the certification system (if there is one) have any effect on the pay and working conditions of translators in your country? If yes, please state how.

The respondents from Germany and Australia replied that the certification systems in their countries are "well developed"/"extremely well-developed". The certification

systems in most countries were described as underdeveloped. However, there is some disagreement on this issue among respondents from the same country, for example, the United Kingdom, the United States, Spain, Croatia and Argentina. In the United States, one respondent said that the system is very underdeveloped, but another reported that it is "extremely well developed".

Respondents from many countries mentioned that universities or private schools offer translation courses. However, the introduction of such courses is relatively new in countries like Turkey and Estonia. For example, Bosporus Bogazici University in Istanbul and Hacettepe University in Ankara founded departments of translation in 1983 and 1984 respectively, and Istanbul University established a department of translation and interpreting in 1994 (Yazici 2004). According to the list of American Translators Association-approved translation and interpreting schools (2008), there are now at least five educational institutes offering translation and interpreting courses in Turkey. The respondent from Estonia points out that "having attended a translator training programme is a merit". The information has not spelled out exactly what "merit" means. Perhaps in addition to enhancement in knowledge and skills, "merit" may be interpreted as meaning that these courses act as a signal to prospective employers.

However, in other countries, such a signal may not be effective at all. For instance, a Brazilian respondent notes that university courses "are not taken seriously by potential clients in the market". In other words, even though university translation courses may add some value to people who aspire to become translators, they may not act as an effective signal in the marketplace. One Italian respondent points out that "universities give you a degree as 'translator'. But I would not call the situation here anything remotely similar to accreditation". This issue has been discussed in the context of the United States. When Dr. Michael S. Doyle, of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, was asked whether translation

graduates of his department could be considered "professionally certified" (reported in Sherwin 2003), his response was:

> When I think of a "certified translator", it is definitely along the lines of "ATA-accredited". For me, earning an academic or workshop certificate simply means that the institution's requirements (course work, grade-point average, etc.) have been met for that particular certificate. We say that our certificates in translating serve as preparation for taking (no guarantee of passing, of course) the ATA accreditation exams. But to be certified or accredited as a professional translator goes beyond the coursework and institutional requirements completed. It entails such recognition by a professional certifying or accrediting agency or association, just as occurs with accountants, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals (1).

Gouadec (2003: 25) points out that "a degree from a training program with a good reputation can actually function as a kind of 'certification' in the eyes of a future employer". For example, the master's degrees in translation and interpretation of the Monterey Institute of International Studies do work as a "certification" to some extent, as shown by the number of students who are offered jobs before they graduate. As noted by Dernoshek (2005: 70), "Students who graduate from these MIIS [Monterey Institute of International Studies] programs are highly sought after and obtain some of the best jobs in the field". Of course, if there are too many comparatively less prestigious universities offering translation programs, however, this signaling effect may be at stake, because there will be an oversupply of translators with a university degree.

Most respondents indeed point out that there is a certification system for sworn translators in civil law countries. It is worthwhile discussing briefly the topic of sworn translators.

A sworn translator is a professional who has been duly accredited to translate and

legalize documents by an authority such as a High Court of Justice, A Ministry of Justice or a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Common law countries, unlike civil law countries, do not have "sworn translators". Even so, translations have to be "sworn" or certified for various purposes in common law countries. Certifying or swearing has no bearing on the quality of a translation but serves to identify the translator and their qualifications so that the translator is accountable. When a translation is sworn before a notary, one does not verify the quality of translation but merely satisfies oneself as to the translator's identity. Certification does, however, lend weight to a translation: if, for example, a document is willfully mistranslated or carelessly translated, the translator could be charged with contempt of court, perjury or negligence.

In Brazil, one respondent writes, "the state chambers of commerce have a public exam for those who want to become sworn translators" but "these exams only happen once in a blue moon (as there's a small fixed number of sworn translators in each state and the post is held for life…)" and "it happened once in the last 20 years or so". The sworn translator system, according to this respondent, has two effects: "Apart from the 'prestige', the advantage for sworn translators is that they get a steady demand of commercial jobs that only they can supply. So, a 'monopoly' is created. Another effect is that, since the jobs are badly paid and the demand is high, many sworn translators 'hire' other translators to work for them". If the number of sworn translators is kept low, the title retains its prestige and can thus serve as a signal. But the effect on the general translation market is small.

Does a certification system have an effect on the pay/working conditions of translators? Twenty (40%) of the translators said yes and fifteen (30%) said no. Almost one third of them (15 or 30%) did not answer the question or said that they were "not sure", "did not know" or had "no idea". Overall, it seems that translators are uncertain

142

whether translator certification leads to better pay and working conditions.

The greatest hindrance to the functioning of certification as a signal in the translation market is that "anyone—with or without degree—can work as a translator in most cases", said a respondent from Spain. She also points out that "A system like those [ITI accreditation or the ATA examination] could be helpful to limit unfair competition, given that it be accompanied by some sort of legislation to specify who is qualified to work as a translator and who is not".

Some respondents point out the increasing signaling effect of certification. In the United Kingdom, a respondent said, "[Certified] translators can claim higher rates to provide services and clients are normally happy to provide them, as certification can be taken as a sign of guaranteed quality". One informant in the market in Brazil said, "[M]ore and more companies are requiring that translators are members of a professional association and some are requiring certified translators to worth [sic] with". Referring also to the case of Brazil, another respondent adds that "it [the certification system] stipulates the number of characters and values per page, distinguishing between translation categories (commercial, technical/scientific matters) in a level the translation market does not accomplish". Although this respondent may not have made herself clear, she probably thinks that the recommended rates published by professional translator association are useful as a guide and the different specialisms in the translator certification may convey some valuable information about the translators' specialization to the prospective employers. Besides, the respondents' mention of "a sign of guaranteed quality" and a differentiating effect is in line with the information economics of the theory of signaling. One respondent notes the following:

> Accreditation methods/systems have proved helpful for me to show my clients my qualifications as
>
> a professional translator and to negotiate working conditions with them (at least with direct clients).

> Such accreditation systems have also proved helpful (sometimes) when negotiating rates with direct clients, since I am able to justify my quotes/rates on the basis of minimum rates established by professional organizations and best practice standards.

A respondent from Finland put it more explicitly: "Being accredited, the rates are higher and the possibility of getting work increases". Some American respondents did provide concrete evidence as to how much more ATA certified translators can charge: "Those who are ATA certified may charge about 25% more". Although this reported figure is higher than the figure quoted in the ATA's Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey (12%), it is quite true to say that ATA-certified translators are paid more because they "are typically more skilled than non-certified translators", as pointed out by one respondent in our survey.

A respondent from Spain points out the usefulness of "being part of an exterior association … like ATA". For Portugal, Stejskal (2002) points out that Portuguese translators and interpreters go to the ATA or elsewhere for certification. Currently, there is no certification program for translators in Portugal (a respondent points out that one is in the making), despite several universities offering five-year programs for translators. Perhaps Portugal is too small a country to afford establishing a translator certification system which can be a very expensive process.

Trust is a concept which frequently comes up in this survey. One respondent from the United Kingdom points out that "Certified translators command higher rates obviously and [are] more sought after, as clients place more *trust* in the quality of work they produce" (my emphasis). Another respondent from the United Kingdom adds that "[T]ranslators who are members of professional organizations tend to have better accreditation [sic], thus easier to be *trusted* by potential clients and agencies, especially those who have no knowledge of the translator's mother tongue" (my emphasis). Trust

is also important in small countries where personnel mobility is relatively low. A respondent from Estonia points out, "Recommendation from earlier clients and/or staff and colleagues may also be considered. The society is so small that often people working in the same sphere know each other and what to expect".

However, in a large country like China, where regional mobility is high and both buyers and sellers frequently enter and exit the translation market, translator certification system can "[guide] the market rate of translation service, especially in large cities where demand is always high", according to one respondent. As mentioned before, because the translation market has become more globalized, the information and search cost is on the rise and there is a need for an effective translator certification system, but as a respondent recognizes, the existing system is not mature yet: "The certification system is rather new. Its effects, at this point, are unclear".

5.3 Research findings: Translation industry certification survey: A survey of translation companies on translator certification and the translation profession

This section reports on the questionnaires sent to persons responsible for hiring translators in translation companies around the world through the channels described in Section 4.5.3. It asks about views regarding translator certification and its relationships with translation companies, translators and the translation profession as a whole. Section 5.3.1 provides a description of the background of respondents (including their job title, the number of years in the current position and the number of years hiring translators) as well as their companies. It is followed by Section 5.3.2, which looks at some of the hiring characteristics of translation companies in this survey. There is one question asking which country the company mainly operates in. Other questions are

145

about the situations of the companies in hiring in-house and freelance translators. Lastly and most importantly, research findings regarding the perceived benefits (or the perception of a lack of benefits) of translator certification to various stakeholders in the translation profession are presented.

5.3.1 Background of the respondents and their companies

In the questionnaire, the respondents who are responsible for hiring translators were asked to provide their job titles. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Job titles of the respondents

Job Title	Number (Percentage)
Project Manager	25 (35.71%)
CEO/Managing Director	11 (15.71%)
Owner/President	8 (11.43%)
Operations Director/Marketing Director	7 (10.00%)
Translation Manager	7 (10.00%)
Senior Translator/Translator/Editor	4 (5.71%)
Human Resources Manager	1 (1.43%)
Others	6 (8.57%)
Not Answered	1 (1.43%)
TOTAL	**70 (100%)**

There are a number of interesting observations to make. Perhaps not surprisingly, the most popular title for persons making the translator hiring decision is Project Manager, which accounts for 35.71%. This category includes other similar titles like Account Manager, Vendor Manager, Project Coordinator or simply Manager. It was somewhat unexpected that the title Vendor Manager is used only three times, as vendor management has been a much discussed area in the global translation and localization industry (DePalma and Beninatto 2008). It is generally believed that the job duties of a vendor manager are to find, manage and monitor language service providers and improve relations with them.

It is also worth pointing out that 29 (27%) of the respondents are Chief Executive

Officer, Managing Director, President or are the company owners. One may suspect that there are quite a few "mom-and-pop" businesses in this pool and their owners like to give themselves fancy titles. But, in fact, among these, there are large companies with 2,500 active freelance translators as well as small companies with two in-house translators and six freelancers.

In the sample, the mean number of years the respondents have been in their current position is 6.90, and they have been responsible for hiring translators for a mean number of 7.94 years. We can interpret this as meaning that the respondents in this sample are fairly experienced in recruiting translators and they were responsible for hiring before they took up their current position.

In Question 4, the respondents were asked in which country their company mainly operates. The results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Countries or regions the companies mainly operate in as reported by the respondents

Countries/regions the company mainly operates in	Number (Percentage)
USA	15 (21.43%)
Hong Kong and China	10 (14.29%)
Spain	7 (10.00%)
Israel	5 (7.14%)
United Kingdom	5 (7.14%)
Baltic states	4 (5.71%)
Latin America	4 (5.71%)
Worldwide	3 (4.29%)
Italy	2 (2.86%)
Australia and New Zealand	2 (2.86%)
Others	10 (14.29%)
Not Answered	2 (2.86%)
Not Applicable	1 (1.43%)
TOTAL	**70 (100%)**

From Table 13 we can see that this group of translation companies is a fairly diversified sample of the population of translation companies in the world. First and foremost, the United States accounts for more than one-fifth of the total sample. North America is arguably the largest segment in the international translation industry, and according to the estimate of the Common Sense Advisory (2005), North America accounted for 42%

of the global translation market in revenue in 2004. Secondly, Hong Kong and China make up about 15% of the sample. Business activities in China are booming and the People's Republic of China is increasingly becoming a regional, or even international, software localization centre. According to one estimate (Hong Kong Trade Development Council 2003), the annual turnover of translation and localization business in China is about €1 billion.

The European market (25.71%) is also quite well represented in this sample, with the inclusion of Spain (10.00%), the United Kingdom (7.14%), Baltic states (5.71%) and Italy (2.86%). Latin America and Australasia are also represented in this sample with 5.71% and 2.86% of the sample respectively. Of course, some of these may be regional branches of international companies.

There are quite a number of translation companies in the category "Others". The countries and regions include South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, which have shown a varied representation of the international translation industry. One point that needs emphasizing is that some companies state that they operate on the Internet, so it might be difficult to categorize which country they mainly operate in.. This shows the increasing influence of the Internet on the translation business and the emergence of the global village. However, Canada is also one of the major translation markets, but it is not represented in this sample.

5.3.2 Hiring characteristics of translation companies surveyed: In-house translators versus freelance translators

Question 5 asked the respondents whether their company hires in-house translators. Thirty-four (48.6%) of the translation companies in our sample hire in-house translators and thirty-five (50%) said that their companies do not hire in-house translators. One respondent did not answer this question. The mean number of staff translators for those

who do hire in-house translators is only 6.03. The standard deviation is 8.15, meaning that the difference in the number of in-house translators hired is quite large. Indeed, most translation companies hire just one or two staff translators, and only five of them (14.7%) hire more than 10 in-house translators. The two companies that hire the highest number of in-house translators mainly operate in the United Kingdom and Spain. The UK company has 40 staff translators and, somewhat surprisingly, no freelancer. The Spanish company has 29 staff translators and 30 active freelancers.

Question 7 asked the respondents whether their company hires freelance translators. Only four (11.43%) of the translation companies stated that they have not hired any freelancers. After close scrutiny, it was found that only two are valid responses, because the other two said that they hire neither in-house translators nor freelance translators. Between the two valid responses, one is the British company mentioned in the previous paragraph and the other is probably a "mom-and-pop" translation house in China which has only three translators.

In Questions 8 and 9, respondents were asked the number of freelance translators they have recruited and the percentage of active freelancers. On average, the translation companies that hire freelancers have 680 translators in their pool. The standard deviation is astonishingly high, about 1,224 translators. The top three employers have recruited 6,000, 5,000 and 4,000 translators respectively, and they are all American companies. In addition, there are eight companies (13%) that hire 2,000 freelancers or more. Companies that hire 100 freelancers or fewer account for 45.16% of the entire sample. Respondents were asked whether the translators in their freelance pool are active. The percentage ranges from 10% (meaning only one-tenth of their freelancers are active) to 100% (meaning all their freelancers are active) and the mean is 59.13%. This means that, on average, the translation companies need to coordinate and manage an average of 265 freelance translators.

From the questionnaire results, we can see that hiring freelancers has already become a rule rather than an exception in the translation industry. Virtually all companies hire freelance translators. However, in-house translators have not become a thing of the past, and talk about the "extinction" of staff translators may be an exaggeration. There might be two reasons for this. First, in-house translators are still needed for editing, revision and quality control, as well as offering co-ordination and administrative support. Second, the presence of staff translators can act as a signal of quality to the clients. Clients sometimes ask for the number of in-house translators versus freelancers, in order to evaluate the quality and reliability of translation service providers.

Moreover, if we use the number of freelancers as a proxy for the size of translation companies, it can be said this sample consists of large, medium-sized and small companies. The three US companies with more than 4,000 freelancers can be considered large. In fact, in recent years, as a result of the merger and acquisition activities in the translation industry (for example, the US$180 million acquisition of Browne Global Solutions by the Nasdaq-listed company Lionbridge), a few big market players has been increasing their market share in the global translation industry. Of course, there are also many small translation companies in this sample. They can be represented by those hiring 100 or fewer freelancers, which account for slightly less than half of the total sample. In between, there are also a few medium-sized companies, and they may be represented by those having 2,000 to 4,000 freelancers in their database.

Another point worth mentioning is that a number of respondents failed to provide figures regarding the number of in-house translators and freelance translators. The respondents may consider the information sensitive and have some reservations about revealing the company data.

150

5.3.3 Perceived difficulty in hiring in-house and freelance translators

Questions 10 and 11 asked the respondents about the degree of difficulty in recruiting

in-house and freelance translators.

