

## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY PIA KLENK**

### The terminology side of translation — what my internship taught me

“Translation? I had no idea there was even a course for that. And what do you translate, exactly?” fellow passengers on the way between Freiburg and my hometown of Nagold sometimes asked.

And yes, you can actually study translation — I should know because I spent three years doing just that at Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences.

### **From Magdeburg to Freiburg**

I really wanted to write a dissertation with a practical application in the field of terminology, so I went in search of a translation company where I would be able to tackle this project as part of an internship. Peschel Communications were immediately open to the idea and offered me a translation internship coupled with support for a terminology project on the subject of storage technology. Overjoyed, I accepted the offer.

### **The first day at Peschel Communications**

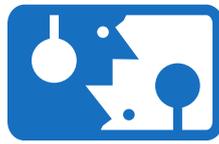
I vividly remember how nervous I was on the morning of my first day at Peschel Communications. While university had taught me a lot of theory, I still lacked work experience, and the questions buzzed around in my head: What would a typical day at a translation company look like? Would I be able to put any of my newly acquired knowledge into practice? What was I to expect?

Well, for starters, quite a lot of information. There wasn't one day in the first week when I didn't go home with my mind reeling, falling into bed with exhaustion. But once I acquired a certain routine, the exhaustion quickly subsided.

### **“And what do you translate?”**

I started off translating short legal documents, such as birth certificates. Most of these documents are only available on paper, which means they have to be prepared in Microsoft Word for electronic processing. It immediately became clear that my studies were very different indeed from the real day-to-day life of a translator. On more than one occasion, I silently thanked my translation tutor for always having provided formatted documents.

I can't deny that documents with intricate layout or uncooperative software sometimes stretched my patience. But here, too, practice made everything much easier! As the weeks passed, I was given longer documents to translate, such as press releases or contracts. Every new text meant having to familiarise myself with a completely different subject area. What may sound exhausting to some is exactly what makes translating such an interesting profession for me. No two texts are the same and you have the opportunity to broaden your horizon every day. Never before have I been exposed to so many different topics as during my internship.



One of my personal highlights was a marketing translation for a cosmetics product which required an entirely different register than some of the technical texts I had translated previously. The “creative freedom” was a completely new and exciting experience, something my course had not prepared me for.

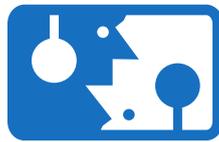
As already mentioned, my internship also included a terminology project on storage technology, which gave me insights into the terminological aspect of translation. The demand for translations in the field of renewable energies and storage technology is rising, and so I was tasked with creating a German-English glossary of storage technology terms. I researched technical terms and prepared the researched specialist terms in an Excel document according to the Peschel Communications terminology guidelines, so that the terminology could be imported into the CAT tool memoQ. The fruit of several months’ labour is a glossary containing 200 specialist terms, which is now available both as a PDF and as a terminology database.

### **The internship – a steep learning curve**

The internship was one long and important learning process for me. Not a day went by on which I didn’t learn something new. The most useful part was the feedback from my colleagues, who took the time to thoroughly discuss every translation I produced. This helped me recognise my strengths and weaknesses, allowing me to continually improve my translation skills. Whenever I had a question or a problem, help was at hand.

Another reason why I enjoyed working at Peschel Communications was that I was welcomed as part of the team from day one. The working atmosphere was more than agreeable and there was always time to have a laugh, even on stressful days. Thank you for a great time!

November 2018 to March 2019



## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY SABRINA GREETHER**

“If I want to learn to swim, I have to go into the water, otherwise I’ll learn nothing.”  
(August Bebel)

With a Bachelor’s degree in translation under my belt and the start of my Master’s approaching, I wanted to see what it’s like to work in a translation company and put the knowledge I’d acquired at university into practice. After a three-month internship at Peschel Communications, I’ve learned one thing above all: translation is a craft! And a craft needs to be practised.

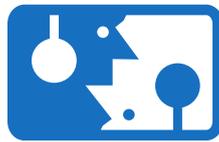
Of course, it’s essential to have an academic grounding. I would recommend a degree in translation to anyone who hopes to make a career out of it. University is where you really hone your command of your foreign languages, and your native language too. And you have to learn how to familiarise yourself with all kinds of different topics, so that you can produce accurate translations whatever the subject matter. But a degree alone isn’t enough to make someone a good translator. Without the practical experience that I was able to gain at Peschel Communications, I certainly wouldn’t be adequately prepared for the world of professional translation. For example, you may think you know your way around Microsoft Word, but you’ve probably never had to prepare a document for translation and fiddle with countless obscure settings to reproduce the layout of PDFs or other read-only file formats.

After focusing mainly on journalistic texts and the occasional specialist text from a particular field during my translation courses at university, here at Peschel Communications I was suddenly confronted with official documents, certificates, directives, court rulings and various other texts from a whole range of areas. Translating from English, Spanish and French, I had to deal with all kinds of bureaucratic jargon and all of the different institutions and systems that are specific to each country. The highlight of my internship was helping with translations for the European Commission: working on these texts meant I had to familiarise myself with subject areas that otherwise I would probably never have come into contact with. And that’s exactly what appeals to me so much about translation.

