



The Invisible Woman

I'm a professional French to English **translator**, and as such I'm invisible. "How come?" I hear you cry. Well, the best translations are invisible. That means you don't notice that what you're reading has been translated, and I'm sure you don't think about the person who's translated it.

So what is life as a translator on Reunion Island like? Personally I work mainly with local clients in Reunion, but also with some translation agencies in Europe. As a freelancer I'm glad to say no two days are alike! During the course of my working day as well as translating I also have to find time to answer e-mails and phone calls, **draft price quotes**, invoice clients, **chase up** any **late payers** ... and make myself copious cups of tea of course.

When you translate you have to be an investigator and an explorer. You're constantly **solving** a complex puzzle: you can't just take words from one language and **turn them into** words in another language; you have to **rearrange**, and **rephrase**, and think very hard about the word choice in order to produce **seamless** writing in the target language.

If I'm home for lunch I follow the news in French on TV and/or in English via the internet. As somebody who translates into English but who lives in the French- and Creole-speaking environment of Reunion it's important for me not to lose my native language!

In addition it's essential to keep **up to date** with Continuing Professional Development, or CPD as it's known, and although Reunion is far away from where most translation industry conferences and presentations take place, I manage to **stay abreast** using online **webinars**.

When I go out I **admit** I sometimes have trouble **switching off**, as at the cinema I tend to compare subtitles with the dialogue, and at a restaurant if the menu has been translated into English I invariably end up finding a humorous mistake: *souris d'agneau* translated as 'lamb with mouse' for example, or the fish *cabot de fond* translated as 'dog's **bottom**'! At the weekend in 'Meeting', sorry Reunion Island, I could go and stay in Saint Pierre at the 'Beating of the **blades**' hotel...

If I want to visit one of the 'circuses', as I've seen Reunion's **caldera** called many a time, I could go to Cilaos and see its famous **embroidery** 'days', or hike in Hellbourg on a path whose sign proudly proclaims that it's been 'done' (as opposed to *amenagé*).

All in all I think there's plenty of days work left for us 'invisible' translators to do... and I'm not talking about embroidery.





Vocabulary

translator - traducteur

"How come?" - comment ça se fait?

to draft - rédiger

price quotes - devis

to chase up - relancer

late payers - client retardataire

to solve - résoudre

to turn into - transformer

to rearrange - reorganiser

to rephrase - reformuler

seamless - harmonieux

up to date - à jour

to stay abreast - se tenir au courant

webinars - webinaires

to admit - avouer

to switch off - décrocher

bottom - fesses

blades - lames

caldera - cirque

embroidery - broderie

