Session 4:
Summary of the discussion

On the subject of Dr Vasconcellos's paper and the technique which she called 'textual zap', concern was expressed that translators were being encouraged to retain the same sentence structure as in the source language text, when the ability to restructure sentences into good target language forms is considered to be one of the fundamental qualities of a good translator. Muriel Vasconcellos countered this argument with another which supports the idea that changing the structure of sentences within a text can disturb the cohesion of the text as a whole.

Peter Whitelock was asked to explain the concept of 'paratranslation'*, which he then defined as translation performed by a subject specialist using sophisticated machine aids including dictionaries. The paratranslator would have had special training in the use of such aids and in the structure of the source language, but does not have the level of source language competence of a true translator.

Mort Weaver of ALP Systems asked Peter Whitelock to comment on the quality of Japanese-English translation in general and whether there might be a shift in this quality? Peter Whitelock replied that it would be unfair to say that the Japanese are only interested in producing low quality but faster translation with MT.

Loll Rolling then remarked that the EEC had received very high quality translation from Japan because all systems used intensive pre-editing.

In his final conclusion and closing of the conference, Geoffrey Kingscott commented on the disparity of the conference, saying that it was impossible to sum up what had been discussed, such had been the variety of the issues raised. He attributed this to the new dynamism of the profession. Among

*The concept of 'paratranslation' was originated by Preston Maxwell of Tokyo.

these topics were the problem of the quality of revision, the standardisation of terminology, the training of translators and revisers, subject specialists replacing translators in post-editing, the definition of terms in the field of MT, and paratranslation, to mention but a few. He congratulated the speakers on their depth of knowledge and the thoroughness of their research, and referred to the surveys which had been carried out specifically for the conference. Speaking of the future of 'Translating and the Computer', he said that the conference needed feedback on whether it should carry on as it had until now on every front, or whether it should focus entirely on translating and the computer and leave other aspects of the profession to professional associations such as the Institute of Linguists, ITI or AIC.

RAPPORTEUR

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