Table 14: Degree of difficulty in hiring in-house and freelance translators
as perceived by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
10. The company finds it easy to hire suitable in-house translators.	2.67	1.24	12 (21.05%)	14 (24.56%)	18 (31.58%)	7 (12.28%)	6 (10.53%)
11. The company finds it easy to hire suitable freelance translators.	3.30	1.42	8 (12.12%)	17 (25.76%)	6 (9.09%)	17 (25.76%)	18 (27.27%)

In general, the respondents thought that it is more difficult to recruit in-house translators

than freelancers. About 53% (35) of the respondents believed that it is relatively easy

for them to hire freelance translators, but only 22.8% of the respondents strongly or

somewhat agreed that hiring in-house translators is a relatively straightforward task.

Also, the view is more clear-cut for freelance translators, as far fewer respondents chose

"Neither" as their answer.

These survey results make sense, as hiring in-house translators is a more long-term

and committed investment for the companies. Direct labor costs may include salaries,

medical benefits and travel allowances. Moreover, as there are peak and off-peak

seasons in the translation market, hiring freelance translators may provide more

flexibility to the translation companies. And as some translation companies provide

services in dozens of languages, they cannot have in-house translators for every single

language. More importantly, as revealed, most translation companies hire only one or

two in-house translators. Therefore, staff translators may need to be responsible for

ensuring the quality of the translation services provided by different freelance workers.

These few in-house translators may need to be, in a sense, masters of all trades. No

wonder recruiting in-house translators is more difficult in the eyes of our respondents.

5.3.4 Experience requirements in hiring translators

Questions 13 and 14 ask the respondents the minimum years of experience they require and prefer their translators to have respectively. The companies' minimum requirement is 2.71 years (standard deviation 1.79 years) and their preference is 3.61 years (standard deviation 1.79 years). It is worth pointing out that six respondents (9.23%) do not require their applicants to have any experience but almost all respondents prefer their applicants to have some years of experience. The respondents' preference for job applicants with experience can be explained as that if translators come with some on-the-job training, there will be less need for the translation companies to provide training opportunities. Thus, training costs can be minimized for the employers.

Question 15 asks the respondents whether their newly hired translators increasingly have translator certification.

Table 15: Whether the newly hired translators increasingly have translator certification as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
12. Newly hired translators increasingly have certification (e.g. MCIL, ATA, NAATI, CATTI)	3.01	1.37	12 (17.65%)	14 (20.59%)	15 (22.06%)	15 (22.06%)	12 (17.65%)

As discussed in the literature review, more and more countries have developed or are in the process of developing their own translator certification system. However, as perceived by the respondents, it is not certain that the newly hired translators increasingly have translator certification, as the responses of agreement (38.24%) are almost equal to the ones of disagreement (39.71%), while 22% of them answered

"Neither".

Possible explanations for this include the fact that translator certification is not a prerequisite for entering the job market, so translators just do not bother. Also, taking the certification examination of a professional translators' organization can be quite expensive. In addition, as the translation companies in this survey are mainly looking for new translators with about three years of experience, translators with this level of experience may opt for acquiring translator certification at a later stage in their professional career.

It might be interesting to see how large translation companies (defined as those that have 2,000 or more freelance translators in their pool) and small ones (defined as those that have 50 or less freelance translators in their pool) answered this question. Large companies tend to "strongly agree" that the newly hired translators increasingly have translation certification (arithmetic mean and standard deviation are 3.82 and 1.17 respectively) while small companies "somewhat disagree" (arithmetic mean and standard deviation are 2.47 and 0.96 respectively) with the statement. This may be interpreted as large companies tend to employ more translators with certification while small ones do not. However, it is also possible that the translators who have earned their certification believe that they are more competitive and apply for a position of freelancer in large companies instead of small ones.

5.3.5 Perceived benefits of translator certification to translation companies

Translation service companies are important stakeholders in the translation market. If the translator certification system is to be successful, support and even input are needed from them. Therefore, how translation service companies perceive the translator certification system is an important area to explore. Questions 15 to 20 ask the respondents whether they think that translator certification can make the identification

of a job applicant's linguistic knowledge and subject knowledge easier, and whether they believe that translator certification can facilitate the recruitment process and reduce the staff attrition rate.

Table 16: Identification of job applicant's linguistic and subject knowledge through translator certification as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
15. Translator certification makes it easier to identify applicant's linguistic knowledge.	3.46	1.35	9 (13.24%)	10 (14.71%)	6 (8.82%)	27 (39.71%)	16 (23.53%)
16. Translator certification makes it easier to identify applicant's subject knowledge.	3.03	1.39	14 (20.59%)	11 (16.18%)	13 (19.12%)	19 (27.94%)	11 (16.18%)

From Table 16, which shows the responses to Questions 15 and 16, it is quite clear that most respondents believe that translator certification makes it easier to identify the applicant's linguistic knowledge. In answer to Question 15, nearly 63.24% strongly or somewhat agree that they can have a better understanding of the applicant's linguistic knowledge through translator certification. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation are 3.46 and 1.35 respectively.

However, the respondents were not so certain when they were asked whether translator certification can help them identify applicants' subject knowledge. The arithmetic mean is 3.03, indicating that most respondents have answered "Neither" and/or the answers "Strongly Disagree/Somewhat Disagree" offset those of "Strongly Agree/Somewhat Disagree". As shown in Table 16, this is indeed the case, as 19.12% (13) of the respondents chose "Neither". Those who disagree (44.12% or 30) with the statement "Translator certification makes it easier to identify applicant's subject

knowledge" somewhat exceed those who agree with it (36.76% or 25).

Table 17: Perceived benefits to the recruitment process and staff retention through translator certification as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
17. Translator certification makes the recruitment process easier.	3.46	1.31	9 (13.24%)	10 (14.71%)	6 (8.82%)	27 (39.71%)	16 (23.53%)
18. Translator certification makes the recruitment process cheaper.	2.35	1.21	14 (20.59%)	11 (16.18%)	13 (19.21%)	19 (27.94%)	11 (16.18%)
19. Translator certification makes the recruitment more time-efficient.	3.21	1.40	12 (17.91%)	9 (13.43%)	13 (19.40%)	19 (28.35%)	14 (20.90%)
20. Translation certification reduces the likelihood of staff turnover.	2.58	1.13	15 (23.08%)	14 (21.54%)	20 (30.77%)	15 (23.08%)	1 (1.54%)

From Table 17, we can see that about 63% (43) of the respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree that "Translator certification makes the recruitment process easier", and nearly 52% either strongly agree or somewhat agree that "Translator certification makes the recruitment more time efficient". However, when it comes to cost considerations, the respondents are not as certain. The arithmetic mean for the statement "Translator certification makes the recruitment process cheaper" is only 2.35, meaning that, on average, the respondents do not believe that translator certification can reduce the expenditure of the recruitment process.

Although the recruitment of more freelancers in the language service industry may increase the flexibility of personnel needs, it may not significantly reduce the recruitment costs. One possible reason is that the costs of recruitment are not simply the hiring costs, such as the costs of advertising on various printed media and the Internet, but also include the indirect costs of a bad hire (Bellizzi and Hasty 2000). The costs of a

bad hire are difficult, if not impossible, to measure. Increasing quality assurance costs and even reduction in returned business may be included. Therefore, as more translators have translator certification, it might be easier and more time-efficient for language service companies to locate potential vendors, but translator certification alone cannot significantly reduce the probability of a bad hire and hence the recruitment costs.

In answer to Question 20, "Translation certification reduces the likelihood of staff turnover", only one respondent strongly agrees. The arithmetic mean is 2.58. In other words, most respondents think that translation certification actually increases the likelihood of staff turnover. A higher probability of staff turnover may mean that certified translators are in greater demand and therefore more likely to be hired by competitors. However, in general, staff turnover is considered undesirable for translation companies, as it involves various costs. The costs of staff turnover can be significant and may include administrative costs associated with the leaver's separation from the company, administrative costs associated with creating a vacancy, costs of covering the vacancy until it is filled, advertising and agency costs for the vacancy, costs involved in the selection process (including but not restricted to the administration and evaluation of translation tests) and training costs.

However, translator certification might indeed increase staff turnover, especially for freelancers. Freelancers can work for many translation service companies at the same time, and translator certification may increase the probability of a freelancer being hired.

5.3.6 Perceived benefits of translator certification to translators

**Table 18: Perceived monetary benefits of translator certification to translators
as reported by the respondents**

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

			(1)	(2)		(4)	(5)
21. A person with translation certification gets more job offers.	3.52	1.21	5 (7.58%)	9(13.64%)	14 (21.21%)	23 (34.85%)	15 (22.73%)
22. A person with translator certification is more likely to be hired at my firm.	3.14	1.39	12 (18.46%)	10 (15.38%)	12 (18.46%)	19 (29.23%)	12 (18.46%)
23. A person with translator certification receives higher pay.	3.08	1.27	11 (16.67%)	9 (13.64%)	18 (27.27%)	20 (30.30%)	8 (12.12%)

According to Table 18, the respondents agreed that a person with translator cer tification gets more job offers. In answer to Question 21, 57.58% of the respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the statement. The arithmetic mean is 3.52. When asked whether a person with translator certification is more likely to be hired at the respondents' firm, the respondents are not as certain. The mean is only 3.14, and some 18.46% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. These two results may be interpreted as follows: although translator certification may be a well-appreciated addition to the applicant's résumé, when a company makes recruitment decisions, other factors might be considered as well. A very interesting observation is that even fewer respondents believe that a person with translator certification would receive higher pay. The arithmetic mean is 3.08. Although 42.42% of the respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the positive relationship between translator certification and pay, 16.67% have the extreme view that the translator certification does not lead to higher pay. To some extent, this shows there is keen competition in the language service industry and, unlike other professions, almost anyone can enter the translation service market.

Table 19: Perceived benefits of translator certification to translators as regards the indication of language proficiency and subject knowledge as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Strongly

			Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	(3)	Agree (4)	Agree (5)
24. A person with translator certification has better language proficiency.	2.88	1.26	12 (17.65%)	15 (22.06%)	17 (25.00%)	17 (25.00%)	7 (10.29%)
25. A person with translator certification has better subject knowledge.	2.75	1.25	13 (19.12%)	17 (25%)	19 (27.94%)	12 (17.65%)	7 (10.29%)

Questions 24 and 25 ask the respondents whether a person with translator certification has better language proficiency and subject knowledge respectively. In general, the respondents do not agree with these two statements. Those who either strongly disagree or somewhat disagree account for 39.71% for the statement on language proficiency and 44.12% for the statement on subject knowledge. This difference is in line with Questions 15 and 16, which ask respondents whether they agree with the statements "Translator certification makes it easier to identify applicant's linguistic knowledge" and "Translator certification makes it easier to identify applicant's subject knowledge".

Table 20: Perceived non-monetary benefits of translator certification to translators as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
29. A person with translator certification earns the respect of co-workers.	3.23	1.13	7 (12.28%)	7 (12.28%)	16 (28.07%)	22 (38.60%)	5 (8.77%)
30. A person with translator certification is more satisfied with his or her job.	3.13	0.93	5 (8.77%)	6 (10.53%)	27 (47.37%)	17 (29.82%)	2 (3.51%)
32. A person with translator certification has a higher sense of self-esteem	3.62	1.03	4 (7.14%)	2 (3.57%)	17 (30.36%)	24 (42.86%)	9 (16.07%)

Questions 29, 30 and 32 look at the perceived non-monetary benefits of translator certification to translators. These include peer respect, job satisfaction and self-esteem.

158

The respondents believe that translator certification is likely to increase a translator's peer respect (mean=3.23) and self-esteem (mean=3.62). It should be noted that about 60% of the respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree that translator certification leads to higher self-esteem. However, far fewer respondents believe that translator certification can lead to more job satisfaction (mean=3.13) and most of them said "Neither". This makes sense, as job satisfaction may be due to a number of reasons and translator certification may not be a relevant factor.

Table 21: Perceived benefits of translator certification with regards to long-term career development as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
27. A person with translator certification is more able to deal with change occurring in the industry.	2.84	1.21	14 (24.14%)	6 (10.34%)	18 (31.03%)	16 (27.59%)	4 (6.90%)
28. A person with translator certification is more likely to have a successful career.	3.27	1.21	8 (13.79%)	5 (8.62%)	19 (32.76%)	18 (31.03%)	8 (13.79%)
31. A person with translator certification is more committed to his or her career.	3.50	1.10	5 (9.09%)	2 (3.64%)	15 (27.27%)	24 (43.64%)	9 (16.36%)
33. A person with translator certification is less likely to leave the translation profession.	3.32	1.15	6 (10.71%)	3 (5.36%)	14 (25.00%)	25 (44.64%)	8 (14.29%)

Questions 27, 28, 31 and 33 ask the respondents about the perceived benefits of translator certification with regard to translators' long-term career development. Quite a large proportion of respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with Questions 27 and 28, that translators with certification are more committed to their career (60%) and less likely to leave the translation profession (58.93%). The means for these two questions are 3.50 and 3.32 respectively. Having translator certification can be interpreted as having the intention to develop a relatively long-term career in translation.

However, whether that career will be successful might be a different story. That is why respondents give a much lower rating for Question 31, which states that "A person with translator certification is more likely to have a successful career".

One striking observation is that the respondents do not agree that people with translator certification would be more able to deal with change occurring in the industry. For Question 33, the mean is at a low of 2.84, 34.48% either strongly disagree or somewhat disagree, and 31.03% answer "Neither". This is understandable, as translator certification is usually granted after a one-off pencil-and-paper translation test. Recent developments such as machine-aided translation and translation memories are not tested. What is more, as translation projects require collaboration and co-operation among translators, revisers and desktop publishing professionals and have become increasingly team-based, the inauthentic setting of conventional translation tests might not be an adequate response to the changes in the translation marketplace. This may explain to some extent why translator associations have paid more attention to continuing professional development (CPD) and some even make CPD a mandatory requirement if their members desire reaching a higher status in the membership hierarchy. The designation of Chartered Linguist of the Chartered Institute of Linguists is a vivid example (Chartered Institute of Linguists 2007a). Of course, as in many other professions, CPD is still a relatively new phenomenon and there is still much work for the translation profession to make these efforts cater better to the market developments.

5.3.7 Perceived benefits of translator certification to the translation profession

Table 22: Perceived benefits of translator certification to the translation profession as reported by the respondents

Question	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
34 A person with translator certification	4.06	0.98	3 (5.17%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (15.52%)	26 (44.83%)	20 (34.48%)

160

enhances the image of the profession.						

The last question, Question 34, asks the respondents to evaluate the benefits of translator certification to the translation profession. It has the highest arithmetic mean of all the questions, which is 4.06, and the standard deviation is relatively small (0.98%). A higher percentage of respondents believe that a person with translator certification enhances the image of the profession: 79.3% of respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the relationship between translator certification and the image of the translation profession.

In summary, we can say that, in this sample of large, medium-sized and small translation companies from around the world, the respondents reported that they maintain a pool of freelancers but still hire a few in-house translators. They see translator certification as something that can enhance the overall image of the translation profession. In their view, certification does bring some benefits to translators who hold it (e.g. increase in number of job offers, higher self-esteem and respect from co-workers). However, increased monetary benefits brought by translator certification might be minimal. Translation companies generally welcome a system of translator certification, as it provides a relatively reliable signal of applicants' linguistic ability, and this has made the recruitment process easier and more time-efficient. However, certification may not make the hiring process less costly, as bad hires cannot be avoided; disciplinary actions like censure, suspension or expulsion from membership are still not taken seriously by the professional organizations.

