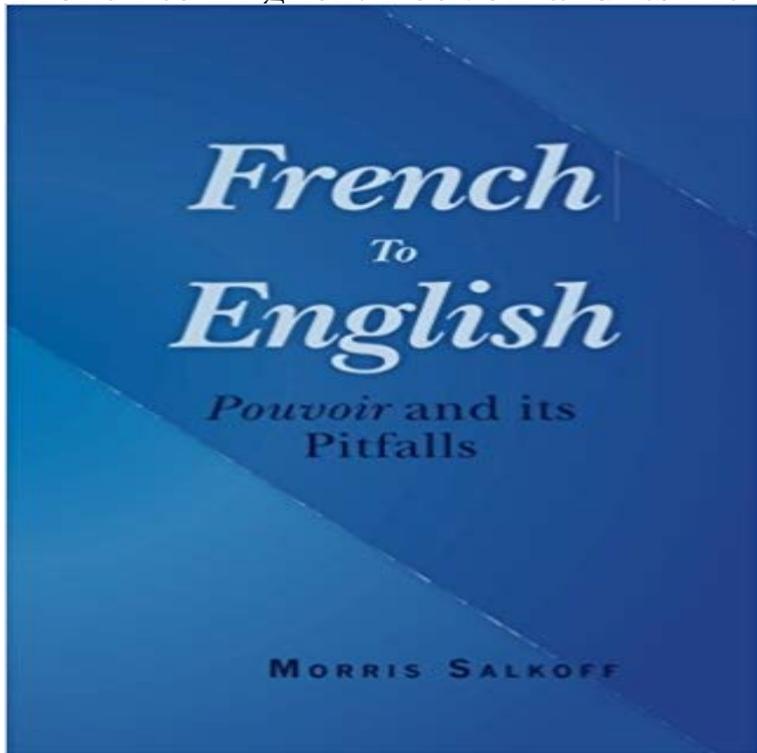


French to English: Pouvoir and its Pitfalls



The verb *pouvoir* is given short shrift in many of the usual sources used for translating French into English. It is noted there that this verb is triply ambiguous, and can mean can, may or must. But such information is too meagre to aid the user when faced with some of the complex tenses of *pouvoir* followed by a variety of possible objects, or predicates. One case is when *pouvoir* is followed by a perfect infinitive, with or without a negation. Such sequences generally lead to ponderous and inelegant translations for which alternative solutions must be found. These alternate solutions are discussed at length. A second relatively unnoticed and untreated difficulty is the use of the future *pourra* or the future perfect *aura pu* as a stylistic variation of the present *peut* or the present perfect *a pu*. This particular usage has no equivalent in English, and often traps the French learner into misunderstanding (and mistranslating) certain sentences. This particular stylistic variation is illustrated with many detailed examples showing that the future of *pouvoir* is frequently translated by a present tense. Another difficulty is the almost totally ignored present and perfect participles *pouvant* and *ayant pu*. The problems in using them are never treated in any of the French grammars for English speakers or in any bilingual French-English dictionaries. This neglect of these participles may be due to a mistaken observation of them. They seem to present no problems: the one means being able and the other having been able. It is perhaps for this reason that no current French-English dictionary contains a single example of their use. Yet these two basic translations are not applicable to all the possible contexts in which these participles can appear. Sometimes it is *pouvoir* as possibility that appears in *pouvant*, at other times it is *pouvoir* as capability. The two translations above are largely insufficient to the task. The difficulties associated with

the translation of each of the tenses of pouvoir are discussed here in detail, something which cannot be found in the usual French grammars for English speakers. Various translations of certain tenses must be used for particular types of subject or object, and few of these are apparent to an English speaker learning French. Many of these variant translations require lengthy explanations, and they are given here. The French learner will surely find all this information of great use in understanding how pouvoir is used in French, something which cannot be obtained from any of the usual grammar sources. The explanations of how its translation depends on the subject and the object which appear with it will also help him when he encounters new sentences with other subjects and objects of this verb.

Welcome to the blog of Joan le Grande. I'm changing the blog to english so forgive me the dutch articles before. I already translated a few, keeping it up! Anyway, stay tuned for lifestyle articles and reviews about games or other nerdy stuff. Enjoy! Categories Comics Games Playstation 4 Wii U Lifestyle Posted by Joan le Grande in Games, Playstation 4 Leave a comment Tagsexperience, first look, Games, Playstation 4, Playstation VR review, ps4 VR review, virtual reality YES YES YES. I'm super hyped about the VR, but you obviously knew that already because of my last blogpost. There were a few hiccups because I ordered it online and I was working during the time it came. I stressed, freaked, jumped and finally gave up on the thought I got to play on the day it came out. But luck was on my side and when I got home, 20 minutes later the VR glasses arrived! In this post I will take you with me on my first experience with virtual reality. Was it as awesome as I hoped? Or is nauseating and not really my cup of tea? Read and find out!

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