I am extremely grateful that I was able to work on real translations from the very first day, which is something you can’t always take for granted with translation internships. The whole team were excellent mentors, patient, helpful, and always there for me. Here at Peschel Communications, every translation – no matter who produces it – is thoroughly checked by a second translator before delivery, which guarantees the quality of the translations and really helped me to improve my skills as a translator. I received feedback on all of my translations from one of my experienced colleagues, and this enabled me to discover my strengths and work on my weaknesses. I also had the chance to get a taste of project management, a field which was completely new to me and which I found extremely interesting. I was able to see how quotations and invoices are drawn up and even took responsibility for private customers arriving to collect their translations, which gave me the opportunity to interact with customers every day.

The team showed me a warm welcome from day one and I was always happy to go to work. I am very grateful for everything that I learned here and for the wonderful time I had. Now I can start my Master’s degree feeling well prepared and secure in the knowledge that this is the career for me!

April to July 2017



## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY ANNA FRITSCH**

“Translation — that’s something you can study?!”

This is the kind of question with which we translation students often find ourselves confronted. Most people tend to think that being able to speak a foreign language automatically makes you a skilled translator. We learn during our studies, however, that this is far from the truth. As I soon found out, the daily working life of a translator had many more surprises in store.

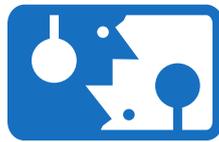
After finishing my degree in translation, I had the opportunity to pursue an internship at Peschel Communications.

Although I had little practical experience, I was entrusted with translation jobs from day one. Initially, I translated all kinds of certificates and official documents, where I learned about “officialese” the hard way. While Joe Public may look at such documents and see only set phrases, the translator must render these in another language, word-for-word and with proper style. Luckily, I wasn’t just left to my own devices, but benefitted from the support of an experienced team every step of the way. This is a privilege that most translators don’t have, as the profession is often practiced by freelancers. At Peschel Communications, texts are always revised by a second professional — whether they were translated by an intern or the boss. Not only did this help me feel more secure, it also ensures that the translations are top notch.

During my internship, I worked on a wide variety of texts and had the opportunity to try my hand at translations in fields like medical technology, renewable energies and shipbuilding. In the process, I learned that, for me, the most interesting aspect of translating is discovering topics, people and projects that I would never otherwise encounter. An experienced translator is a bit like a Renaissance man for the 21st century. While this opens doors to an incredible wealth of knowledge, it also presents challenges, since it is impossible to know everything about everything.

As a result, translation also at times involves extensive research. This is true for both seasoned professionals and beginners like me and it revealed to me another important aspect of the working life of the translator: time management. In an era where everyone is pressed for time, customers often want their translations done yesterday. I gained a good sense of what is involved in planning a translation job, including building in enough time for research and revision, while also keeping profitability in mind.

The next time someone asks me if it’s really necessary to study translation, I can confidently answer: “Among other things.” In addition to theoretical knowledge, practical experience is essential, and I was lucky to gain so much of it during my time at Peschel Communications.



## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY CARMEN HOLZWARTH**

Peschel Communications — Translation for team players

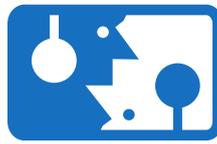
It may seem strange that although I studied translation at the University of Hildesheim, I initially couldn't imagine pursuing it as a career. I had too often heard that "translation is a lonely profession" — a nightmare for a social person like myself.

That was before I completed an internship at Peschel Communications. Now I know that translation doesn't have to be a solitary pursuit. At Peschel Communications, good translations are a team effort! Even as an intern, I was part of the team right from the start, helping with translations from day one. I found the wide variety of texts particularly fascinating: From certificates and advertising copy to operating manuals and travel guides — there was a little bit of everything. I even got to translate instructions for a massage. My other duties included creating glossaries, preparing marketing materials, proofreading, transcribing audio texts and running errands. In short, I was never bored.

I also learned a lot just by looking over my colleagues' shoulders. This gave me insight into tasks such as estimating costs and preparing quotes, invoicing, communicating with customers and managing projects using state-of-the-art translation tools. But the greatest benefit was the ongoing personal feedback. My colleagues corrected each of my translations and regularly took the time to discuss their corrections with me. This helped me polish my writing style and my work approach. I learned more in three months than in a year at university. And don't even get me started on the lovely summer evenings spent with colleagues in Freiburg (and the surrounding areas).

I came away from the internship with many new experiences and perspectives — first and foremost a concrete vision of the future. Because translation is indeed a profession for team players!

