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Mark Your Calendars!
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September 20-23, 2000

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As Tough as it Gets—But How Tough?
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The Translator as Global Contractor
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Educational Documents: Translation or Evaluation?
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Style Issues in the Translation of Biopharmaceutical Texts from German into English
By Christian Schmitz .......................... 37
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...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.

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225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 • Alexandria, VA 22314
Fax (703) 683-6122 • Chronicle@atanet.org
"Sprachliches Kleingeld": The Translation of Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions in German/English Context
By Dorothee Racette

Proverbial or fixed structures make up a large part of metaphorical language. Since German and English use widely differing cultural metaphors and source materials for their proverbial lore, appropriate translation can be a challenge, particularly when it comes to word games and advertising slogans. The following presents a discussion of different approaches to translating proverbial material, and features a bibliography of helpful resources.

Musings on the Translation of German Literature
By A. Leslie Willson

Personal reflections on how one translator came to realize that he was called to translate, and how he trudged the arduous and compelling path to published translations. The importance of impudent initiative and salutary good fortune, links to publishers and authors, the translator as author’s agent, and resources for translators young and old are also discussed.

Mark Your Calendars!
ATA’s 41st Annual Conference is September 20-23, 2000
about our authors...

Clancy J. Clark is a research associate and coordinator of translation services at The Cross Cultural Health Care Program. He received his Bachelor of Arts in anthropology at Brown University in 1998. His areas of interest include discrimination and racism, cultural adaptation, cross-cultural interactions and communication, personal identity and multiculturalism, and community-based outreach strategies. He can be reached at CCHCP@pacmed.org.

George Fletcher, Ed.D., is president of the International Education Credential Evaluation Division of Globe Language Services, Inc., in New York. He is an adjunct assistant professor of translation at New York University, and is the current chairperson of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers’ International Education Research Committee, charter member of the Association of International Credential Evaluators, and a Little League baseball coach. He is an ATA-accredited Spanish/English translator and author of The Complete Handbook and Glossary of Soviet Education (1992) and Chile: A Comparative Education Study (2000), with Spanish/English glossary. He can be reached at george@globelanguage.com.

Oliver French is a freelance translator (ATA-accredited in German>English), as well as a retired physician certified in several specialties. He has published a number of articles and poetry in general audience publications, as well as scientific articles and letters in professional publications. He teaches a course in the psychiatric field of dissociation at Syracuse University. He can be reached at np13@clarityconnect.com.

Marga Hannon is primarily a technical translator, ATA-accredited for English-German. Her home and office are on SaltSpring Island, B.C., Canada, where she shares her interest in languages with her husband, a German-to-English translator. She is also one of the co-editors of Interaktiv, the newsletter for the German Language Division. She can be reached at mh_translating@saltspring.com.

Leon McMorrow is a career medical translator with a background in linguistics and medicine. Currently freelancing, he has previously practiced in language as a translation teacher in college and an agency manager. In the field of medicine, he has held a variety of titles in hospitals and medical companies. He can be reached at leon@medtranslator.com.

Dorothee Racette holds an M.A. in German from the University of Vermont and translates mainly academic materials from German into English. She is the owner/administrator of One World Language Services® in upstate New York and is ATA-accredited for English<>German. She can be reached at dracette@owlang.com.

Cindy Roat, MPH, is nationally recognized for her work on interpretation in health care settings. An interpreter herself and a trainer of medical interpreters, she works for the Cross Cultural Health Care Program in Seattle, Washington, and is a founding member of both the Society of Medical Interpreters in Seattle and the National Council on Interpretation in Health Care, a national organization supporting the development of health care interpreting. Her basic training for medical interpreters, Bridging the Gap, is offered regularly in multiple sites across the country. She can be reached at cindyr@pacmed.org.

Alexandra Russell-Bitting has been a senior translator/reviser at the Inter-American Development Bank for the past 12 years. She works from Spanish, French, and Portuguese into English, and has taught translation at the Université de Paris and Georgetown University. She can be reached at alexandrarb@iadbo.org.