5.4 Research findings: Ranking of fictitious résumés and qualitative analysis of interview data

This section reports on the rank order of 12 résumés of applicants for the post of

translator and the qualitative analysis of the interviews with the eight respondents for their choices. Section 5.4.1 describes the characteristics of the sample. Section 5.4.2 reports on the quantitative results from the ranking of the fictitious résumés and the analysis of potential influences on ranking. The last section provides a qualitative analysis of the transcribed interviews, and presents selected respondent quotes to support the findings.

5.4.1 Characteristics of the sample

A total of eight interviews were conducted between February and April 2007 in Hong Kong. The interviewees were asked to provide a brief description of their background and the hiring behaviors of their companies or organizations. The data are tabulated in Table 23.

Table 23: Background of the respondents and hiring characteristics of their companies

Item	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6	Interviewee 7	Interviewee 8
Nature of each respondent's company	Textbook and dictionary publishing	Legal publishing	Textbook and dictionary publishing	Textbook publishing	Small-sized translation company	Large multi-national translation company	Large multi-national translation company	University press
Job title	Publishing Director	Product Develop-ment Director	Head and Editor-in-Chief	Assistant Managing Director	Project Director	Supervisor (Asia)	Client Relationship Manager	Senior Course Designer
Years in current position	6	2	7	2	18	5	10 months	13
Years of hiring translators	6	4	12	6	18	5	NA	10
Country of operation	US	US/UK	China	Hong Kong	Hong Kong, China	Global (mainly Asia)	Switzerland	Hong Kong, China
Number of in-house translators	5	1	0	Everyone needs to be involved	2 full-time, 8 part-time	0	1 (local); 2 (regional)	3
Number of freelancers	No exact number (on project basis)	5	20	5	0	>700	>200	25
Percentage of active freelancers	NA	100%	80%	50%	NA	30%	30%	2%

Although the sample is not a random or well-stratified one, it provides a relatively diversified reflection of the translation market. Interviewees are senior and management personnel working in a number of organizational contexts, including a multinational translation corporation, a small-sized translation company, a textbook and dictionary

162

publisher, a legal publisher and a university press. The variety of companies provides an additional piece of evidence to for the claim in the previous section that the translation market is heterogeneous and segmented. There is indeed a wide range of companies requiring the language services offered by translators.

Another interesting observation is that, although all interviews were carried out in Hong Kong, half of the respondents stated that countries or regions other than Hong Kong/China were the place where most of their business was conducted. Of the four corporations in this sub-sample, two are indeed multinational translation companies. One is a New York Stock Exchange-listed provider of print and related services, and the other is among the top 15 language service providers in the world in revenue (Beninatto and DePalma 2007). In fact, the remaining two companies, which claim give the US and the US/UK to be their countries of operation, are also major players in their respective fields (legal and financial information provider and education, business information and consumer publishing) and are listed companies in London and New York respectively. Together with the data collected from the survey in Section 5.3, we can thus say that the translation market is being consolidated and multinational companies play a more important role.

The data provided by the sample are believed to be reliable, as the mean number of years the interviewees are employed in their current position is 6.73, with a range of less than 1 year (the Swiss company that Interviewee 7 works in started its Asian operation in 2007; he left his previous translation firm and joined this company 10 months ago) to 18 years. Seven of the eight respondents have experience in hiring translators. The mean number of years of hiring is 8.71. Therefore, we can say that the interviewees are experienced both professionally and in hiring translators. They should have a relatively good understanding of the general translation market or at least of their particular translation segment (e.g. textbook publishing and legal book publishing).

5.4.2 Ranking of fictitious résumés

In order to illustrate the respondents' rank order preference for the 12 résumés, a calculation of the frequency with which each résumé was ranked first was conducted. Each of the respondents ranked the 12 résumés in order from 1 to 12, according to their perception of the suitability of the applicant for a position of translator in their firm. The unit of analysis for this question was each résumé, and the frequency with which it was ranked first by each respondent. The results are presented in Table 24.

Table 24: Frequency table of each résumé ranked in first place

Résumé	Characteristics of applicant	Frequency
1	Qualifications: Secondary school certificate Experience: None	0
2	Qualifications: Secondary school certificate Experience: Less than 3 years	0
3	Qualifications: Secondary school certificate Experience: 5 years	0
4	Qualifications: Degree in English Experience: None	0
5	Qualifications: Degree in English Experience: Less than 3 years	0
6	Qualifications: Degree in English Experience: 3–8 years	2
7	Qualifications: Certification from professional translators association Experience: None	0
8	Qualifications: Certification from professional translators association Experience: Less than 3 years	0
9	Qualifications: Certification from professional translators association Experience: 5 years	0
10	Qualifications: Degree in English and certification from professional translators association Experience: None	0
11	Qualifications: Degree in English and certification from professional translators association Experience: Less than 3 years	2
12	Qualifications: Degree in English and certification from professional translators association Experience: 5 years	4

From Table 24, we can see that there is a strong preference for the person represented by Résumé 12. Perhaps this is not surprising, as the résumé presented arguably the "strongest" applicant, one who has both a degree in English and certification from a professional translators association, along with 5 years of work experience. Four respondents (50%) ranked this résumé in first place, Interviewees 1, 6, 7 and 8. It should

be noted the two interviewees from the large multinational translation companies chose this résumé. However, two respondents chose Résumé 6 (Interviewees 3 and 5) and two chose Résumé 11 (Interviewees 2 and 4). Résumé 6 represents an applicant with an English degree and 5 years of experience but no translator certification.

In order to better highlight the individual factors (academic qualification, translator certification and relevant work experience), Tables 25 to 27 present the ranking preference for four selected résumés: Résumé 1 (secondary-school certificate only and no experience), Résumé 4 (degree in English with no experience), Résumé 7 (certification from professional translators association but no experience), and Résumé 12 (degree in English, certification from professional translators association and 5 years' experience).

Table 25: Frequency ranking for Résumé 1

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2

The ranking of Résumé 1, reflecting an applicant with no higher education qualifications (neither certification from a professional translators association nor a university degree) and no relevant previous work experience, was singled out as the least suitable by the majority of respondents. Table 25 presents the frequency with which Résumé 1 was ranked. For this resume, 87.5% of the respondents ranked it in the bottom three places (10th to 12th place). The remaining respondent (Interviewee 5) even stated strongly that he would not consider this applicant at all.

Table 26: Frequency ranking for Résumé 4

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Frequency	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	1	2	0	0	0

Résumé 4 represents an applicant with a university degree in English but no relevant

previous work experience. Half of the respondents placed this résumé in the middle position (6th place), as shown in Table 26, and most of the remaining respondents indicated that the person whose résumé this is was not suitable for a job with their company (9th and 10th places). An English degree alone, without any work experience, had very little support for a top ranking. In fact, in the interview, almost all interviewees mentioned the importance of relevant professional translation experience.

Table 27: Frequency ranking for Résumé 7

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	0

Table 27 shows the ranking distribution of Résumé 7, reflecting an applicant with translator certification but no relevant experience. This résumé produced a skewed distribution tending towards the less suitable end as 87.5% of the respondents placed this résumé in 9th to 11th place. This suggests in general that persons responsible for hiring translators still prefer an applicant with a university degree to one with translator certification.

Table 28: Frequency ranking for Résumé 12

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Frequency	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Résumé 12 represented the "strongest" applicant, who offers an English degree, translator certification and relevant work experience. As shown in Table 28, four respondents ranked this résumé in first place and four ranked it in second. Therefore, we can say that this applicant was considered the most suitable by the respondents.

Because it is the objective of this research to examine the signaling power of translator certification, in the following, the preference for translator certification is

compared to preference for a university degree after controlling for experience. Those résumés that presented applicants with equal levels of experience but differing educational credentials were compared. Table 29 displays the proportion of respondents ranking the English degree higher than translator certification in the three comparisons, using equal levels of work experience.

Table 29: Comparison of preference for translator certification

Previous work experience	Translator certification Ranked higher	Degree ranked higher
None	12.5%	87.5%
Less than 3 years	12.5%	87.5%
5 years	0.00%	100%

In fact, all except one respondent preferred the applicant with an English degree rather than one with translator certification. The respondent who had a preference for translator certification instead of an English degree in both cases was Interviewee 5, the Project Director of a small-sized translation company. The rationale behind the respondents' choices is explored in the follow-up interviews, which were conducted immediately after the ranking exercise.

5.4.3 Qualitative analysis of transcribed interview data

This section presents the results from the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts. We will look at the actual wording that recruiters used in discussing what they are looking for in hiring translators and how academic qualification, translator certification and work experience signal the applicants' employability to them.

The eight interviews were carried out and recorded with prior consent of the interviewees. Seven were conducted in Cantonese and one was in English, as the interviewee was a non-Chinese speaking expatriate working in Hong Kong. The

interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Those conducted in Cantonese were translated into English for easier computer searching of terms and phrases needed for analysis. Each interview transcript was then read critically and analyzed for common themes.

Rather than analyzing the responses to each question, the answers to three meta-level issues were explored in the transcripts. The benefit of this approach is that a respondent may add valuable insights on a particular issue in answer to a number of questions. By examining the entire interview transcript, a deeper understanding can be gained of a respondent's attitude towards the signaling power of translator certification. Consequently, the analysis was conducted and results organized in answer to these two questions:

(1) What do you look for in a person's résumé applying for the post of translator?

(2) What do education, certification and work experience signal?

The responses to these two questions were divided into categories, which were in turn subdivided into several themes. The following presents the categories and themes that developed after the analysis.

Question 1: What do you look for in the résumé of a person applying for the post of translator?

All interview data were read critically several times, in order to identify references to academic qualifications that are sought in job applicants. Four main types of response emerged from the data and were categorized as follows: (1) formal/traditional educational qualifications, (2) translator certification, (3) relevant previous experience, and (4) personal qualities and other factors.

Category 1: Formal/traditional educational qualifications

Each of the eight interviewees made at least one specific reference to formal educational qualifications as playing a role in their ranking decisions. Within the context of this study, the "formal/traditional education qualification" referred to is a university degree in English.

Quite a number of respondents pointed out that possessing a university degree is a basic requirement of translators they intend to hire. Interviewee 8 said that this is the policy of her organization: "The first thing I would look for is academic qualification. Since we are an educational institute, we must choose someone with a university degree. We need to abide by the policy of our school".

Two respondents also said that they mainly consider university graduates, because nowadays in Hong Kong there are a lot of universities and the total number of university students has increased drastically in the past two decades[5]:

> To be frank, if people cannot get into a university, their academic results must be really bad. If they finish Form 5 [equivalent to General Certificate of Secondary Education in the UK] or Form 7 [equivalent to General Certificate of Education Advanced Level in the UK] and do not further their studies, their school results must be unsatisfactory and their command of languages cannot be good. We would first screen out this batch of applicants and then look at those who are university graduates. (Interviewee 4)

Many respondents said that the most important characteristic in their top-ranked résumé was the presence of an English degree and that the degree is the important

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[5] As quoted in Post (2003), the total full-time-equivalent student enrollment increased from 9,973 in the 1981–82 academic year to 68,796 in 2000–01.

criterion for determining applicant suitability. For example, Interviewee 8 stated: "We usually will consider people with an English degree" and this was supported by Interviewee 1 who said:

> Their major should be related to language. English is our major [consideration]. It can be English literature, contemporary English, English for professional communication or similar subjects. (Interviewee 1)

In addition, the interviewee moved on to emphasize that she "would not consider applicants with majors in physics or chemistry, even if they have a lot of experience". This view might be somewhat gratuitous, as the interviewee is the Director of Bilingual Dictionaries and Home Education and no technical translation is involved in her job. An applicant with a major in science may be highly suitable for the post of a scientific translator. In fact, Interviewee 2, who is the Product Development Director of a law publisher, stated that his company would prefer to have graduates from the law department, not the language department.

Category 2: Translator certification

"Translator certification" was the second category investigated. Respondents indicated that translator certification made applicants more suitable for employment. However, 75% of the respondents said that they preferred an English degree to translator certification when given a choice between an applicant with an English degree only and one with translator certification only, other things being equal. After further investigation, it seems that in some cases this is due to the respondents' ignorance or misconception of translator certification.

Interviewee 4 quite frankly admitted her ignorance of the various professional

translator associations, even though she has been hiring translators for 8 years. She said, "In fact, I am not well acquainted with the various professional translator associations". However, despite her seemingly apparent ignorance, she gave some rather constructive comments on what these associations should require their members to do:

> When someone joins a [professional translator association], I may question whether he or she just needs to pass a simple examination. If there are requirements in addition to an examination, for example, the prospective member also needs to have substantial work experience, I think the qualification will be better recognized. (Interviewee 4)

This comment shows that the respondent did not have an accurate understanding of translator certification. In order to become a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, which is one of the more accepted translator certifications in Hong Kong, one needs (1) a degree and at least three years' professional experience that involving foreign-language skill, or (2) a proven post-graduate qualification and at least one year's professional experience with similar foreign language requirement (Chartered Institute of Linguists 2007b). Alternatively, translators wanting to join the Institute may take one of the examinations offered. These examinations do not require a university degree for entry. These data have been utilized in the design of fictitious résumés.

Another respondent even showed his grave misconception that the only requirement to become a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists is to pay a membership fee:

> For Chartered Institute of Linguists, basically you just need to pay to register. Therefore, it is not a good reference point [for considering job applicants]. (Interviewee 7)

This is quite astonishing, as this interviewee is the Client Relationship Manager of a large multinational translation company based in Switzerland, a company with over 200 freelance translators.

The only interviewee that seems to have a good understanding of translator certification is Interviewee 5, the Project Director (and in fact the owner) of a small-sized translation company, who prefers an applicant with translator certification to one with an English degree, *ceteris paribus*. He quite correctly pointed out that:

[If the applicant] is a member of Chartered Institute of Linguists, this shows that he has done some

hard work. You can view it as a degree-equivalent qualification. (Interviewee 5)

This is true, at least in Hong Kong. According to the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, "the FDEC [Final Diploma in English and Chinese] / MIL [Member of the Institute of Linguists] qualification is considered as a degree equivalent qualification for language-related jobs in the Civil Service in Hong Kong" (Education Bureau of HKSAR Government 2007).

Category 3: Work experience

The third category that emerged from the interview data was titled "work experience". All transcribed interviews had respondents making at least one specific reference to looking for previous work experience in making decisions for hiring translators. Because of the number of references to work experience and the diversity of opinions on the importance of this factor in ranking résumés, the textual analysis was broken down into three sub-themes to find related patterns of responses.

The first sub-theme indicated that managers were clearly looking for résumés that described applicants with relevant work experiences obtained in previous positions.

172

Interviewee 2 explained how he ranked the résumés:

> We … look at work experience, work experience that is very relevant to our industry [legal publishing]. So [the applicants with relevant industry experience] should have received quite high marks for related experience, whether or not they have the professional qualification. (Interviewee 2)

The second sub-theme related to experience was the amount of experience. One respondent (Interviewee 8) stated that three years of experience is the minimum for her organization. Also, the respondents in general believe that the more years of experience, the more employable the applicant is. According to an interviewee:

> Experience is the most important thing to a translator. As you do more translation, it is natural that you'll make progress. So, when you have worked in the translation field for a longer time, things would become much smoother. Therefore, when the backgrounds [of applicants] are similar, I would definitely choose one with more years of experience. (Interviewee 1)

And, this interviewee indeed chose the job applicant which has 5 years of experience which is the one represented by Resume 12.

Another sub-theme to emerge was freelance experience. One of the interviewees voiced his concern on how to count the number of years of freelance experience.

> Some people claim that they have freelance experience. I would be cautious about this. The reason is that everyone can work freelance. Some only translate one piece every year and others work really hard from nine to five to earn a living. Sometimes it is difficult to judge. (Interviewee 5)

This interviewee raised a valid point: although work experience is highly valued in the field of translation, as so many translators working freelance, the number of years of freelance experience may not give the potential employers a good signal as to the employability of applicants and the quality of their translations. Some employers have to resort to their own written test to screen out applicants. This is discussed in the next section.

