

Practice Unit 8

1. Consult various web resources on forensic linguistics and identify two high-profile cases in which linguistic evidence has played a role. What type of evidence was involved, and how important was the role of the linguistic expert in sentencing or acquitting the defendant? Discuss some ethical issues which you see arising for linguists working in this field.
2. Analyse all the non-standard spellings in Lindau's utterances in the extract from Howell's novel (Text 8.1 in the book). Which features of a German accent in English are they supposed to represent, and are they successful in doing so?
3. The extract from the student's translation discussed in Unit 8 in the book is repeated here for convenience:

After the critic on America's solo-tour in Iraq by many US partners, George W. Bush tries harder to settle the deep cracks. Not only because of massive difficulties in Iraq, Bush is promoting for international support to rebuild the country. During the next days he therefore gets several occasions.

Which errors do you note in addition to the two already discussed in Unit 8? Which of them are very likely due to interference from German, and which of them are more complicated to account for?

4. Consult German and English dictionaries for the meaning and grammatical constructions of the words *Möglichkeit* and *possibility* and then try to account for the following two learner's errors:
 - * *Immigrants are often attracted by economic possibilities.*
 - * *What makes mothers go for part-time employment is the possibility to combine children and a career.*
5. As a final example of interference-caused errors consider the following warning printed on millions of railway tickets sold by *Deutsche Bahn*:

*Applications for refund on unused tickets submitted after the first day of validity, or in respect of partially used tickets, must be addressed in writing, within a period of six months from the expiry dates of the tickets, to the issuing office or to one of **the transport undertakings** involved in*

the journey.

Monitor translations on documents or in public places and collect further examples of institutions or corporations going public with flawed English.

6. Transcribe the following statement phonetically, using the IPA alphabet, first in a native-speaker pronunciation, then in a German accent showing maximal interference, then in a German accent showing maximal hyper-correction:

the verbal wit in Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield works very well

Discuss the following sentence from a term paper written by a student. In your view, is the wrong verbal form of the predicate due to hyper-correction? Or are there other, more plausible explanations for this error:

** Words from the Continental period are showing early borrowing by corresponding forms in other Germanic dialects, or by their phonological form.*

7. A few years ago Helmut Bonheim published a short article ("Problems of English in German letters of recommendation," *Anglistik* 9 (1998): 120, 121), in which he deplored the linguistic standards in letters of recommendation issued to students by their (German-speaking) university teachers. Sadly, some of his examples even seem to emanate from English departments:

In particular he has already in school successfully participated in abroad programs and more recently toured Spain and England on his bike. This is especially remarkable as he studies three (instead of our customary two) subjects.

N.N. has taken my "Introduction to the Study of English" a year ago. One can tell that she has set herself a goal and firmly intends to reach it all the way.

Ms. N. was participant in one of my language courses last semester.

Identify the errors and comment on interference from German as a possible cause.

8. While the errors in the examples in task 7 are largely grammatical, the question arises whether there are language-specific or nationally specific textual (= stylistic or pragmatic) norms which should be known to somebody writing a recommendation in English. Find out reliable sources which might help you answer this question.

9. Friederich's translation strategy III, "'Eins durch zwei' oder Hendiadyoin," is illustrated by the following examples, among others:

<i>beauty and magic</i>	<i>zauberhafte Schönheit</i>
<i>buildings of individuality and charm</i>	<i>Gebäude von eigenem Reiz</i>
<i>sanity and reason</i>	<i>gesunder Menschenverstand</i>
<i>care and attention</i>	<i>sorgfältige Beachtung</i>

Consult German and English textual material, including - if possible - digital language corpora to find out whether this piece of advice to translators is based on a solid generalisation.

10. Below you find one German original and two English translations:

In Verbindung mit einer zunehmenden Nachfragesättigung im Bereich der Massengüter löste der Verdrängungswettbewerb der sogenannten Billiglohnländer vor allem in den altindustriellen Branchen des verarbeitenden Gewerbes tiefgreifende Strukturkrisen aus, die schwere Beschäftigungskrisen nach sich zogen.

Version A: Linked with an increasing saturation of demand in the areas of mass-produced goods, the competitive pressure from so-called low-wage countries led particularly in the old industrial branches of the manufacturing sector to profound structural crises, which drew serious employment crises in their wake.

Version B: The new competition from so-called low-wage countries coincided with increasingly saturated demand for mass-produced goods. This led to profound structural crises - and hence severe unemployment crises - particularly in old, established sectors such as manufacturing. (source: Salkie, *THES*, 31 March 1989)

Which of the two translations is the better one in your view, and why? Give the two translations to fellow students who do not know the original German text and ask them to translate the English texts into German. Comment on the results of this "translating back" exercise.