Christian Schmitz is a freelance English-to-German translator specializing in medical and computer texts. After receiving his M.A. in speech-language pathology from The University of Iowa, he worked for many years with children and adults with communication disorders. In 1996, he obtained his certificate in translation from The Translation and Interpretation Institute in Seattle, Washington. He now lives in Iowa City and can be reached at cg schmitz@compuserve.com.

A. Leslie Willson was born in 1923 and raised in the Panhandle of Texas. A Yale Ph.D. (1954), he is now emeritus professor of Germanic languages at the University of Texas at Austin. He co-founded the American Literary Translators Association in 1979 and was its first president. He served as president of the ATA from 1991 to 1993. In addition to having published scholarly articles and books on his academic specialties, he has translated plays, poems, and stories by dozens of contemporary German-language authors. Since his retirement in 1992, he has translated and published nine novels, and has edited three volumes of contemporary prose for Continuum's The German Library. His latest translation, Piranesi’s Dream, a novel by Gerhard Köpf, will appear in July, 2000 (George Braziller, Inc.). Three novels are presently being considered by publishers, and he is at work translating two more. He can be reached at LWillson@aol.com.
Accreditation Survey Conducted. At the November Board meeting, the Board cited the need for member input on the issue of offering ATA accreditation examination sittings outside the United States. As background, international exam sittings have been suspended since the July 1999 Board meeting. The suspension was to give the Board time to collect information and member feedback on the matter.

Through Board efforts, a forum on international exam sittings was held at the ATA Annual Conference in St. Louis. The forum, chaired by Nicholas Hartmann, allowed members to share their opinions. In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee on International Exam Sittings, chaired by ATA Director Izumi Suzuki, followed up with its report.

With no clear-cut message from the forum and AD Hoc Committee report, ATA President Ann G. Macfarlane proposed a survey of the membership. The survey, which was conducted in mid-February, provided the Board with hard data based on member feedback. The results are not binding since the ATA’s bylaws do not allow for referendum votes. However, they will be used as a guide for the association. Thank you to those who participated.

Corporate Translation Services Directory. In an effort to complement the very successful online Translation Services Directory, a directory of companies providing language services is now online. The Corporate Translation Services Directory will provide in-depth profiles of ATA corporate members who want to market their services to the business community, the general public, and individual translators and interpreters. The Corporate TSD will include a field for corporate members to acknowledge that they are accepting resumes from independent contractors. (This field will be searchable.)

Specialized Translation Services Directories Printed. The first printed sorts of the online TSD have been published: 1) French<>English translators/interpreters for over 120 areas of specialization; and 2) legal translators/interpreters in over 110 language combinations. The Specialized TSD: French<>English is about 250 pages; the Specialized TSD: Legal Translation and Interpretation Services is over 400 pages. While the same information is available online for free, there is still a demand for printed directories. More information on ordering these Specialized TSDs will be published in the April Chronicle.

Japanese Language Division’s Introduction to the Professions of Translation and Interpretation Published. This 376-page publication features career information in both English and Japanese. More information will be featured in the April Chronicle.

Conference Planning Underway. The ATA Annual Conference, scheduled for Orlando, Florida, September 20-23, is six weeks earlier than usual. For example, the deadline for submitting a proposal to do a conference presentation has passed. However, if you are still interested, please submit a completed Conference Presentation Proposal form. (The form is available from ATA Headquarters, (703)683-6100; fax: (703)683-6122; or e-mail: ata@atanet.org. The form may be downloaded from the ATA Website: http://www.atanet.org, click on “Conference” to view conference-related information, including the form.) Late proposals will be considered as space allows.

Finally, thanks to all of you for renewing your membership. With these projects and the ones in the works, your ATA membership has never been more valuable. As always, if you have any questions about the benefits of your ATA membership or have suggestions for programs, publications, or services ATA should offer, please let me know.
Alert Listeners

Dave Barry, the manic humor columnist, frequently cites news items sent to him by “alert readers.” I owe this month’s column to alert listeners, who responded immediately to one sentence in President Clinton’s State of the Union address on January 27: “Soon researchers will bring us devices that can translate foreign languages as fast as you can speak.” (In the words of Dave Barry, “I am not making this up.”)