Category 4: Personal qualities and other factors

The fourth and final category of themes related to what hiring managers seek is labeled "personal qualities and other factors".

Probably because almost everyone can claim to be a translator and take up translation work, one interviewee emphasized that it is important for translators to have a sense of responsibility:

> In the [job] interview, we need to look at whether the applicant has a sense of responsibility, as this will also affect the [translation] quality…… It is also important to understand the individuals, whether their personality is suitable for the position. (Interviewee 6)

Another interviewee pointed out that persistence is another important quality he prefers in translators:

> [Another] condition is that he should have persistence in his translation work. In other words, he has to be in the profession for an extended time, not just have fragmented experience in translation. (Interviewee 5)

Quite a number of recruiters emphasized the importance of written tests. One even

emphasized twice that written tests are the most "critical" factor in her hiring decision. And Interviewee 8 provided the reason why written tests are needed:

> The applicants need to take a written test so that we can be certain that the [chosen] one is the one we need…… We require the test because they need to show us that they can fulfill the needs of our organizational culture and the nature of the jobs they'll be required to do. (Interview 8)

Interviewee 6 provided more information about how these translation tests were carried out. She said that the tests would be domain-specific:

> At first, I would what kind of translator we are looking for. Which industry is the translator for? If we look for a financial translator, we will ask the applicants to do a written test related to finance. If we need some telecommunication translators, the written test will be about telecommunication. We also need to look at the language pair. Is it Chinese into English or English into Chinese? Or is it for another language pair? (Interviewee 6)

In addition, she also emphasized that the tests would be administered within a specific time limit:

> We would [need the applicants] to complete the test within a time limit. [The reason is that if] someone completes a test in two to three days and another one spends three hours, the quality will be very different. Therefore … we would require them to finish the test in a specific time limit. (Interviewee 6)

The interviewee did not further explain whether the test would be delivered online or the applicants need to come to her office to take the test. As this interviewee works in a

multinational translation companies, it is quite likely that the test is sent through email. How to ensure that the job applicants actually complete the test within that time limit or do the test by themselves can be some potential problems.

The recruiters' great reliance on internal written tests may once again show that academic qualification, translator certification and work experience cannot suffice as reputable signals when recruiters make hiring decisions.

Question 2: What do education, certification and experience signal?

Having established what managers are looking for in the résumés when screening for translators, the analysis moved on to examine what an English degree, translator certification and work experience signal. Common themes relating to qualification signals were grouped into one of the three categories.

Category 1: What does an English degree signal?

An English degree appeared as a signal in many different ways. The three themes to emerge signal that the applicant with an English degree has received professional training, has foundation knowledge in linguistics and demonstrates a better language standard than non-graduates.

The first theme reflected comments relating to the signaling ability of an English degree in providing students with professional training: "If they have a degree in language, it shows that they have received professional training" (Interviewee 4). However, the interviewee did not elaborate on what kind of professional training was included.

The second theme related to the signal sent by the English degree holders is that they possess a theoretical foundation of linguistic knowledge that is relevant to the field of translation.

176

According to some interviewees, the third signal is that, compared with non-university graduates, university-degree holders are generally more capable linguistically: "In general, university-degree holders have a better language standard than Form 5 [equivalent to General Certificate of Secondary Education in the UK] or Form 7 [equivalent to General Certificate of Education Advanced Level in the UK] graduates do" (Interviewee 4).

However, one interviewee indicated that an English degree can also send negative signals: "Their English is very good but their Chinese standard might be far from satisfactory. If we need them to translate from English into Chinese, there may be a problem" and if there were a choice, they would choose "one with a major in Translation" (Interviewee 4). This view was echoed by Interviewee 7, who said, "Our company is inclined to find a candidate with a degree with Translation".

One last point to notice is that, although there are a number of league tables on the ranking of universities in Hong Kong (e.g. *Opinion Survey on the Public Ranking of Universities in Hong Kong 2004* carried out by the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong), the interviewees indicated that the degrees from different universities (City University of Hong Kong, Baptist University and Lingnan University) are not significantly different:

I won't pay much attention to which university they graduate from. I just need them to have some university training. (Interviewee 5)

Another interviewee provided a more detailed explanation:

If one applicant graduated from the University of Hong Kong [HKU] and the other from Lingnan

University[6], would I think that the HKU one is better? To me, this would not be my first concern, because I think… I have seen in some top universities some not so fine students. The reputation of a university doesn't necessarily mean that it has quality graduates. (Interviewee 1)

Category 2: What does translator certification signal?

Most interviewees indicated that certification can be an "additional" factor for their hiring decision, but it does not give a strong signal regarding the suitability of applicants. As discussed, this is in part due to the recruiters' partial understanding of the certification process. Interviewee 5, the only respondent in this survey with a relatively good understanding of translator certification, said that translator certification signals perseverance:

He is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists. I can see that he has consistency… or persistence. It shows that he is likely to stay in the translation field and not just work for a short while. (Interviewee 5)

This lends some support to the findings from the survey of translation companies on translator certification and the translation profession in Section 5.3, that translators with certification may signal they are less likely to leave the translation profession.

Category 3: What does work experience signal?

Work experience was seen as conveying information about the suitability of an applicant. Unlike the analysis of the signals sent by academic qualification and translator certification, only two themes emerged to describe the types of signal that

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[6] According to the *Opinion Survey on the Public Ranking of Universities in Hong Kong 2004* carried out by the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong, the University of Hong Kong was ranked first with regard to overall performance. Lingnan University was ranked last of the eight public universities.

previous work experience sends.

Work experience signals that the job applicants have "hands-on" and "real" practice on translation:

[Regarding this job applicant], [he] has more than two years of work experience. He has some real experience in translation. (Interviewee 4)

Another interviewee stated that work experience provided a stronger signal to her than did education:

I would think that this applicant with only Form 5 education is better than another with Form 7…. In fact, he has freelance translation experience. He has some contact with authentic translation work. To me, although he has two less years of education… Experience is more important than two more years of schooling. (Interviewee 1)

However, it should be pointed out that, in the later part of the interview, this interviewee contradicted herself by saying:

I divided the résumés into two piles, one of university graduates and the other one of not university graduates… I think that translator is a job that requires a certain level of education… Therefore, what I really need to do is to rank the six university graduates. (Interviewee 1)

Therefore, although almost all interviewees consider work experience an important factor in making their hiring decisions, work experience alone cannot sufficiently signal that the applicant possesses sound translation skills and can deliver high-quality translation work. The recruiters need to base their decision on other factors, most often

the possession of a relevant university degree.

In summary, the critical textual analysis of eight transcribed interviews provided deeper insight into the features of a résumé that recruiters look for in applicants for the position of translator, what certain résumé features signal, and attitudes towards education and translator certification. Although a variety of responses were explored, the dominant themes that emerged highlight the importance of formal educational qualification and relevant work experience in the screening of résumés. Most interviewees viewed translator certification as an "add-on", and they prefer an academic degree to translator certification. To some extent, this is due to inadequate knowledge and misconception about the process of translator certification.

The discussion and implications of these research findings are to be explored in the following chapter.

6. Discussion and Implications

As mentioned in Section 4.4, the purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the translation profession and translator certification by investigating several hypotheses using the research instruments of job advertisement corpus, online questionnaires and face-to-face interview. In this section, I attempt to provide a more holistic view of the various findings and highlight their implications for the professional translation community and for researchers who are eager to understand more about the translation profession.

Section 6.1 discusses in detail the segmentation and heterogeneity of the translation market from demand and supply sides. Owing to the segmentation and heterogeneity of the market, the huge search cost for competent translators has called for the existence of an effective signal in the recruitment process. In Section 6.2, the use

of licensing and certification is discussed, and the current mistrust of translator certification in the translation community highlighted. Then, the scale effect of professional associations and the co-ordination between certification systems in different countries or regions are examined in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 respectively. To strengthen the functioning of translator certification as a signaling device, we suggest conduct regulation, the use of dossier and continuing professional development. Sections 6.5 to 6.7 discuss these methods with reference to experiences in other professions. Section 6.8 looks into whether academic degrees in translation can be a more cost-effective signal than can translator certification. The last part, Section 6.9, proposes that in an environment of mistrust and diversity in the translation market, a coordinated multi-lateral signaling between translation companies, professional translator associations and translator training institutions should be fostered.

6.1 Segmentation and the heterogeneity of the translation market: Demand- and supply-side analysis

As noted by Pym (2000: 10), globalization has produced "a more segmented market for language services". Durban (2003: 1), a professional translator, also noted "There is not just one translation market, rather a variety of segments". This apt observation can be understood from both demand- and supply-side perspectives. As a result of globalization and the increasing role played by information and communication technologies, the demand for translation services has been growing rapidly in the political, economic, technical and cultural domains. On the other side of the coin, because the translation is generally an unregulated "profession" with free entry and exit, the supply of translators is abundant. Also, the popularization of university education in

many parts of the world and the prevalence of the translators' electronic marketplace have lent further support to the supply of translators.

As shown in the corpus of job advertisements in Section 5.1, a wide range of companies are looking for translators and their services, for example, government departments and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, telecommunications corporations and cosmetics companies. Of course, those familiar with the professional translation market are aware that the demand for financial, legal and business-related translators is the greatest. Although it might be far-fetched to say that the demand for translation is ubiquitous, the need for bilingual and, perhaps increasingly, multilingual language services has increased and many multinational corporations have become aware of the importance of these services. Multilingual website is a good example. According to a research carried out by the translation company The Big Word (2008), it was found that 58% of America's largest companies currently have multilingual websites and there is a slight correlation between the size of the organization and whether or not it has a multilingual website. Another study from the investment bank Merrill Lynch (cited in Perkin 2001) suggests that only 10% of companies that trade across borders on the Internet have maintained their websites across multiple languages. Therefore, there should be enormous demand for multilingual translation in the future. Despite this, the increase in demand also creates more difficulties for buyers that do not have a good understanding of the difficulties and subtleties of translation services. For example, when an Australian soft drink company entered the Hong Kong market, its well-known English slogan "Baby, it's cold inside" was translated into Chinese as "Small mosquito, on the inside it is very cold" (back-translated into English). "Small mosquito" is a Cantonese colloquial expression for a small child, but it did not convey the intended English slang word "baby" to refer to "woman" (Albaum, Strandskov and Duerr 2002).

Many translation scholars (e.g. Schäffner eds. 2000; Cronin 2003) have discussed the increasing demand for translation service due to globalization and the complex relationships between globalization and translation. Although globalization is by no means a non-problematic concept (see for example the edited volume compiled by Appadurai 2001), it should encompass the following forces: the rise of the network economy; the restructuring of the economic world system; the political reshaping of the world order; growth in the real and virtual mobility of people, capital and knowledge; the erosion of nation-states; and the increasing complexity of cultural developments (van Damme 2002). Although globalization creates more opportunities for translators as there is increasing demand for translation services, the development also brings a number of formidable challenges. For instance, in the case of Microsoft, "the company was having trouble delivering the breadth of localized products the market wanted and meeting customers' demands for prompt, simultaneous release of localized products" (Brooks 2000).

Therefore, in a globalized world where multinational corporations have played an increasingly important role, it is common for a translation project coordinator to be responsible for translating and localizing a product into a number of languages in a short time. For example, it was reported in the New York Times (30 May 2001) that American Standard, a leading multinational corporation in producing bathroom and kitchen fixtures and fittings, needs to translate its intranet into the 16 languages spoken by its 61,000 employees. In this case, the project coordinator concerned is quite unlikely to have a command (whatever the required level) of all 16 languages involved. Therefore, the translation assignments are usually sub-contracted to language-specific vendors. This increases costs and there is a need for a clear and cost-effective signal to help vendor managers, or other people responsible for hiring, find translators who can competently accomplish the task.

In addition, the prevalence of the use of the Internet has further increased the uncertainty in hiring and hence the search cost for competent translators. Chapter 5.3 reports on a survey of 70 persons responsible for hiring translators. There was a question asking respondents the country or region that their company mainly operates in. Quite a few companies state that they operate on the Internet. Thus, the issue of e-trust among various players in the online business environment has become acute. In the domain of e-business, trust can be defined as "promises, assurances and a demand for high-quality products and services. […] This is because the two parties are not in the same place, and hence we cannot depend on things like physical proximity, handshakes and body-signals" (Ratnasingam 1998: 1). When these companies hire freelance translators, the existence of an efficient signaling device can enhance the e-trust and reduce the search costs.

Therefore, on the demand side, the provision of an effective signal can help those translation services buyers find competent translators who can deliver, and may enhance the image and status of the translator profession.

On the supply side, we can also find the translation marketplace filled with all kinds of "translators", from non-professional bilingual students barely acquainted with the language they use to highly professional, highly qualified linguistic experts who process important documents (Gile 1995). In China, for example, about 3,000 translation companies have registered with the individual and commercial authorities, but there are numerous unregistered organizations and individuals engaged in the translation business (China Daily 9 April 2008). According to another source, the total number of people who practice translation in China is at least 500,000 (Shanghai Daily 11 December 2004).

In a different context, Pym (1999) has provided a more detailed analysis of the segmentation of the translator labor market in Spain. At the bottom end of the market,

there is a huge number of badly paid translation jobs which are carried out by amateur and inexperienced translators such as university students majoring in foreign languages or incompetent part-timers who have a very low opportunity cost and are hungry for some extra cash. Indeed, it is difficult to decide whether these people should be counted as "translators", as there are problems determining the work experience of this segment. In Section 5.4, an interviewee, the project director of a small-sized translation company, remarked, "Some [freelancers] only translate one piece every year". In fact, the translators in this segment are more likely to work a short stint as a "translator" and then move on to pursue other career goals, rather than develop a long-term career in the field.

The second segment comprises contracted literary translators, established freelancers and salaried language professionals in non-technical fields. It is more likely that translators of this type will stay in the market, and they typically are more eager to convey to potential translation service buyers that they are competent.

The segment at the top consists of a small number of highly competent language professionals who are in increasing demand in fields such as information technology, economics and marketing. They are more usually termed "intercultural managers", "language consultants", "language service providers", "language managers" or more recently "transcreators" (Maroto 2004). These professionals will be more involved in the work of project management, computer programming and software development than in translation proper. They may be paid many times more what translators in the second segment are paid. Because of the small number of these translators and the relatively high-profile work, there is less incentive for them to seek translator certification.

In fact, this phenomenon is sometimes termed "counter-signaling" in economics. According to Feltovich, Harbaugh and To (2002), receivers of signals judge the senders of signals based not only on what can be inferred from the signal sent but also on

additional information. In a scenario where there are signal senders of low, medium or high quality, under certain circumstances, medium-quality senders will have an incentive to signal in order to be distinguished from low-quality ones. However, high-quality senders may not signal, as they are not likely to be mistaken for low-quality senders in any case, and signaling behavior may mark them as "medium". Therefore, due to counter-signaling, top-notch translators have less incentive to use a signaling device such as translator certification. Moreover, they prefer not to call themselves "translators" as "for most [translators, their] self-image stops short of fully-fledged consultancy" (Martin 1993: 2), but titles such as "language consultants", "language service providers" and "localizers" are preferred.

However, as there are a huge number of translators of different kinds, the transaction cost of searching for competent translators will be prohibitively high. Moreover, owing to the increasing off-shore sourcing of translation work and the proliferation of the electronic marketplace, the segmentation of the translation market has become more pronounced. There is an acute need for translation service buyers to have access to a signal to distinguish them from those translators who can and cannot deliver.

6.2 Licensing and certification: Which is the better option for the translation profession?

Both licensing and certification, defined in Section 4.2, are used to create a signaling effect. Although there are important functional distinctions between the concepts, the general public still tends to use the two terms interchangeably, and it is reported that some government authorities call their licensure processes "certification" (Abram 2002).

