

I: We are talking a bit about translating, of course, but also a bit about language and language learning and life as a translator in general. Would you mind telling us a bit about your life. How long have you been working as a translator?

[00:00:18.22]

R: I have been working full time for about ten years now with translating. I started off doing small bits of translating while I was working at other companies but then I took the step to actually being a freelancer full time and that was almost ten years ago.

[00:00:32.04]

I: Mhm. What made you take that step, do you think?

[00:00:38.17]

R: I think, I mean there was partly this interest in languages. Previously I was working with something completely different, with IT...But I have always had an interest in languages and having acquired a couple of extra languages in addition to English I wanted to then make use of these languages. So, there was the language side of it and then there was also the lifestyle choice almost to become more flexible and to be able to manage my own time and therefore to work as a freelancer in some context and languages seemed to be the obvious context for me to do that.

[00:01:11.25]

I: So, what languages do you work in? English, of course, that is your native language.

[00:01:17.20]

R: Exactly, English is my native language so I always translate to English. And my other languages are Swedish and German, so I translate from German to English and Swedish to English.

[00:01:28.07]

I: Mhm. A quite common misconception is that translators, they can sort of translate both ways. //Like we would be// bilingual somehow. But would you dream of translating into Swedish, although your Swedish is perfect basically, or translate into German?

[00:01:37.07]

R: //Exactly, yes//.

[00:01:48.07]

R: Exactly, as you say, there is sometimes a misconception that you can translate equally well in both directions, and I would //also//.

[00:01:55.02]

I: //But you would not//, do that?

[00:01:55.22]

R: No, I would say personally, I would always translate into English and I would, I think probably that is what the majority of translators do, and I would recommend that if you

were ordering a translation that you order it from somebody who is always translating into their mother //tongue//.

[00:02:12.01]

I: //Absolutely//.

[00:02:13.17]

R: //I mean// it is possible that if you are born into a bilingual environment then you could make a case for you being equally good at both languages. But otherwise I would say, regardless of how good you are at your second or third language. It is never quite, it does not quite have that extra twist, that extra, the nuances in the language that you have. That extra feeling for the language that you have in your native tongue. So, you always produce better texts in your native language, I would say.

[00:02:41.10]

I: You have been living in Sweden for quite a while now. Are you ever afraid that your English is going to, sort of, //disappear// somehow? Everything is in Swedish now for you.

[00:02:50.08]

R: //(laughter)//

[00:02:53.10]

R: Yes, that is true. A lot of my everyday life is in Swedish so one certainly gets...Used to speaking in Swedish as kind of the default language. And...Of course in certain contexts you perhaps have, I perhaps have, more experience now in Swedish. Than I would do in English. But I...And you can almost get to a stage in some respects that you are very good at your new language, which is Swedish in my case, and you are obviously very good in your native language, English, but you are perhaps no longer quite 100% in either of them in a way. But of course, sometimes perhaps when you are talking I will be so used to speaking in Swedish that when I speak about that same subject in English, I will be almost using the Swedish way of saying it or something that even though I am speaking English. But I would say that, native language kind of always sits there in the brain stem and once you sit down and start writing in it then. It is always there, it is, you do not lose it, I //would not say//.

[00:03:56.06]

I: //I//.

[00:03:58.13]

R: So I still //claim// to be as good in my native language as I was before I moved here I would say.

[00:03:58.13]

I: //Exactly//

[00:04:02.00]

I: I know what type of target texts you produce, Nick, and they are fantastic!

[00:04:06.08]

R: Oh, //thank you// very much.

[00:04:06.08]

I: //(laughter)//

[00:04:08.28]

R: And I think also now these days you have. OK sure now I live in a different country. But I think now there are so many more opportunities than there perhaps were 20 years ago for keeping in touch with your native language. Obviously, there is talking to family and friends and so on, but now you have the exposure from TV channels, you can read on the Internet, the newspapers and so on so. You can still keep yourself immersed in your native language even if you live in a different country, I would say, so it is not such an issue as it might have been //perhaps//

[00:04:38.16]

I: //Like// 10-15 years ago.

[00:04:40.00]

R: Exactly. And I think in fact now there is almost an advantage, whereas previously there might have been. You could have made a case again for, you should be living in the country which uses the language into which you translate but now I think, for example living in Sweden, I have so much more knowledge about...Let us say I am doing a...Translation about the tax agency here, or something like that, you have so much more knowledge about the internal workings and so on of things in Sweden. That I think that actually helps.

[00:05:10.09]

I: Oh, yes, //that is true actually/.

[00:05:10.09]

R: //With the translation// you have so much more contextual knowledge from the source language, which is Swedish in my case.

[00:05:10.24]

I: Yes, so that would actually...I mean, then it would be better maybe to live in the country you translate into?

[00:05:24.15]

R: I think so, I think it is good you have at least some experience of living there, whether you still live there or you moved on somewhere else but I think it is good to have that experience of how things work in that country.

[00:05:35.28]

I: Mhm. Are you a happy translator? Do you like what you are doing?

[00:05:40.20]

R: I think so, //yes//

[00:05:40.20]

I: //(laughter)//

[00:05:41.25]

R: I go to work with a smile on my face most days I think and...I am always, you know, happy to go sit at my desk and start working. Of course, it is nice that one works at home because then one can sit and get started slowly. And have a cup of tea maybe in the morning and get ready for the day's work and so on. And I also like the fact that, for me at least, it is nice I have fairly regular deadlines so I can structure my work and have deadlines rather than just a mass of stuff that I know I have to do within three months, so now I have to organize that myself. //But if I have deadlines//.

[00:06:17.09]

I: //No room for// procrastinating.

[00:06:18.22]

R: No, exactly. I mean the sort of texts I do they are quite often a deadline today or tomorrow //or//

[00:06:24.16]

I: //Or yesterday//.

[00:06:25.03]

R: Or yesterday in some (laughter) cases as well. Or by the end of the week so there is almost like it is very easy to focus on the work.

[00:06:33.17]

I: OK, thank you very much for talking to me a bit about your life, Nick Butler!

[00:06:38.24]

R: Thank you, it (inc.).