Within 24 hours the cyberwaves were buzzing with comments from outraged ATA members, who felt it important that we respond to the patent unreality of the President’s remark. It was a pleasure to try to articulate on paper a response to this comment that would be respectful, and yet forthright. Those of us who work in the language business encounter unreal expectations about machines and language all the time. Sometimes it isn’t worth taking the trouble to explain “what’s wrong with this picture.” In this instance, however, when millions of people were listening in, and likely to swallow unthinkingly the fantastic vision conjured up, the effort seemed justified.

In a new departure for the ATA, we posted this letter and a press release on our Web page, in addition to distributing it to selected outlets in the media. Many thanks to those of you who have sent positive comments about this effort. I thought that Chronicle readers might enjoy seeing the text in the form that it was sent to the President, and so provide the letter as an accompaniment to this month’s column (see page 9). I hope that you “alert readers” will keep us informed of other opportunities where we can try to set the record straight on these and similar issues.

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**From the President**

**Ann G. Macfarlane**

president@atanet.org

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**IJET-2000 Kyoto • May 20-21, 2000**

**Kyoto, Japan**

**This spring—for the first time ever—the Japan Association of Translators takes the International Japanese/English Translation Conference to the Kansai region.**

Now in its second decade, IJET provides a forum for meeting colleagues, making new contacts, catching up on the latest trends in the industry, and improving professional skills.

The venue is just a quick subway ride from Kyoto Station, and the line-up of speakers and presentations, including Professor Ogawa Takayoshi, translator of the bestseller *Memoirs of a Geisha*, promises to be well worth the price of admission (24,500 Yen or $225; online sign-up available). An early sign-up will ensure your reservation. For details, please refer to the IJET Website at [http://www.ijet.org/ijet-2000](http://www.ijet.org/ijet-2000).
January 31, 2000

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thanks to the historic economic expansion you have presided over in your years in office, there has never been a better time to be a translator or an interpreter. The market for language services is booming and the number of translators and interpreters is increasing every day. Membership in our professional association, the American Translators Association, has doubled since 1992—to over 7000 members.

After listening to your State of the Union address on Thursday, our members have asked me respectfully to point out to you that while technology has produced many marvels, machines that “translate as fast as you can speak” are still a long way off. As you know from your work with interpreters in high-level meetings and negotiations, it takes experience, knowledge, native ability and training to interpret foreign languages correctly. Despite the increasing compactness and cleverness of all the computing devices now on the market, human speech remains something that can be interpreted correctly only by human beings.

Machines to translate speech instantaneously have been predicted for over fifty years, and yet the need for human translators and interpreters is at an all-time high. Nothing can replace the truly accurate, nuanced job that a trained human translator produces, and yet, the American public is largely unaware of this fact. Our work is an essential part of the success of American society. The American public needs to know what a tricky, challenging and high-level task every translator and interpreter engages in when he or she sets to work. Please speak to this reality. Please don’t build false hopes by talking of machines that are still, unfortunately, in the realm of fantasy-land—where they will remain for the indefinite future.

Sincerely yours,

Ann G. Macfurlane
President
TRADOS Workshops

TRADOS Corporation offers one-day training workshops each month for Translator’s Workbench, MultiTerm, and WinAlign at its site at 803 Prince Street, Alexandria, Virginia. Attendance is limited. For more information, contact: Tracy Calvert at Tel: (703) 683-6900; Fax: (703) 683-9457; E-mail: tracy@trados.com or www.trados.com.

Institute of Translation and Interpreting Conference 2000
“Do We Speak Science?”
Translation, Interpreting and the Sciences, Technology and Medicine
April 8-9, 2000
Imperial College, London, England
Call for Papers

The 14th ITI International Conference will take place in London at Imperial College in the Sir Alexander Fleming Building on April 8-9, 2000. The theme will be science technology and medicine. ITI invites translators, interpreters, and specialists from higher education and industry to contribute papers on any subject pertaining to this theme. Here are a few subjects which will be covered at the conference: specialization and training (there will be a special workshop for new translators and those moving to technical translation); pharmaceutical and medical translation and interpreting; research and terminology; patents; the translation of scientific research papers for major scientific communities; the application of technology to the translation process; and the localization industry (translation as part of the industrial process).