186

In brief, certification is "a process, often voluntary, by which individuals who have demonstrated the level of knowledge and skill required in the profession, occupation, role, or skill are identified to the public and other stakeholders" (U. S. National Commission for Certifying Agencies 2002). However, under the licensure system, the tasks and functions or scope of practice of a profession are defined by statue, and these tasks must be legally performed by those who are licensed. Therefore, licensing is like creating a monopoly or a legal cartel, and entry of potential competitors is limited.

Given the segmentation and heterogeneity of the translation market as discussed in the previous sub-section, it is tempting to suggest licensing be introduced to the translation profession, as its restrictive nature may provide a stronger signaling effect. In fact, in the field of sign-language interpreting, there have also been strong demands for government regulators to establish public policies and regulatory frameworks in order to mitigate the negative effects of "market disorder" (Witter-Merithew 2004). Here, the concept of "market disorder" is borrowed from the field of economics (Phillips 1997), referring to the periods of increased uncertainty about the safety and liquidity of the economy, and government intervention is called for to secure and maintain control over the variables that affect the market operations. However, for the translation market, I would argue that whether or not it is in market disorder is highly evaluative and speculative, and asserting such market disorder exists in the field of translation can be a non sequitur. In other words, the current seemingly undesirable market conditions may just be the optimal response of different stakeholders to a set of preferences and constraints. Time is also a key factor. This presumed market disorders may also be short- term phenomena since in the long run, there are incentives to seek signaling devices so that the benefits of such devices will outweigh the cost of market disorders.

In fact, licensing has been used in the field of translation. For instance, obtaining qualifications to work as a sworn translator in countries that have civil law is like

obtaining a licensure. In the system of sworn translators, a legal cartel and the entry of potential competitors is limited. However, sworn translation accounts for only a relatively small percentage of the total translation business. Also, certifying or swearing has no bearing on the quality of a translation but merely serves to identify the translation so that the translator is accountable, or in some instances, "to fulfill some obscure bureaucratic requirement", as evidenced in an advice website on selecting sworn translators in Spain:

> When it comes time to select a sworn translator, ask yourself: "Will anyone read this translation?" If you're certain that the answer is no and you just need the translation to fulfill some obscure bureaucratic requirement, go ahead and give yourself permission to try the cheapest sworn translator you can find. Getting the sworn translator's signature and seal is the only thing that matters here. (Spain Expat 2008)

Therefore, certification, a voluntary process, might be more applicable for the general translation market in which consumer preferences are heterogeneous and highly contextualized. In other words, translation-service buyers have different preferences for quality, price and speed under different situations. Some translation-service buyers prefer quality translation, whereas others may sacrifice quality for price and speed. A specific example is financial documents that can be highly time-sensitive, but superior quality may not be needed.

Shapiro (1986) points out that markets that are divided by quality of service may benefit more from certification than other types of market. In information economics this is called a "separating equilibrium". In such an equilibrium, those who voluntarily participate in the certification process reveal themselves as "good" types, whereas those who do not participate are revealed as "bad" types. Of course, we need a critical mass or

188

threshold of people participating in the certification to be reached so that translation-service buyers (or at least a particular segment of them) will view those translators who do not want to go through the certification process (for whatever reason) as "bad". In fact, a certification process that cannot generate sufficient interest from translators is doomed to fail as an effective signal. Liu (2001) chronicled a sad (yet interesting, as it provides some empirical support to this claim of critical mass) experience of how the translator certification examinations organized by the Hong Kong Translation Society which started in 1991 were forced to terminate three years later.

In our questionnaire surveys, the translators (the supply side) and the people responsible for hiring translators (the demand side), both believed that the certification process has not functioned effectively as a signaling device. Perhaps the reason for this is that the critical mass has not been reached. Therefore, apart from educating translation service buyers about the translating process (e.g. through the booklet *Getting it Right: A Guide to Buying Translation*) and the value of translator certification, more proactive strategies are needed to persuade those interested in pursuing translation as a profession to take translator certification examinations. Section 6.9 provides a real-life example of how the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Limited (NAATI) has encouraged translators to seek accreditation as translators by abolishing the paraprofessional level accreditation.

There is another advantage of certification over licensing in the translation market which should be highlighted. With certification, translation service buyers have a choice between services provided by certified (more expensive but better quality) and uncertified translators (who can be used for translation for information purposes). And because of clearer (and probably less costly, as searching cost can be prohibitively high) signals, the uncertainty for translation service buyers over quality can be lessened. As a result of this, the overall demand for professional translation service may increase.

6.3 The scale effect of professional organizations: Recognizability and visibility

An important variable influencing the effectiveness and status of a professional association is its size. Sometimes the reputation of professional associations may bring economic benefits to their members. For example, according to empirical studies in auditing, members of internationally renowned accounting associations can command higher auditing fees than those of lesser-known accounting groups (DeAngelo 1981; Comunale and Sexton 2003). An empirical study of over 1,000 accountants in the US also shows that participants in the accountant labor market who were certified public accountants (CPAs) received, on average, a starting wage of $11,400 (€7,210) more than non CPAs.

Of course, most professional associations of translators cannot claim to be large professional bodies if they are compared with professional associations of more well-established professions (e.g. accountants). The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), a British chartered accountancy body, has 122,000 members and 325,000 students. CPA (Certified Practising Accountant) Australia has approximately 112,000 students of various membership statuses. Turning to the translation profession, the number of members in the two major professional translator associations, American Translators Association (ATA) and Chartered Institute of Linguists (IoL), UK is less than one-tenth of the two accountant associations mentioned. ATA has more than 10,000 members in 80 countries, and IoL has around 6,500 Fellows, Members and Associate Members. Other translator associations have far fewer members: the Institute of Translation & Interpreting, 2,642; Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council, 3,500 (of which 2,500 whom are certified). The Australian Translator and

Interpreter Accreditation Agency, NAATI Limited, has awarded more than 30,000 accreditations to some 18,500 people over its 27 years of operation, but it admitted that there might be fewer than 4,000 "active" practitioners of translation and interpretation in Australia in 2005 (NAATI Limited 2005). The astonishingly high number of accreditations granted by NAATI may not reveal the fact that the critical mass has well been reached. Instead, as NAATI accreditation is recognized by the Australian government as one of the requirements for emigration as a skilled worker according to the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship Skilled Occupations List (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Australian Government 2008), some of these "accredited" translators may just be people wanting to emigrate to Australia.

It may be superficial just to have a headcount, and the number of members is by no means the only way to judge the success or effectiveness of a professional association. However, it is possible that the more members a professional association has, the more likely it will be recognized by its practitioners, other related professions and the general public. In real life, it seems that translator professional associations also have the problem of "invisibility", as the various names may not necessarily be familiar to all language students, people responsible for hiring translators and the general public. In a small-scale survey of 29 language students in the UK, less than one-fifth had heard of ITI or IoL (Leech 2005). Also, a long-time member of ITI, Fretter (2004) quite frankly states, "surely I am not the only member exasperated at the fact that ITI, in existence since 1986, has not yet achieved a higher profile outside the language professions". And one of the interviewees in Section 5.4, the client-relationship manager of a large multi-national translation company, even has the misconception that "the only requirement to become a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists is to pay a membership fee". Therefore, we can say that the signaling effect of membership of a translator professional association in general is rather weak.

Some translator associations operate more like a social club whose major (if not only) objective is providing networking opportunities for their small number of members. For example, the Japanese Association of Translators (JAT), which consists of a group of Japanese-English and English-Japanese translators working in Japan and elsewhere, has a membership "open to all individuals interested in Japanese/English and English/Japanese translation and interpretation" and "there are no particular professional qualifications necessary to join JAT" (Japanese Association of Translators 2008). Despite being an associate member of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), JAT has only about 400 members.

6.4 The coordination between certification systems and professional organizations in different countries or regions: From information exchange to mutual recognition

Closer and more co-ordination among certification systems and professional organizations in different countries may have a similar scale effect on a regional or even an international level. In fact, this regional collaboration is happening in the field of higher education (e.g. Bologna Process) and in a number of professions (e.g. engineering and actuary). The Bologna Process is probably the most high-profile effort recently to harmonize the higher education provision throughout the European Union (EU). The beginning of this process was marked by the signing of the Bologna Declaration by the Ministers of Education from 29 European countries in the University of Bologna, Italy. Of course, the accord is not without criticism. For example, Lorenz (2006) criticized it for being too economic-driven and downplaying academic autonomy and freedom. But, the process has indeed made some achievements in the harmonization of higher educational process and increasing student mobility both within and outside

the EU. As a result of growing cross-border education and new developments such as e-learning, joint campuses and transnational consortia, two international organizations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are working on development non-binding international guidelines on "Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education" (OECD 2005).

When it comes to international mutual recognition in professional qualifications, the engineering profession is a relatively successful example. The achievements can be exemplified by the signing of the Washington Accord (1989), the Sydney Accord (2001) and the Dublin Accord (2002). The Washington Accord is an international agreement for recognizing professional engineering degrees between the accreditation bodies in its signatory countries. The agreement recognizes the "substantial equivalency" of academic programs accredited by the signatories, and the program graduates are mutually recognized as having met the academic requirements for entry into to professional engineering practice. In 2007, there were 12 signatory accreditation bodies from all continents. The Sydney Accord and the Dublin Accord are agreements for international recognition for engineering technologists and engineering technicians respectively.

Other professions have also identified the issues of mutual recognition and cross-border practice. In the actuarial profession, there is increasing demand for actuaries to practice outside their native countries. Thus, the International Actuarial Association (IAA) has been working on negotiating mutual recognition agreements between national actuarial organizations and determining universal education requirements for actuaries (IAA Committee on Professionalism 2001).

Some may argue that it might be easier to carry out cross-border "licensing" for professions which require a licensure to practice (e.g. engineering) or have a relatively

193

defined domain of knowledge (e.g. for actuaries, mathematics and statistics). As it is still easy to enter the translation market and the domain of knowledge (the language pair involved) is usually not the same for different national or cultural contexts, it is far more difficult to do. However, prior to the Bologna Accord, there were a number of initiatives to harmonize translation degrees. According to Kelly (2005), the European Language Council (ELC) represents a network of mostly European universities offering language and translation and/or interpreting courses and all national, European and international associations with a special interest in languages. Its aim is to promote "European co-operation between institutions of higher education in the area of language studies" through information gathering, exchange and dissemination and launching European projects in education, training and research. It may be argued that the harmonization efforts seems to be mostly symbolic but the more deep-rooted problem is that the translator training programs are not geared towards clearly defined professions. Therefore, these programs cannot signal professional competence because the translation profession itself is not yet constituted socially.

Another example of collaboration efforts is the International Translators Federation. It caters to the interests of the translation profession, and as a worldwide organization, it represents the interest of translators and interpreting through its membership of more than 100 national translation organizations from over 60 countries; but, again, the collaboration is mostly limited to international consultation.

In the future, it seems that professional recognition is going to be more important, as our global economy has become more knowledge driven. According to a presentation given by a senior OECD official, Kurt Larsen (2003), in a world where lifelong learning is increasingly emphasized, there will be less focus on formal learning and curriculum and more focus on learning outcomes. Thus, there has been a shift towards evaluation for the labor market, and professional recognition will gain in importance. Therefore, it

might be advisable for the national professional translator organizations to collaborate on a more concrete level, as the present co-ordination is limited to only informal exchange of information and best practice.

Van Damme (2001) has put forward a hierarchy for international collaboration for educational institutions and it can be used for collaboration between professional bodies as well. It can be used for illustrating what can be involved in much higher-level collaboration.

Table 30: van Damme's hierarchy of international collaboration in professional certification

Level	Method of collaboration
Level 4	International certification
Level 3	Meta-certification
Level 2	Formal mutual recognition
Level 1	Informal exchange of information and best practices

On Level 1, there is a minimal strategy to improve the communication and exchange among national certification agencies which can act as a foundation for the harmonization and international benchmarking of trustworthy standards and methodologies. This is what FIT is now engaged in. On Level 2, the strategy is to develop formal but "soft" mutual recognition based on a mutually accepted definition of concepts and basic standards and criteria. The strategy for Level 3 is the development of real meta-certification on an international scale, but the author admits that "[T]here is no real significant example of this for the moment". Level 4 is the development of a real international certification agency. The author quite correctly warns that an international agency of this scale can be "very bureaucratic" and "costly". Perhaps the international professional translation community should strive in future for collaboration on Level 3

or 4.

6.5 Professional codes and conduct regulation: Real promise or lip service?

It is quite generally agreed, as discussed in Section 6.4 and elsewhere (e.g. Bray 1995), that professional bodies or associations have played an important role in the knowledge-driven world where lifelong learning and continuing education have gained in importance. However, professional associations do not necessarily bring about professionalization. As shown in the questionnaire survey results in Section 5.3, although the recruiters have perceived an increase in the number of translators holding certification and generally believe that translator certification can enhance the image of the translation profession, their responses demonstrated a mistrust of translator certification and they had doubts about the concrete benefits that a certification system can bring to the translation companies.

Professional associations in other professions are often delegated to enforce ethical professional conduct by formulating professional codes and rules of conduct describing the tasks and duties of their members. For example, the Architects Registration Board, UK (1999) has a Code of Conduct and Competence which contains 1,465 words with 10 standards and 33 notes. The Code of Professional Conduct of the IoL, UK (June 2001 Version) is of a comparable length of 1,562 words with 11 sections and 33 clauses.

More specifically, in the IoL Code there was one section concerning the "scope of work which Practitioners may undertake", and it states that "Practitioners who act as translators shall work only into the language registered with the institute as their mother tongue or language of habitual use". However, it is quite widely reported in many countries (for example, Poland) that there are "no qualified native speakers around and

consequently reverse translation [has become] common practice" (TranslatorsCafé.com 2005). Another translator quite aptly points out that it "depends on the number of native speakers available and [the] level of complexity of the text" (ProZ 2007). In Hong Kong, for Chinese-English translation, as Caucasians make up a scant 0.5% of the total population of Hong Kong and because of cost considerations, native English speakers are seldom used. For a comprehensive survey of translation into second language, one can consult Pavlovic (2007).

In fact, IoL seemed to be aware of this when it issued its November 2007 Version of the Code of Professional Conduct. The above phrases are replaced by "Practitioners shall only accept work they believe they have the competence both linguistically and in terms of specialist knowledge or skill to carry out to the standard required by the client" and a detailed explanation is given as to what "competence" means:

> The competence to carry out a particular assignment shall include: a sufficiently advanced and idiomatic command of the languages concerned, with awareness of dialects and other linguistic variations that may be relevant to a particular commission of work; the particular specialist skills required; and where appropriate, an adequate level of awareness of relevant cultural and political realities in relation to the country or countries concerned.

Phrases like "mother tongue" and "language of habitual use" are omitted in the new version of the professional code. This can be seen as a more flexible approach to the kinds of work that translators can take and more accurately reflect the actual situations in the translation marketplace.

In addition, the IoL Code of Professional Conduct (June 2001 Version) recommends its members who act as employers "as far as possible, employ only who are members of the Institute or of professional bodies of equivalent standing". Although

there have not been any studies on how far this "recommendation" is taken seriously by the corporate community, in my interviews, the recruiters in two large translation companies (both are Corporate Members of the ATA, though it is not clear whether they hold membership in IoL) have not attached particular importance to translator certification and merely viewed it as something desirable to have. One of them even stated explicitly that he preferred someone with a university degree in translation and thought that, for professional translator association membership, "you just need to pay to register".