August 2010



## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY ELIZABETH DU PREEZ**

(Master's in Language, Culture, Translation in Germersheim)

I was very pleased that I got to spend most of my internship working on translations. But I also received feedback on my editing and glossary work, so that there was something to learn, no matter the task. In my daily translation work, I tried my hand at texts from a range of different fields, including education, advertising, medicine and renewable energies. As an intern, I was also able to observe the project managers at work and take part in team meetings. This gave me a lot of insight into the organisational side of a translation company.

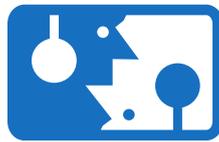
I came to see the practical value of many of the concepts that are covered at university, for example the importance of well-maintained glossaries and translation memories for technical translations. Since I often had to read up on new subject areas, the central role of research also became very clear to me. Although quality assurance and project management were discussed during my studies, it wasn't until my internship that I saw how they are applied in practice.

It was interesting to learn that translations aren't necessarily "finished" even after they have been delivered, since the customer may request changes. At Peschel Communications, translations are always checked by a second translator, which really brought home the team-oriented nature of translation projects.

Translators must be able to work to tight deadlines and may also encounter very different texts on the same day. This variety was particularly appealing to me. Thanks to regular constructive feedback, I was able to focus on my weaknesses. But my most important "lesson" was the responsibility that the translator holds. Difficult terms must be carefully researched so that the translator can later explain why they translated the term as they did.

The open and pleasant working environment at Peschel Communications made it an ideal place to learn. The skills and experiences that I gained during my internship will spur me on as I continue my studies.

July 2010



## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY JOHANNA BETTINGER**

Five semesters into my B.A. degree in Germersheim, I was beginning to doubt whether I really wanted to work as a translator someday. But there was only one way to get a true picture of what a day in the life of a translator is really like: an internship.

In March and April of 2009, I was an intern at Peschel Communications in Freiburg im Breisgau. And lo and behold, as soon as I could see the connection between translation and the “real” world, everything began to come alive. I was entrusted with translations right from the start — at first shorter texts such as documents and certificates and later newspaper articles and other texts from a wide variety of fields. In addition, I was involved in maintaining glossaries and proofreading. Tasks such as making phone calls, researching client addresses and running errands also fell to me, but generally took up little of my time.

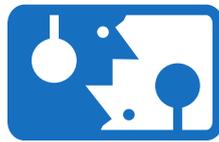
When questions arose, I could turn to any member of the team and they were always willing to patiently explain things to me. Over the course of the internship, I received introductions to using dictionaries and reference works as well as to project management procedures and the preparation of quotations, order confirmations and invoices. How to prepare invoices is a perfect example of something that is rarely discussed at university, even though it becomes important as soon as you take your first translation job.

Along with these brief introductions, I had the opportunity to take part in several in-house trainings on various topics as well as a workshop on interpreting.

One of the highlights of my internship was accompanying Anja Peschel to an interpreting job. Watching an interpreter work outside of the classroom was fascinating. I soon realised that it's not just the job itself that is demanding: the struggle for compensation and the constant need to justify daily rates that only seem high at first glance is an everyday part of the profession.

During my internship, I came to see that the life of a translator is fortunately not nearly as dreary as I had imagined. After rediscovering why I had chosen this degree and this career, my goal moving forward was clear: After completing my B.A., I plan to pursue a Master's degree in translating and interpreting.

July 2009



## **INTERNSHIP REPORT BY KATHRIN THANNER**

Can you learn more in a ten-week internship than in two years of university study?

Before my internship at Peschel Communications I wouldn't have thought this was possible. But looking back now, I can answer the question with a resounding "yes".

Of course, the theoretical knowledge that I gained over five semesters of study served as the foundation for translating specialist texts in fields such as economics, law, technology, medicine and advertising. But as time went on, I realised that comparing translation at university to translation for "real customers" is like comparing apples to oranges.

The first fundamental difference lies in time management. While in courses I'm given around a week to translate a (short!) text, in the real world, translations are often needed the next or even the same day.

But since tight deadlines can't be allowed to compromise the quality of the translation, I had to learn how to do more in less time, which was definitely an adjustment at first. Fortunately, the four-person team at Peschel Communications patiently answered my questions and supported me every step of the way. Their linguistic tips and useful tricks for researching difficult topics helped me find my footing in new subject areas and saved me loads of time.

Even this form of intensive mentoring was a valuable new experience for me, since the number of students in my degree programme makes mentoring difficult. The feedback and constructive criticism that followed every translation helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses and work on my shortcomings. At the same time, looking at the corrections to my texts gave me a good sense of what is important when revising a translation, which came in handy when I got to try my hand at revisions for the first time.

In addition to translating, creating glossaries and proofreading, I got a glimpse into the administrative tasks that every translator is faced with. Watching the team at Peschel Communications prepare quotations and invoices and calculate standard lines and prices gave me insight into the organisational and administrative side of things without the need to study.

Over the past ten weeks hardly a day went by without a new experience. My conclusion: When it comes to the translation industry, practice beats theory by a mile!

March 2007