There will be tours of the Science Museum and Natural History Museum. All suggestions for papers and themes for sessions are welcome.

For more information, please contact: Jane Hibbert or Maria Cordero, Institute of Translation & Interpreting, 377 City Road, London EC1V 1ND, United Kingdom; Fax: +44 171 713 7650; E-mail: MariaCordero@iti.org.uk. Correspondence should be clearly marked ITI Conference 2000.

Research Models in Translation Studies
April 28-30, 2000
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
Manchester, England

Hosted jointly by the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology and the University College of London, the conference seeks to foster critical awareness of current research methods in all areas of translation and interpreting, and to evaluate the significance of both traditional and new theoretical models for practical research. For more information, please contact: Departmental Events Secretary, Department of Language Engineering, UMIST, P.O. Box 88, Manchester, M60 1QD, United Kingdom. The conference organizers can be reached via e-mail at: Mona Baker, moni@ccl.umist.ac.uk; Theo Hermans, t.hermans@ ucl.ac.uk; and Maeve Olohan, maeve@ccl.umist.ac.uk.

The Society for Technical Communication
47th Annual Conference
May 21-24, 2000
Orlando, Florida

The Society for Technical Communication will hold its 47th Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, May 21-24, 2000. The conference will feature more than 250 technical sessions covering technical writing, editing, management, Web design, multimedia, and other subjects of interest to technical communicators. Information on the conference is available on the STC office Website at http://www.stc-va.org. A copy of the conference Preliminary Program, including a registration form, can be obtained by calling (703) 522-4114 ext. 200.

Multimedia 2000 - Translation and Multimedia:
From the Monitor to the Big Screen
June 6-8, 2000
Capomulini (Sicily, Italy)

The keynote speakers will be Yves Gambier, Daniel Gouadec, and Ida Mori.

During the first morning session, Yves Gambier, who has been conducting research in translation for the screen at the international level since 1990 and is head of the Center for Translators and Interpreters at the University of Turku in Finland, will discuss the skills needed in multimedia translation. In the second session, Daniel Gouadec (University of Rennes), who is director of CRAIE (Research Center on Linguistic, Multimedia, and Documentary Engineering) and has a research interest in the application of information technology to translation, will examine the implications of multimedia translation for training. In the third session, Ida Mori, translation manager for Berlitz Dublin, will discuss localization. Four roundtable discussions have also been planned for the afternoon sessions.

For more information, please e-mail multimedia.congress@uni.net or visit www.mix.it/ati.

Rennes 2000 International Symposium on Specialist Translation Teaching/Training Methods and Practices, Professional Practice
Université de Rennes 2
September 22-23, 2000

Open to professional associations, students, translator trainers, employers, and organizations. The event is designed: to provide an overview of the best professional practices; to identify proposals, initiatives, and models for specialist translator training along trulyprofessional lines; to discuss the aims and the implementation of courses designed to train specialist translators and translation managers - specialization being understood to imply domain, product type (software localization), technical constraints (subtitling), or type of translation tools (computer-assisted translation and automatic translation software); and to describe course content requirements in light of identifiable and model-based professional practices.

Submissions for workshops or papers should be half a typescript page in length. Please enclose a short C.V./resume of the author (half a page), along with the author’s e-mail address or Website. Submissions should be forwarded to the organizing committee no later than June 20, 2000. Please send them to: D. Gouadec, 6 avenue Gaston Berger, F35043 Rennes Cedex, (tel/fax: +33 02 99 33 13 37). All persons submitting papers or registering for the Symposium will automatically be added to an e-mail list and kept updated with the latest developments.