The professional codes of professional translator bodies also include other aspects of professional practice. For example, the ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices (2002) states that ATA certified translators should safeguard the interests of their clients as their own and divulge no confidential information as well as refrain from interfering with or supplanting any business relationship between the client and the client's client. These two clauses might be easier to put into practice in real life than is maintaining quality, but quite often they have been incorporated into the contract agreement between translation companies and their translators. For example, a freelance staff agreement of a translation company in Hong Kong has the following clauses on "Confidentiality" and "Breach of Employment Agreement":

The "Free-lancer" shall not, under any circumstances, reveal to any person or company any matter concerning [Name of Company], the translated statements/documents/tapes or any related jobs which may come to his/her knowledge in the performance of translation/transcription/interpretation or related work, and shall keep with complete secrecy all confidential information entrusted to him/her, and shall not use or attempt to use any such information in any manner whatsoever. The above shall continue to apply after the termination of this agreement without limit in point of time but shall cease to apply to information or knowledge which may come into the public domain.

(Confidentiality)

[Name of Company] shall not, under any circumstances, accept "Free-lancer" to take up jobs/assignments direct from [Name of Company] clients, failing which, a penalty of HK$100,000 (€8,112) will be charged to indemnify [Name of Company] for the loss of business and hold you liable to prosecution. (Breach of Employment Agreement)

Based on the above analysis of the professional codes of two translator associations, it can be concluded that it is quite difficult for professional bodies to resolve the quality issues in the market, and the change in IoL's Code of Professional Conduct can be evidence to show that the translation market is marked by flexibility and complexity. Also, the translation companies tend to think that they will tackle matters such as confidentiality on their own. The status of a professional association depends to a certain extent on whether there is sufficient probability that a member will actually be excluded if he or she indulges in misconduct and whether professional codes are easily enforceable. As the above discussion shows, translator associations are limited in the roles they can play in enforcing professional codes and regulating the conduct in the field of translation. In the IoL's Annual Review 2006-2007, it was stated that "One case was referred to the [Disciplinary] Committee during the year" (Chartered Institute of Linguists 2007c: 34) but no details were provided as to how the case has been dealt with. In the 2007-2008 Annual Review, there was no mention of any disciplinary cases. In the official journal of IoL, The Linguist, Wood (2004) states that "unlike lawyers or doctors, a translator found guilty of malpractice is not struck off the register but allowed [...] to continue". The author has not provided evidence to support his claim, but one thing is quite clear: in the relatively unregulated translation market where entry is free, those regulators who are "struck off the register" can still find jobs

199

and practice their trade.

6.6 Certification on dossier as an alternative certification system: A real replacement of traditional certification examination?

Certification through a one-off examination is by far the most common method to obtain translator certification. However, as it is a form of summative assessment given an artificial context, its validity, reliability and authenticity are often criticized. In 1998, an alternative evaluation system, certification on dossier, was introduced in the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and British Columbia.

The CTINB (Corporation of Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters of New Brunswick) and the STIBC (Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia), which are members of the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC), introduced a method of enabling candidates to apply for the title of certified translator without having to sit the traditional standardized examination. Individuals who apply for certification must present a dossier giving the details of their qualifications and professional achievements. Each dossier is assessed by a peer committee which reports to the CTINB. According to the website of CTINB, the dossier should contain the following:

- an application form;
- the dossier examination fee (CAD$160);
- a curriculum vitae;
- the names of three referees;
- certified copies of diplomas, certificates and transcripts;

- confirmations of the period of employment from employers/clients;

- substantial and varied examples of work;

- proof and testimonials from clients or employers showing that the candidate is indeed the author of the work submitted for evaluation; and

- proof of success in professional examinations.

Although CTINB believes that this alternative route of membership should enable a greater number of practicing professionals to become certified members of their corporation, it emphasizes that "CTINB members who went through the exam may rest assured that this new route to certification is certainly not an easy option" (Corporation of Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters of New Brunswick 2006). It needs to be pointed out that the last requirement ("proof of success in professional examinations") is optional. According to information provided by Wenhui Zhong (a senior member of STIBC and is currently on the committee that evaluates such applications to this author in email communication, the proof of professional examinations in the certification on dossier is not obligatory and the professional examinations can be from a specialization-specific professional association such as the Society of Automotive Engineers. However, the applicants are required to pass the Ethics examination offered by the association.

Of course, the reason why CTINB introduced this alternative certification effort may be due to cost consideration. For relatively small professional associations like CTINB, the cost may be prohibitively high to implement traditional certification examinations for minor language combinations. For example, in a recent issue of the CTINB Newsletter (June 2008), there were only 6 candidates in their certification examination from the foreign language (Arabic, Bulgarian and German) to French examination. In fact, the corporation is currently studying the possibility of setting up a

system of mentorship leading to certification as an alternative to obtain certification.

It might be true to say that the traditional certification examination provides only a snapshot of the translator's abilities and achievements, which may not suit the needs of a dynamic world, but there are several strengths of an exam-type assessment. Complementing a traditional certification examination with a formative assessment, instead of replacing the former with other certification methods, may sound a more reasonable option. In fact, the recent development of continuing professional examinations in many translator professional associations can represent such efforts Examples include the Chartered Institute of Linguists and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting in the United Kingdom.

6.7 Continuing professional development: Keeping up-to-date with the changing world

Continuing professional development (CPD) can be defined as follows: "The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life" (Construction Group, quoted in Vaughan 1991: 29). Although the definition was used originally in the construction industry, it is quite comprehensive in including the three learning domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and it can and should be applied to other contexts.

CPD has recently become a much-discussed topic in the associations of different professions. Many professions have made CPD a mandatory requirement for maintaining the membership of professional bodies, and some even need CPD in order to continue professional practice. More interestingly, there is even a CPD Alliance in Hong Kong, which was set up in 2002, with the aims to "assist professions in

establishing CPD schemes and programs" and "enhance the general public's awareness of CPD through active promulgation of the associated functions and professional needs of the various learned and professional organizations" (CPD Alliance 2002). The alliance is made up of 16 professional bodies in Hong Kong, including professions such as lawyers, bankers, marketers, company secretaries and human resources managers. However, the translation profession is not represented.

In the translation profession, the two major professional translator associations and the largest accreditation body, ATA, IoL and NAATI, have made CPD an important element of their membership. Starting in January 2004, ATA-certified translators have been required to accumulate 20 continuing education points per three years in order to maintain their credentials. Members must keep a record of all activities through which they earn continuing education points. These activities include approved seminars and conferences, university courses, membership in other translation, interpreting and specialization-specific professional organizations (e.g. Society of Automotive Engineers and European Society of Clinical Pharmacy), becoming mentors, mentees and ATA Certification Program graders, and publishing articles on the subject of translation or interpretation. It should be noted that, according to ATA regulations, "if you do not earn the required number of continuing education points, you will lose your certification, but you will still be an active or corresponding member of ATA" (ATA 2008). As ATA-certified translators may refer to their certification in their résumés, business stationery, cards, and other related materials and these can be important signals to the prospective employees that they are competent and reliable, losing certification may affect translators' competitiveness in the translation market.

The case is similar for IoL in the UK. Although CPD is not mandatory for all IoL members, it is one of the most important components for becoming a Chartered Linguist (Translator) whose status needs to be renewed every year. Those who want to apply to

become Chartered Linguists have to submit evidence of CPD. The scope of continuing education is wider for IoL than for ATA. For IoL it includes fives areas: language, culture, business and IT skills, methodology and subject-matter knowledge. IoL's CPD includes both formal and informal learning, and many of the activities are similar to those for ATA requirements. However, IoL includes quite a number of informal elements like reading foreign-language newspapers and periodicals, and making overseas visits (IoL, UK 2008b). since there is no information available on how much weight is given to these informal elements, it appears to be difficult to quantify and verify these efforts.

NAATI, which is not a professional translator association but a translator and interpreter authority in Australia, uses continuing professional development together with evidence of continuing professional practice for "periodic revalidation of accredited translators/interpreters qualifications" (NAATI 2005). According to NAATI, professional development is classified into four categories of activities: language maintenance, translation and interpretation skill development, supporting skills development, and contributions to the profession. Practitioners seeking revalidation of accreditation must obtain a minimum number of professional development points spread across at least three types of these activities. This new system of Revalidation of Accreditation was officially implemented on 1 January 2007, and the first batch of revalidation cases will be in 2010.

The introduction of a mandatory a CPD element in the certification system may play a role in enhancing the reputation of professional association membership, as the maintenance of the credential involves more than passing a standardized examination and paying a regular membership fee. It is hoped that, in the medium run, these efforts can correct some of the misconceptions the general public have regarding the translation profession and in turn enhance the signaling effect of certification systems, and

ultimately improve the status of translators.

6.8 Academic degrees in translation: The most cost-effective signal?

As shown in the interview data in Section 5.4, quite a number of recruiters stated that a university degree is the most important criterion for determining applicant suitability and they "would be inclined to find a candidate with a degree in translation". It has become quite clear that the basic educational requirement for translators is a university degree. However, the question remains whether a Bachelor's or a Master's degree in translation will function better than translator certification as a signaling device in the translation market.

Since the 1990s, there has been spectacular growth in the number of translator training institutions. In recent years, specialized Master's degrees in Translation have been mushrooming. According to Newmark's (2006: 186) observation, "[T]ranslation, particularly at postgraduate level, is thriving. Ten years ago there were about a dozen courses. Now …, 38 universities [in the United Kingdom] are 'delivering' 76 courses, including audio-visual, screen, media and cultural transfer, translation and diplomacy". Vocation-oriented degrees, such as an MA in Screen Translation Studies (University of Surrey, first offered in September 2004) and an MA in Legal Translation (City University of London, first offered in September 2008), are likely to compete with translator certification as a signaling device in the translation market.

Tan (2008), a Master's degree student at the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, US, compares the cost of obtaining a translator certificate (in her case, ATA certification) and attending translation schools (Monterey Institute of International Studies), and finds

that, although an MA degree costs a hefty US$45,516 (€28,885), if the costs of CPD over a specific time period are added, in the long run an ATA certification can cost as much as, if not more than that. Tan adds that ATA certification is limited in its signaling power, as it is "only widely recognized in the US (and perhaps Canada), and that each country has its own certification system, which could very well render the ATA certification obsolete".

Of course, a degree from the Monterey Institute can function quite effectively as a signal in the translation market, as the degree qualification has been around for more than 50 years and the entrance requirements are stringent. However, the many other translation schools vary considerably in admission standards and quality. To compete for students in order to stay afloat, they may oversupply the market with translators. Thus, in general, this makes it difficult for translators to convince clients to respect their educational credentials. Consequently, translators' control over their working conditions diminishes, and a vicious cycle of unprofessional behavior and mistrust by translation service buyers is initiated. This phenomenon is quite well documented in Tseng's (1992) analysis of the professionalization process of interpreters in Taiwan, and this may be applied to the translation profession.

Pym (2003) provides an alternative explanation for the proliferation of translation schools and degrees. He suggests that, at least in Spain, most of the translator-training programs might have been established to absorb teachers of languages that have been made redundant as a result of the dominance of international English. The other factors he mentioned also include the breakdown of the barrier between professional and academic training (when the polytechnics became universities) and the growth in the number of students going to university. These have resulted in a more fierce competition in the job market. In addition to the above factors, elsewhere such as the UK and Hong Kong, the recent proliferation of MA translation programs has been due to funding

policies in higher education.

In Britain, Rivza and Teichler (2007) point out that public policies in the UK of funding higher education in general as well as policies of not funding the majority of foreign students have led to a vested financial interest on the part of higher education institutions to attract foreign students paying higher fees. For the MSc degree in Imperial College, London, the tuition fee for British nationals and EU students is £3,900 (€4,943), but for overseas students it is £11,850 (€15,019). According to an email communication with Terri Jacques, the Course Administrator of the MSc Translation Program at Imperial College, for the 2007–08 academic year the program had 14% non-EU international students, and the number for 2008–09 would be "at least double as [there is] a great increase in the number of international applicants". Whether these international Translation students, after earning the Master's degree and returning to their home countries, can be equipped with a better signaling credential and strive in the job market is not without questions. The Master's programs in Translation in the United Kingdom tend to be non-language specific as they have to deal with many foreign languages. Besides, these programs focus more either on translation technologies or academic Translation Studies but less on translation skills. Prospective employers in the international students' home countries may only perceive them as having better English skills and cultural knowledge.

The situation in Hong Kong is similar. In Hong Kong, the government announced in November 2002 a blueprint for the further development of higher education, and almost all taught postgraduate programs and would be gradually be self-financing in the following years (Hong Kong SAR Government 2002). In other words, the government would no longer subsidize the taught postgraduate programs, but the universities were going to have more autonomy and flexibility to offer study programs according to market needs. According to the local newspaper Ta Kung Po (3 February 2007),

207

between 2004 and 2007 the number of government-funded postgraduate programs decreased from some 160 to zero. In the 2006–07 academic year, the Chinese University of Hong Kong alone had more than 100 postgraduate programs, and on average the student intake of each of these programs is 50. Take the MA in Translation program as an example. There are six programs offered by four universities:

- Master of Arts in Translation and Master of Arts in Computer-aided Translation, Chinese University of Hong Kong;

- Master of Arts in Language Studies (with a Specialization in Translation and Interpretation), City University of Hong Kong;

- Master of Arts in Applied Translation and Master of Arts in Legal Translation, Open University of Hong Kong; and

- Master of Arts in Translating and Interpreting, Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

The tuition fees for these one-year full-time programs range from HK$63,000 (€5,125) to $90,000 (€7,322) (The tuition fees are halved per year if students opt for two-year part-time programs). Given that each program takes in 50 students, there will be 300 graduates every year, and the revenue for the universities can be enormous. However, it is doubtful whether the translation market can absorb all these graduates. According to the Program Director of Master of Arts in Computer-aided Translation (MACAT) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, "Based on the statistics on the profession of our students, we observe that a large number of executives and teachers take MACAT, amounting to 44.5%. Translators are the third largest group, totaling 20%" (Department of Translation, Chinese University of Hong Kong 2006a: 5). It is surprising that translators only account for one-fifth of the study body. Probably they think that the acquisition of a Master's degree may not significantly increase their

employability. In fact, some of MACAT student took the program just for personal interest: "I enrolled in the programme with two aims in mind. The first was to acquire new knowledge beyond my previous studying in translation. The second was to look into languages from a computer perspective" (Department of Translation, Chinese University of Hong Kong 2006b: 4).

Therefore, although the interviewees in Section 5.4 respect academic degrees as a signal mechanism in the job market, as there is a tendency for translator training schools to over-supply the translation market with academic degrees, the translation market continues to be flooded with translators with academic credentials of all levels. It is likely that employers' respect for academic Translation degrees will diminish as the effects of over-supply become more evident. One may argue that there is no over-supply but an acute shortage of proficient Arabic translators in the United States and among the 120 American Translators Association members, "fewer than 25% have taken and passed the association's proficiency exam" (Browning 2001). However, the translator training institutions have been quick in response to this market demand as well. For example, the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Master of Arts in Arabic-English Translation and Interpretation program in 2008 (Monterey Institute of International Studies 2007). Therefore, it is possible that an over-supply of Arabic translators may emerge in the medium run if the high rates (more than US$50 per hour according to Browning 2001) attract more translators to enter the market, the translator training institutions have responded to this by introducing more Arabic-English translation programs and/or the issue of international security has become much less of a concern.

6.9 Multilateral signaling and the coordination between translation companies,

professional translator associations and translator training institutions

Perhaps it is a cliché to say we are living in a society typified by widespread changes in the social, technical and cultural aspects (Candy 2000). The emergence and enlargement of the European, heightened security awareness and opening-up of many developing economies have created ample opportunities as well as challenges not just for translators but the humankind. Technologically, the development of information and communication technologies change the way translation companies run their business and how translators live, communicate and work. Besides, because of more attention is given to the preservation of minority languages and cultures, multilingualism has become a pervasive concept. Because of these changes, "[k]nowledge and skills learnt in school or university rapidly become obsolete in an environment where practices and processes changes so rapidly that industries and jobs that have existed for centuries can disappear almost overnight" (Knapper and Cropley 2000). To deal with the changes, lifelong learning is often suggested as a way to enhance workers' adaptability to shifting circumstances and readiness to learn new work-related knowledge, skills and attitudes (Knapper 2001). In the context of this thesis, translators with sound lifelong learning skills are more employable in the translation market.

