

European Society for Translation Studies
Summer School Scholarship

Report on Experience at the 29th CETRA Summer School

Marie-France M. K. Guénette
Ph.D. Candidate in Translation Studies
Département de linguistique et de traduction
Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada
marie-france.guenette.1@umontreal.ca

At the end of the summer, I had my first experience at a doctoral summer programme. I had the immense pleasure of being a participant at KU Leuven's CETRA summer school in Antwerp from August 28 to September 8' 2017. I choose my words carefully, for as we all quickly learn at CETRA, one does not simply "attend" the CETRA summer school. In this rewarding experience, what you put in is never wasted. Indeed, CETRA is a place where participants put 110% of their energy and willpower, and where they are given 200% back. The summer school brings together excellent doctoral students from all around the world for a two-week stay in Antwerp, Belgium. KU Leuven's Antwerp campus provided all the amenities needed for the research stay. The building was clean and well kept, the quaint library was welcoming, and the employees were always helpful. The university even provided an access card with visiting scholar status until the end of November for those who wished to stay on. All the hard work that went into the organization of the event shone through daily, as participants were never made aware of any glitches or problems that went on behind the scenes.

As a second-year doctoral student, I approached the summer school as a place where my ideas about translation studies would be challenged. I had no sense at the time just how many times my doctoral research project would be questioned, cross-examined, and redefined. Guest professors graciously offer their time to meet with students to discuss whatever is most pressing or difficult for them in their doctoral programme. I cannot thank all these emergent and decorated scholars enough for the time they gave to meet with me. Together, we went over my doctoral research proposal and discussed approaches to data collection, methodological issues, case study ideas, realistic timeframes and expectations... But these professors do not only lend their expertise on research in translation studies; they participate in shaping the researchers of tomorrow by addressing any and all anxieties in relation to self-confidence, life in academia as a student and would-be professor, research work, time management, article formatting, publication venues, career goals and aspirations, even sleep deprivation and coffee consumption. Any topic is up for discussion, and what a relief it is for a young scholar like myself to meet these experienced researchers whose books and articles I have been reading for over a decade, and to appreciate first-hand to what extent they are patient, generous, and approachable. At times, their words were harsh and destructive, but as

all researchers learn during their graduate studies, these are the moments of growth; moments where our understanding of our own research topic is put to the test. And is it ever valuable.

The time and effort I put into my participation at CETRA paid off in so many ways. I had submitted my second comprehensive examination papers the day before my flight for Europe, and at Université de Montréal's Département de linguistique et de traduction, this written work entails preparing a preliminary (though still exhaustive) literary review of the main topics addressed in the Ph.D. research, as well as a detailed project description and map of the thesis-writing for the upcoming months. I therefore arrived at CETRA with a clear idea of where I was headed, but with so many uncertainties regarding what I needed to do to get there. And the more CETRA lectures I attended, the more questions I had for professors during the one-on-one meetings.

Coming out of CETRA with so many answers and so many more questions prepared me for my candidacy paper defence, which was scheduled the week of my return to Canada. I was instilled with a confidence and strong sense of how to approach the questions of the committee members of my home university. That day, I put on my fanciest dress and newfound self-confidence, and tackled the event I had been dreading for months. With the help of the CETRA Professor Leo Tak-Hung Chan and guest lecturers, I not only improved my doctoral research project, but I also improved myself as a scholar. My defence was long and tedious, but I felt prepared and could answer all types of questions with confidence. As I sat there, I knew how my experience at CETRA played an important role in this personal growth. I strongly recommend all doctoral students of translation studies attend an event like the CETRA summer school.

I conclude with a word on the other participants. At the CETRA summer school, I met emergent scholars as well as established ones. Beyond professional contacts, I made true friends. We have stayed in touch, and we are planning to meet up at future international translation studies events. We connected on our research topics, and even developed ideas for collaborative publications. I hope this short essay gives a glimpse of how rewarding this experience has been for me. I am so thankful for the generous European Society for Translation Studies Summer School Scholarship that helped cover the tuition, travel and accommodation expenses for this experience.