Continued on next page
**ATA Activities**

**Accreditation**
- An exam was held in Portland, Oregon.

**Board**
- The ATA Board of Directors met March 4-5 in Alexandria, Virginia.
- A survey of the membership was conducted regarding international exam sittings and related issues.
- The Honors & Awards Committee published the announcements seeking nominations and entries for the Gode Medal, the Lewis Galantière Award, and the Student Translation Award.

**Conference**
- Advertising space in the *Conference Preliminary and Final Programs* continues to be marketed. (If you would like more information, please contact ATA Headquarters.)
- Proposals for presentations are still being accepted, space permitting, for the September 20-23, 2000 ATA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. If you would like to submit a proposal, please complete the Proposal for Conference Presentation form and send it to ATA Headquarters. Copies of the form are available from ATA (703)683-6100; fax: (703)683-6122; or e-mail: ata@atanet.org; the Website: www.atanet.org; and ATA Documents on Request line: 1-888-990-3ATA (-3282), and request document #80.

**Membership**
- Membership continues to grow (5.3 percent ahead of last year at this time).

**Membership Services**
- The online Corporate Translation Services Directory, which features the profiles of ATA corporate members providing translation and interpretation services, is up and running. The Corporate TSD complements the extremely successful TSD, which features the profiles of over 3,700 individual translators and interpreters who are ATA members.

**Public Relations**
- ATA and/or translation/interpretation services were featured in *The Washington Post*, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, *Hoppoken* (a Japanese publication with an article written by ATA Director Izumi Suzuki), and the American Society of Association Executive’s International Section newsletter (the article was written by ATA Past President Muriel Jérôme-O’Keeffe).
- ATA President Ann G. Macfarlane wrote to President Bill Clinton regarding his State of the Union message. (See “From the President” on page 9.)
- ATA continues to work with the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs, the ASTM Translation User Standards Project, and the Localisation Industry Standards Association.

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**Upcoming Conferences and Educational Programs**

Continued from previous page

For more information, including registration, please contact Nathalie Collin at Nathalie.Collin@uhb.fr; Tel: +33 02 99 14 16 06; Fax: +33 02 99 14 16 06. Please also visit http://www.uhb.fr/langues/craie.

**Critical Link 3: Interpreters in the Community**

**May 22-26, 2001**

**Montreal, Canada**

Critical Link 3: Interpreters in the Community will be held in Montreal, Canada from May 22-26, 2001. The specific theme for this conference is "Interpreting in the Community: The Complexity of the Profession." As in the previous two Critical Link conferences, participants will come from the five continents to discuss interpretation in the community (health services, social services, courts, schools). The event will provide interpreters, users of interpreter services, administrators, and researchers with an opportunity to share experiences, explore the complexity of the community interpreter profession, and learn about successful strategies and models in this rapidly evolving field. The call for papers and further information can be found at: http://www.rssso6.gouv.qc.ca/english/colloque/index2.html.

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**4th Annual New England Translators Association Exhibition and Conference**

**April 29, 2000**

**Boston College • Boston, Massachusetts**

NETA will hold its fourth annual exhibition and conference on April 29, 2000 at Boston College in Boston, Massachusetts. The fair is being organized in association with the Judicial Interpreters of Massachusetts (JIM) and the Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA). The event will include 20-30 exhibiting companies from throughout the New England area. Speakers will include ATA President-elect Tom West and other prominent interpreters and translators. There will also be a panel discussion on standards for medical interpreters. For further information, please contact Ken Kronenberg, NETA president, at kkrone@tiac.net or call (617) 734-8418.
Against Political Correctness and Censorship

I am writing in response to Eileen Osmond Savdié's appalling letter in the November/December 1999 issue, in which she calls for the bowdlerization of The Grapes of Wrath, Huckleberry Finn, and who knows what else. I find it shocking that someone so afraid of words, or at least one word, "nigger," has the temerity to pass for a translator or any kind of writer.