Although the concept of lifelong learning is usually used loosely in different contexts, it can be defined more comprehensively as follows:

The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person. (Jarvis 2006:

210

134)

From this definition, we can see that lifelong is a wider concept and CPD is "a fundamental component that lies along the continuum of lifelong learning" (Ryan 2003). The term "lifelong learning" has been used constantly in political and public discourses. For example, the EU Commission's staff working paper titled A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning from the European Union (European Union 2000) states that:

European Union must set an example for the world and show that that it is possible both to achieve dynamic economic growth and to strengthen social cohesion, lifelong learning is an essential policy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment. (4)

The document was a reflection of the decisions taken at the 2000 Lisbon European Council Memorandum and stresses the one of the important aims stressed for lifelong learning is promoting employability. In Asian countries and regions, governments have also been active in promoting lifelong learning through various public policies and projects. The former Secretary for Education and Manpower of the Hong Kong SAR, Arthur Kwok-cheung Li, remarked in the opening ceremony of an international conference on the internationalization of lifelong learning:

The philosophy of lifelong education is that learning is an un-ending process crucial both to self-actualisation and social development. It is through lifelong education that we inculcate initiatives, responsiveness and creativity in individuals. These individuals in turn form a well-trained and versatile workforce which helps enterprises to thrive, and maintain Hong Kong's overall competitiveness in a globalised economy. (2004: 1)

Perhaps the most common manifestation of the actualization of the concept of lifelong learning is the creation or, for some countries, further development of a national or regional qualification framework. For example, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the governments plan to replace the National Qualifications Framework with the Qualifications and Credit Framework in late 2008. For the translation profession, the IoL's Diploma in Translation has been accredited by the UK government's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for entry to the National Framework of Qualifications at Level 7 (equivalent to a Master's-level qualification). This can be seen as an abolition of differences between professional qualifications academic degrees. However, the current situation is that an increasing number of academic degrees have become vocation-oriented, there is a "signal-jamming" problem in the job market for translators. In economics, a "jam" is defined as the inference problem faced by the decision-maker in an economic transaction (Fudenberg and Tirole 1986: 367). Since the differences between academic degrees and professional qualifications have narrowed, it is more difficult for employers to make inference about job applicants' employability from these credentials. Hence, there is a signal-jamming problem in the job market for translators.

The development of these national qualifications and credit frameworks are important to the translation profession as they have provided a system for translator training institutions, translation companies and professional translator associations to engage in coordinated efforts to develop multilateral signaling mechanism.

At present, there seems to be a rigid demarcation among translation companies, translator training institutions, and professional translator associations. For translation agencies, they may not have the incentive for them to develop well-structured training programs for their "staff" who only work on a freelance and project basis. Although some international organizations, such as the European Parliament (2008), do offer paid

212

translation traineeships, as far as I know, it seems that there are not studies on whether translation companies provide any training programs to their freelance staff. The most common "training" I can think of and have received during my freelance years is probably feedbacks from the quality control people in the translation agencies. In a multinational subtitling company I have worked for, my translation was vetted by a more experienced but anonymous freelancer and the comments were given back to me for reflection. That person who vetted my "assignment" was paid for his or her service as stipulated in the pay schedule. For the same company, there were also occasional quizzes, especially when a new subtitle version of the translation software package was released and the winner could receive a prize. However, these efforts can hardly be conceived as a structured training program.

Traditionally, in many professions (and perhaps true when a lot of in-house translators were still around), professional development was closely tied with institutional needs. It is still the case for most professions such as teachers, engineers and architects who almost always work in an organizational context. However, for freelance translators, professional development has increasingly been a personal matter and they have to take responsibility for their own development.

However, professional translators usually do not have incentive to upgrade their skills because professional development is costly and, more importantly, demands time from their usually hectic and often unpredictable work schedule. Perhaps NAATI's (2005) case of Translator/Interpreter at the paraprofessional level can be used as an example to illustrate this. This is a level below the professional level and represents a level of competence in translation for the purpose of producing a translated version of non-specialized information or in interpreting for the purpose of general conversations. According to NAATI, as at 30 June 2005, almost half of its accreditations were at the paraprofessional level but a large number of these paraprofessional practitioners work in

213

health and legal areas which usually demand a higher level of linguistic skills. However, as there is no incentive for these "paraprofessionals" to upgrade themselves to Translator/Interpreter Level accreditation, they do not choose to move to the professional level. NAATI has been concerned about this as the upgrading of these translators to the professional level would raise the status of the profession, and possibly remuneration. In view of this, the Authority in 1995 discontinued awarding accreditation in translation at the paraprofessional level in high demand languages (but continue awarding this accreditation for languages of low and emerging demand) and interestingly, the growth in Translator level accreditations has been 110% while for Paraprofessional Translators it has been only 2.5%. Although whether the status and remuneration of the translation profession has indeed increased remains an unanswered question, this shift shows that professional translator associations can play an active role in the professional development of translators by offering a suitable incentive mechanism.

Traditionally, the connections between translator training institutions and professional translator associations are limited to two channels only. First, some translation departments in the UK are corporate members of professional translators associations. For example, MSc Translation Programme of the Imperial College London is a corporate member of the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI), UK. Second, some universities and professional translator associations have signed mutual recognition agreements regarding their certification examinations or degree programs. For example, the holders of the Diploma in Translation will be granted exemption from Module 6 (Translation Project) of the MA in Translation Studies at Birmingham University and students who attain a mark of 65% or more in the Annotated Translation Project of the MA in Applied Translation Studies at London Metropolitan University will be moderated by IoL Educational Trust with a view to granting exemption from

Paper 2 or 3 (semi-specialized translation) of the Diploma in Translation.

However, as discussed above that CPD has become an increasingly important component of translator certification, there should be even closer collaboration between translator training institutions and professional translator associations. For instance, translator training institutions can tailor better CPD programs in consultation with professional bodies and as suggested by Cutler (2007), "Translation courses… need to incorporate professional development features with the existing academic pathway."

Translator companies and translator training institutions/professional translator associations should engage in coordinated efforts to develop multilateral signaling mechanism. Although in some countries and regions, translation companies do have their association (e.g. Association of Translation Companies in the UK, Association of Hungarian Translation Companies and European Union of Associations of Translation Companies) but many professional translators associations also accept corporate members. Examples are ITI in the UK and ATA. This can make the communication and collaboration between the corporate world and professional translators easier. On the other hand, as CPD has become more important, university academics can develop tailor-made programs and short courses for the CPD needs of professional translators.

Translation companies (including technology developers) can also be consulted on developing academic translation programs so that the graduates from such programs can better meet the demands and challenges when they launch a career in the translation profession. This is usually not the case at present. Take the Higher Diploma in Translation and Interpretation program offered by Caritas Francis Hsu College in Hong Kong as an example, as shown on its program website (Caritas Francis Hsu College 2008), it external advisers consists of four academics, one senior court interpreter and one NAATI examiner but there is no representative from the translation companies. It would be desirable if someone from the translation business sector can sit on the

advisory board and provide a perspective from the industry on how the program should be run.

The above coordinated efforts will have two results. First, they can help foster trust in an increasingly uncertain translation market. This reduces significant asymmetric information in the translation market as the future perceptions of different parties about the market uncertainty decrease. Second, translator training institutions and professional translator associations will be more effective in knowledge circulation. The knowledge can be better diffused to all that can benefit including professional translators, translation companies and other stakeholders. In this way, it will be easier for employers to make inference about job applicants' employability and the process of recruiting translators can be easier, cheaper and more time-efficient. Besides, equipped with updated knowledge and skills, translators will be more able to deal with change occurring in the translation industry.

As a conclusion, I cite from Paul Ricoeur, a French philosopher, who looks into the issue of identity:

> To say *self* is not to say *I*. The *I* is posited—or is deposed. The *self* is implied reflexively in the operations, the analysis of which precedes the return towards this self. Upon this dialectic of analysis and reflection is grafted that of *idem* and *ipse*. Finally, the dialectic of the same and the other crowns the first two dialectics. (1992: 18, emphasis in original)

According to Ricoeur, the "self" is not synonymous with the "I" because the former is a mediated self which is constituted in "an unending process whereby the self encounters explanations of the self" (Hengel 2002: 83). Ricoeur distinguishes between two concepts of identity, *identité idem* and *identité ipse*. *Idem* means "the same as" while *ipse* means "appertaining to the oneself". *Identité idem* is repetition of the same,

216

which might be interpreted as the way a profession seeks to reproduce itself. *Identité ipse* is the identity as constituted in relation with others. In a situation of complex change, repetition of the same, alone, is not likely to constitute a viable identity. Therefore, there is a need for professional translator associations, translator-training institutions and other stakeholders to work together in developing multilateral signaling devices that can meet the demands of employers and clients, as well as provide professional translators with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for them to survive and thrive in the complex and ever-changing translation market.

7. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

It is important to evaluate critically the research methodology and results as well as the whole study here. Although the quantitative and qualitative research instruments in this study reveal a number of interesting findings about translator certification and the translation market, there are limitations and biases, some of which can be seen as indicating fruitful avenues for future research. It is hoped that, through additional research, a better picture of the translator profession can be painted.

One of the major problems of this research is the statistical significance of the findings. This study analyzed 66 job advertisements looking for translation-related positions, 55 responses from professional translators and 70 responses from people responsible for hiring translators. There were also eight in-depth interviews asking interviewees about their ranking of fictitious résumés and what signals recruiters were looking for in hiring translators when reading résumés. However, given the huge number of translators in the world (not to mention the different levels of commitment and skill) as well as various kinds of companies and organizations demanding translation services, the scope of this study is limited, and it can be considered only a

medium-scale survey. However, well-conducted surveys of a limited scale still have a contribution to make (for a discussion, see Punch 2003). For example, compared with larger-scale questionnaire surveys that could have been taken, the in-depth interviews in Section 5.4 may provide a better understanding of the complex relationship between various signaling devices and the recruitment behaviors. In addition, in this study, the multiple research methods of corpus analysis, questionnaire and interview were used together to collect information, and there were different sources of data on the topic of translator certification. This triangulation method (Denzin 1989) has been used with the intention to improve the reliability and validity of the study. But, of course, caution still needs to be taken when we make claims that involve generalizability and representativeness.

With regard to research methodology, online surveys targeted at professional translators and vendor managers were used in this research. Obviously, there are many advantages of collecting survey data via the Internet. Apart from cost- and time-efficiency, one of the most relevant advantages to this research is that the Internet can possibly generate a global sample and provide access to respondents across geographic boundaries. According to Hewson et al. (2003: 31), "[T]he Internet is extraordinary in that it affords the possibility of accessing far more diverse samples than has ever been practically possible before". Despite having said these, online surveys are not without limitations and accompanying constraints.

First, the response rate is low. Using the translation industry certification survey targeted at translation companies as an example, among the 375 email messages sent to vendor managers inviting them to complete the questionnaire on translator certification and the translation profession, only 70 questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 18.67%. Some potential respondents might have regarded the invitation email as a spam. As Tuten (1998) has found, individuals tend to open electronic mail

218

messages based on familiarity of the name identified in the mailbox, and to delete those messages from individuals they did not know. Besides, the proliferation of online surveys may also make the problem of low response rate even more serious. Couper's (2001) observes that the low cost of web surveys has led to a proliferation of online questionnaires, despite the fact that there has been no concurrent increase in the number of respondents willing to complete them. According to Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Zechmeister (2006), the response rates of online surveys were sometimes 90% before 2000 but have been dropping fast to between 2% and 30% in recent years. If we compare the response rate of this survey (19.67%) with these figures, it is not particularly low. Recommendations to increase response rate may include the use of incentives and more follow-ups.

Second, perhaps a more serious problem is the validity of self-reported data in online surveys. As noted by Hewson et al. (2003), when questionnaires are administered via the Internet, rather than in person, the researcher is less able to judge the extent to which responses are sincere and genuine. In the research findings regarding the hiring characteristics of translation companies reported in Section 5.3.2, there was a large translation company which claimed that it has 2,500 active freelance translators. According to Dr. Jiri Stejskal, the President of American Translators Association, only companies such as Lionbridge (probably the largest multinational which hired 4,600 full-time staff in 2007) language service provide or Language Line Services (one of the largest telephone interpretation companies in the world) can possibly have this number of active freelancers. Therefore, it is quite likely that a few companies may exaggerate their number of freelancers to make it look like they are large.

Another problem with this survey is that Hong Kong has been used as a case study in the corpus of job advertisements and in-depth interviews, and there may be questions about whether the data collected and claims made are typical. However, apart from the

219

consideration of convenience, there are many merits in using Hong Kong as a case for investigation. First, Chinese and English are the two official languages of Hong Kong, and all important government documents have to be produced in bilingual versions (Official Languages Division, Hong Kong SAR Government 2007). This may provide some insights into countries like Canada, where official bilingualism is practiced. Second, as the world's most open economy to international trade and investment (World Economic Forum 2008), Hong Kong has frequent business and cultural contacts with other parts of the world, and translation has played in important role in facilitating the trade and cultural exchange process. Third, the case of Hong Kong can also shed some light on countries like the United States and Australia, where a majority of translation services are geared towards the information needs of immigrant communities. Despite the fact that most immigrants to Hong Kong have been from mainland China, where the same written language of Chinese is used, after the introduction of the *Racial Discrimination Ordinance* the Hong Kong Government has begun providing translation and interpreting services to the ethnic minorities which make up 5% of the total population in the territory and include Filipino, Indonesian, Indian and others. Fourth and last, the Hong Kong Regional Society of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, UK, is one of the largest overseas societies, and thus Hong Kong can be seen as a case of a region in which a foreign translator certification system is used. Having said all this, we also need to bear in mind that the translation market and translator profession in each country or region has idiosyncrasies and uniqueness; thus, the case of Hong Kong alone cannot present realistic a picture of the complexity of the world translation market and the translator profession.

The use of translation in reported researching findings may also be "of epistemological consequence as it influences what is 'found'" (Temple 1997: 614). As pointed out by Birbili (2000:1), "Collecting data in one language and presenting the

findings in another involves researchers taking translation-related decisions that have a direct impact on the validity of the research and its report". Indeed, all interviews except one reported in Section 5.4 had been conducted in Cantonese and translated into English and their views were presented in direct quotation. Rossman and Rallis (1998) are concerned about the translating of direct quotations as its decisions are "dependent on the intended function of the quotation in the research text and whether one perceives translated words as a direct quotation" (162). Another problem is that researchers may go for more elegant free translation and there can be implications of creating quotations that read well. Rubin and Rubin (1995) point out that editing quotations involves the risk of misrepresenting the meaning of the conversational partners during the interviewing process.

A more important methodological weakness is that, although this study has a certain level of the *description* of the translation market, the translator profession and the signaling effects of translator certification, the *explanation* level (not to mention the *prediction* level) is inadequate. For example, it is inconclusive as to whether translator certification will lead to a perceived improvement in the pay and working conditions of translators, both in the eyes of professional translators themselves and in the eyes of those responsible for hiring translators. As quoted in Toury (1995: 9), if the discipline of Translation Studies is to become an empirical human science, it has "to describe particular phenomena in the world of our experience and to establish general principles by means of which they can be explained and predicted" (Hempel 1952: 1). However, in this study, we can see that it is not a straightforward task to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between different variables. For instance, one finding in Section 5.4 is that translators possessing translator certification can be seen intending to develop a relatively long-term career in the translation profession. However, the opposite may also be true. In other words, because of self-selection bias, those who

221

intend to develop a longer-term career in translation may tend to obtain translator certification. Despite all this, this research can be considered internal or scientific progress (Chesterman 2000), as the hypotheses and testing procedures have been clearly reported, and it has made replication possible in other temporal and cultural contexts.

