EDITORIAL

What are the propitious circumstances in which research can prosper in University Faculties and Institutes of Translation and Interpretation? The answer seems to us to concern the structure of those Faculties to a greater extent than the personalities of individuals involved. When, at international meetings, the subject of reseach is broached, two key words invariably emerge - the need for "collaboration" and possible sources of "funding". Neither of which questions arise in a Faculty or Institute where teachers of interpretation are inserted organically into the traditional career structure of University teachers of that University.

This would not yet appear to be the case in many of the Schools with which we are familiar where the interpreters are on short- or long-term contracts without having the career or social security guarantees that staff with tenure enjoy. It is difficult to convince an interpreter whose University teaching commitments are paid "piecework" (and at a very considerably lower rate than his or her professional activity) to devote precious and unpaid time to long-term research activity, unless there is at least the prospect of a post with tenure at the end of those labours.

Conversely, a structure envisaging public competitions with an examination board assessing academic qualifications, professional experience and scholarly activity, not only for promotion within that structure, but for admission to the structure itself, is not only conducive to research activity but makes it a conditio sine qua non for the beginning and for every subsequent stage of a University career. Individual teachers are, of course, free to determine the subjects and methodology of their research projects, but the young colleague who has won a public competition as research assistant will find a group of colleagues more experienced in the research field who have reached their present position for that very reason and are eager to assist and advise with a view to following up the careers of their younger colleagues.

Only with representatives at all levels, including the most senior, will interpreters be able to hold their own, in these days of retrenchment, with the more aggressive forces of (linguistics ?) departments determined to call to heel these irritating renegades who dare not only to suggest but insist that practical experience may be a viable counterpoint to theorising. For not all research is or may be directed towards the construction of an all-embracing theory. Our own field in particular would benefit from lengthier and more detailed analyses of results before the corpus of material has been compiled from which specific theories or the all-embracing theory may be distilled.

There will always be a place for free-lance interpreters or interpreters on teaching contracts within the University system, but the determining of Faculty policy, teaching and research methodology may not be left entirely to them as it may not be left entirely to professors of Literature, Glottology, Linguistics or individual languages. The individual teacher has a right and a duty to decide upon his or her priorities. If the profession takes precedence and the financial blandishments are such that it may, the individual's relationship with the University will be of a specific or temporary nature. If, however, at a certain stage of their careers, interpreting teachers feel that their contribution lies rather in the construction of a pedagogy of interpreting (and in the concomitant professional security of a post with tenure) then the University has the right to demand, for admission to and promotion within the University profession, dedication to and reflection upon the principles and results of the interpreting process and the duty to provide (part of) the wherewithal to enable the results of such reflections to be submitted to the analysis and evaluation of the scholarly community.

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