The above biases and limitations of this study bring forth some fruitful and interesting possible avenues for future research into the translation market and translator profession. Future endeavors may be aimed at collecting panel data and more cross-section data about translators in general and translators who have acquired translator certification in different parts of the world.

This study of the signaling power of translator certification suggests that, rather than the choice between traditional educational qualifications (e.g. a BA degree in foreign languages or an MA degree in Translation) or translator certification being an "either/or" issue, it may be more a "both/and" scenario. In other words, the research findings show that translator recruiters seek the knowledge, skills and attitudes that both types of credentials signal. Therefore, rather than creating a "parallel postsecondary universe" (Adelman 2000) outside the boundary of traditional academic translator training institutes, translator certification and educational qualifications may evolve into "converging universes" (Evans, Saflund and Wijenaike 2002) in which there are needs for professional translator associations and translator-training institutions to develop multilateral signaling devices that can meet the needs of employers, clients and other stakeholders.

In view of this, a cohort or panel study on a number of professional translators observed over several time periods could be carried out. The rationale behind this is that, although it is interesting to understand how educational qualifications, translator certification, work experience and other applicant characteristics signal suitability for entry into the translation market as translators, it is equally important, if not more so, to

222

see how these devices signal subsequent suitability for promotion, training opportunities and career advancement. This longitudinal observation of the individual translators through time can make up for the defects that we have just seen of snapshots of translators at different stages of their career development. Of course, a panel study also has disadvantages. For example, it takes a long time to generate useful data and the cost can be prohibitive. Also, attrition may be a problem, as some respondents may not be contactable at successive phases of data collection (Sikkel and Hoogendoorn 2008).

In addition to panel data, more cross-section data can be collected through replication studies. For example, the ranking exercise of fictitious résumés can be expanded to include different national and cultural contexts. As Scott (2003) notes, applicants' résumés are probably the most frequently used selection tool in the recruitment process. This could be even more relevant for freelance translators, as nowadays more jobs are sought through the Internet and across national borders, due to globalization, so résumés (probably followed by a written translation test) may be an important channel through which recruiters can draw inferences regarding the suitability of job applicants. When designing other sets of fictitious résumés for replication studies, caution needs to be taken in adapting the various résumé data to different national and cultural contexts.

Perhaps more importantly, as this research shows that the translation market is highly segmented, further empirical research on specific market segments, both on the supply and demand sides, might be desirable. In fact, some attempts have already been made in this respect. For example, Dam and Zethsen (2008) look at the occupational status of a group of full-time in-house translators with an MA in Translation Studies employed by private Danish companies. With reference to the Danish context, the authors believe these translators belong to "the strong end of a translator-status continuum due to the permanent, as opposed to the freelance, nature of their positions"

(2008: 72). However, Chesterman and Wagner (2002) and Gile (2004) quite correctly point out that the reverse may be true in a number of other countries. On the demand side, this research suggests that translator certification may be best pitched at the clients or corporations which demand premium translation services. Furthermore, Handy (1994: 175) argues that freelancers' fees "will include a time element, but it will also charge for the quality of the work, for reputation and for reliability". However, there are insufficient data about the characteristics of this market segment, and more studies are needed.

Besides, the Web-based translation services marketplace can be studied in more depth in future research. The online translation platforms have been used in this research for collecting data. The two largest ones, ProZ and TranslatorsCafé, have been accessed to generate a list of translation companies. An invitation email was sent to these companies asking them to participate in the survey on translator certification and the translation profession. However, more studies should be carried out regarding the online translator marketplace as it has become more important for the translation profession. For example, how freelance translators and translation companies represent themselves on the Internet, the requirements of translation and other language-related assignments and the bidding behaviors during the reverse auctions. In fact, very recently, McDonough (2007) use the threads on ProZ and TranslatorsCafé to look at how translators organize themselves in these practice-oriented translation networks. The many data in the online translator marketplace should provide rich resources for further research on the translation market and translation profession.

The trend of translator certification is quite unlikely to diminish in future. In fact, during the period in which this dissertation was written there have been at least two new translator certification systems developed in Chinese communities (the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters in 2004, and the Taiwan Ministry of

224

Education Chinese-English Translation Proficiency Test in 2007). The current study has shown that educational qualification and translator certification are two major components of the screening criteria used by recruiters and that both of them send certain signals regarding recruitability to those responsible for hiring translators. Therefore, this research suggests ample opportunities for professional translator associations, translator-training institutions and other stakeholders to work together in developing multilateral signaling devices that can meet the needs of employers and clients, as well as provide professional translators with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for them to survive and thrive in the complex and ever-changing translation market.

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231

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Appendices

Appendix A: The cover letter to accompany a survey of the certification of professional translators

Dear translators:

I am a doctoral student in Translation and Intercultural Studies at Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain. I am currently working on a project regarding the certification of translators. I would like to collect information on how translators are certificated in different parts of the world. Would you be so kind as to help by filling out the attached questionnaire? It is very short and should not take more than 10 minutes of your time. Please send the completed questionnaire to me at andyljchan@gmail.com

Thanks so much for your time and help!

Andy Lung Jan Chan

Doctoral Student in Translation and Intercultural Studies

Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

Appendix B: A short survey on the certification of professional translators

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the relationship between certification and the working conditions of translators. You are most welcome to provide information about the current state of translator certification in your country. Please note that the certification of interpreters is not within the scope of this analysis.

1. Which country are you currently working in?
2. How many years have you been working as a translator?
3. In general, how are translators paid in your country (1=extremely underpaid, 5=reasonably paid, 9=extremely well paid)? Please give a number from 1 to 9.
4. What is the going rate of written translation (translating from the source language of the greatest demand into your mother tongue) in your country? Please express in euros, e.g. _____ euros per word or character.
5. Please express your answer in Q4 on an hourly basis.
6. In your opinion, how is the translator certification system developed in your

country (1=extremely underdeveloped, 5=reasonably developed, 9=extremely well developed)? Please give a number from 1 to 9.

7. The translator certification system of your country is carried out by (a) training institutes (universities, etc.); (b) external examining bodies; (c) translators' professional organizations; and/or (d) others (please state: e.g. government).

8. Does the certification system (if there is one) have any effects on the pay and working conditions of translators in your country? If yes, please briefly state how.

9. If possible, please provide more information about the translator certification system in your country and/or give websites/books/journal articles etc. which contain such information.

10. You may also want to provide information about the situations regarding Q3–Q6 in another country you are familiar with. Please write your answers below.

Appendix C: The covering letter to accompany translation industry certification survey

To: The Person Responsible for Hiring Translators

My name is Andy Chan and I am a PhD student in the Translation and Cultural Studies program at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain. My PhD research project investigates translator certification and the translation profession.

In my study, translator certification is defined as a voluntary process by which a professional organization grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualification standards. Certificates or degrees granted by an academic institution will not be considered as certification here.

Please note that all responses in this questionnaire are anonymous and will be used solely for academic research. I hope that you will be able to participate, because your opinions and insights will provide valuable data for my research. The results of this study are important for the translation industry and the professionalization of translators, as improved translator certification may facilitate the hiring processes and enhance the status of translators. A report on the survey will be written and made available to all participants.

Appendix D: Translation industry certification survey

1. What is your job title? _____

2. How long have you been in your current position? _____ years

3. In total, how many years have you been hiring translators? _____years

4. In which country does your company mainly operate?

5. Does your company hire in-house translators? Yes/No

6. If yes, how many in-house translators does your company currently employ? _____

7. Does your company hire freelance translators? Yes/No

8. If yes, how many translators are there in your freelance pool? _____

9. What percentage of them are active freelancers? _____%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Circle one.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, our company finds it easy to hire suitable in-house translators.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, our company finds it easy to hire suitable freelance translators.					
Increasingly, newly hired translators have certification (e.g. MCIL, ATA, NAATI, CATTI)	1	2	3	4	5
How many months or years of job experience in translation is your company's minimum requirement?	_____ months		_____ years		
How many months or years of job experience does your company prefer for newly hired translators?	_____ months		_____ years		

261

With specific reference to the organization you currently work for, how much do you agree or disagree with these statements about the benefits of translator certification?

Translator certification…	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Makes it easier to identify applicant's linguistic knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Makes it easier to identify applicant's subject knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Makes the recruitment process easier	1	2	3	4	5
Makes the recruitment process cheaper	1	2	3	4	5
Makes the recruitment more time efficient	1	2	3	4	5
Reduces the likelihood of staff turnover	1	2	3	4	5

Thinking specifically about translators *with* certification, e.g. MCIL, ATA, NAATI, CATTI (compared to those without translator certification), how much do you agree or disagree with these statements? Circle one.

A person with translator certification…	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Gets more job offers	1	2	3	4	5
Is more likely to be hired at my firm	1	2	3	4	5
Receives higher pay	1	2	3	4	5
Has better language proficiency	1	2	3	4	5
Has better subject knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Receives more customer complaints	1	2	3	4	5
Is less able to deal with change occurring in the industry	1	2	3	4	5
Is more likely to have a successful career	1	2	3	4	5
Earns the respect of co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
Is satisfied with his/her job	1	2	3	4	5
Is more committed to the career	1	2	3	4	5
Has a higher sense of self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
Is more likely to leave the translation profession	1	2	3	4	5
Positively enhances the image of the profession	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix E: The consent form to accompany an experiment with the use of fictitious resumes

You have been invited to participate in a research study about hiring translators. We ask that you read this consent form and ask any questions you may have, before agreeing to take part in this study.

This study is being conducted by Mr Andy Lung Jan Chan, who is a PhD student at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili and a researcher of the Intercultural Research Group at the same university.

Procedures

You will be asked to fill out a short survey which includes general questions about your translation company and your opinion of what corporations should look for when hiring translators. Following this, you will be asked to sort and rank 12 fake resumes. Then, an interviewer will ask questions about how you sorted these resumes and what information helps you make decisions of who to hire. This interview will be tape-recorded.

Confidentiality

Please note that the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will only be pooled and used in aggregate summaries. Audiotapes will be translated into English (if the interview is conducted in Chinese) and transcribed. They will be destroyed at the end of the study. No one other than the researcher and his supervisors/PhD dissertation committee members will be permitted access to individual responses. It will be impossible to identify an individual or organization from the information you provide.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Mr Andy CHAN Lung Jan. You may ask any questions you may have now. If you have questions later, you may contact him at Room 5704, Purple Zone, Academic Building, City University of Hong Kong, Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong SAR, China. His telephone number and email address are (852) 2788-9118 and andyljchan@gmail.com respectively.

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Andy Lung Jan Chan
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Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I hereby give my consent to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Fictitious resumes

Résumé 1

Education

Form 7, Madam Lau Kam Lung Secondary School of MFBM, Lam Tei, Tuen Mun, New Territories, Hong Kong
• Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination 2006

Work Experience

Media Assistant, Lee Davis Ayer Advertising Ltd. (Summer 2004)
• Assisted in planning and implementing media campaigns

Résumé 2

Education

Form 5, SKH Tsoi Kung Po Secondary School, Ho Man Tin
• Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination 2004 (credits in English and Chinese)

Work Experience

June 2004–April 2006
In-house Translator, *Digital Asset* (An Asian regional IT magazine)
• Translated articles about information technology, dotcoms and e-commerce

Résumé 3

Education

Form 7, Liu Po Shan Memorial College, Tsuen Wan
• Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination 2001

Work Experience

June 2001–Feb 2003
Translator and Editor, Commercial Union Assurance Company Limited (Hong Kong)

- Translated and edited *MarketEye*, a weekly English newsletter on insurance, banking and IT sectors

Mar 2004–Present
News Translator, *Hong Kong Economic Times*
- Translated economic and financial news

Résumé 4

Education

Sept 2002–June 2006
Hong Kong Baptist University
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English Language and Literature

Work Experience

June 2005–August 2005
Summer Freelance Bilingual Copywriter, looks.com
- Wrote and translated articles on skin care products and fashion

Résumé 5

Education

Sept 2000–June 2004
City University of Hong Kong
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English for Professional Communication

Work Experience

July 2004–Present
Translator and Communication Officer
Corporate Advertising and Publicity Department, Dah Chong Hong Limited
- Translate and translate company newsletters
- Coordinate and translate company website
- Translate and prepare various business documents

Résumé 6

Education

Sept 1998–June 2002
Lingnan University, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Contemporary English

Work Experience

August 2002–Dec 2005

Translator and Editor
The Academy of Chinese Studies
- Designed and maintained the bilingual academy website
- Edited newsletters and publicity materials

Jan 2006–Present
Freelance Translator
- Undertook various translation projects for Weber Shandwick Worldwide, Ogilvy and Mather Advertising, Grant Thornton

Jan 2006–Present
Part-time Lecturer
- Taught final-year translation classes at the Open University of Hong Kong

Résumé 7

Education

Form 5, St Catherine's School for Girls, Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination 2005 (credits in English and Chinese)

Professional Qualification

Final Diploma in English and Chinese, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

Professional Membership

Member, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

Work Experience

June 2005–Present
Assistant Merchandiser, Orrs Enterprise
- Handled business correspondence with mainland Chinese suppliers and foreign clients

Résumé 8

Education

Form 7, St Rose of Lima's College, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination

Professional Qualification

Final Diploma in English and Chinese, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

<u>Professional Membership</u>

Member, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

<u>Work Experience</u>

June 2004–April 2006
In-house Translator, Hong Kong Trade and Development Council
- Translated press releases and product handbooks for the overseas trade fairs of the Hong Kong Trade and Development Council

Résumé 9

<u>Education</u>

Form 7, Yan Chai Hospital Lan Chi Pat Memorial Secondary School, Tseug Kwan O
- Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination 2001

<u>Professional Qualification</u>

Final Diploma in English and Chinese, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, 2001

<u>Professional Membership</u>

Member, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

<u>Work Experience</u>

July 2001–April 2003
Translator and Communication Consultant, Linkage Communication Company Limited
- Translated and produced bilingual public relations materials

May 2004–Present
Translator, Oriental Daily News
- Translated news wires for business, political and feature sections of the newspaper

Résumé 10

<u>Education</u>

Sept 2002–July 2006
Hong Kong Baptist University

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- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English Language and Literature

Professional Qualification

Diploma in Translation (Passes in General Translation, Credit in Technology and Science), Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, 2006

Professional Membership

Member, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

Work Experience

June 2005–August 2005
Summer Freelance English Writer, Nature Language and Education Resources Limited
- Wrote English supplementary exercise books and CD-Rom interactive activities for primary and secondary school students

Résumé 11

Education

Sept 2000–June 2004
City University of Hong Kong
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English for Professional Communication

Professional Qualification

Diploma in Translation (Passes in General Translation, Credits in Technology and Science), Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, 2006

Professional Membership

Member, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

Work Experience

July 2004–Present
Translator and Communication Officer
Corporate Advertising and Publicity Department, Dah Chong Hong Limited
- Translate and translate company newsletters
- Coordinate and translate company website
- Translate and prepare various business documents

Résumé 12

<u>Education</u>

Sept 1998–June 2002
Lingnan University, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Contemporary English

<u>Professional Qualification</u>

Diploma in Translation (Passes in General Translation, Credit in Business and Pass in Social Sciences), Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, 2006

<u>Professional Membership</u>

Member, Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom

<u>Work Experience</u>

July 2002–Nov 2005
Translator and Media Co-ordinator
Lee Davis Ayer Advertising Limited
- Coordinated Copywrote advertising and public relations campaigns

Jan 2006–Present
Freelance Translator
- Undertook various translation and public relations projects for Grebstad Hicks Communications, Impact Group, Ascensus Communications, A Force Advertising

Feb 2006–Present
Part-time Lecturer
- Teach translation classes at the School for Professional and Continuing Education, University of Hong Kong