Ms. Savdié's letter was prompted by her objection to Nidra Poller's decision to translate the French word "nègre," in Ahmadou Kourouma's novel Monné, outrages et défis, as "nigger." Now, "nigger" may or may not be a correct translation, but the decision must depend on the extent to which it, in comparison to other words and in the specific context under consideration, conveys the denotation and connotation of the original. Political correctness and censorship cannot even be considered, or the translation is doomed before it is begun. The translator might just as well replace the word with three asterisks every time it appears, as Victorian translators did for any swear word or word naming a sex act or organ. Nor does it suffice to say that a word like "nigger" is so harged that it cannot possibly convey the meaning of the original. That is to assume that readers cannot read, which, if true, makes all translating and writing pointless.

Doubtless, there are a few who, in fact, cannot read, such as those, not all black, who object to the "racism" of Huckleberry Finn, one of the great anti-racist novels of all time. What better task for those who can read, a category which presumably includes translators, than the education of those who can't. Fortunately, according to the PBS television program Culture Shock, there are many, not all white, who are trying to do just that in the case of Huckleberry Finn.

Because to censor "nigger" from Mark Twain's book is to entirely miss its point. Huck's background has given him nothing but this cruel word to refer to Jim. Yet, Huck is a moral hero, eventually willing to recognize Jim's humanity and to act accordingly despite the fact that Huck's immoral society regards such a recognition as evil, so evil that Huck believes he will be punished for it by burning eternally in Hell. Censorship is not "a little judicious editing," as Ms. Savdié calls it. It is an abdication of responsibilities and a betrayal of everything that translators should stand for. Traduttore, traditore indeed!

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Singular Concerns

By Alexandra Russell-Bitting

You would think that something as seemingly universal as adding an “s” or “es” to make a plural would apply systematically to both English and Spanish, especially since they are, after all, members of the same Indo-European family of languages. In fact, most of the time it works: “one loan” = un préstamo; “two loans” = dos préstamos.

But there are also instances where a singular in English is properly rendered in the plural in Spanish and vice versa, not to mention a number of irregular plurals in English that even have native speakers confused.

Safety in Numbers

One key difference between English and Spanish is that English differentiates between nouns (i.e., persons, places, or things) that are countable and those that are uncountable. So, for example, since you can’t count “information,” only “pieces of information,” the sentence Estas informaciones son esenciales, in which the Spanish noun is plural, comes out singular in English: “This information is essential.”

Likewise, on the subject of loans, while you can calculate interest rates or the amount of interest accrued, “interest” itself, in the financial sense, tends to be invariable in English: “the interest accrues” is usually rendered in the plural in Spanish: los intereses se devengan.

By the same token, a country name like “the United States of America,” which certainly looks plural, is treated like a singular in English, presumably because it is only one country: los Estados Unidos tienen una población de 260 millones is translated “the United States has a population of 260-million.”

On the other hand, Romance languages generally assume that individual attributes do not accumulate. Accordingly, the Spanish version of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Charter cites as its purpose to eliminate violence “en la mente de los hombres,” on the premise that each person only has one mind. In English, however, the phrase is rendered as “in the minds of men” because if each person has one head and you have more than one person, then you have more than one head.

Conversely, sometimes Spanish terms encompass so vast a concept that they may need a plural in English: for instance, la problemática is often rendered as “problems”; la normativa can refer to “rules” or even “rules and regulations.”

Collective Bargaining

English grammar also includes a special category of nouns called “collective” nouns, which, although singular in form (that is, no “s” at the end), also represent a group, so they are sometimes or always plural in construction. A prime example is the term “staff,” which can refer to a group of employees as a whole (“Bank staff is recruited internationally”) or as a bunch of individuals (“Staff accrue two days of vacation a month”), with a good deal of overlap.

Another frequently used collective noun is “people,” understood by most English speakers to mean more than one person. The plural form “persons” does exist, but has fallen into disuse in spoken English (even in writing, sometimes the term “individuals” is preferred). But when the term “people” is used to mean an ethnic group, it also has a plural form, as in the expression “indigenous peoples.”

Information, Please

English has the added complication of irregular plurals inherited from sometimes obscure Latin or Greek roots. For example, the English term “data” is actually the plural of “datum,” Latin for “a piece of information” (dato in Spanish).

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Experienced translators and interpreters acknowledge the difficulties faced in working with medical terminology, including the specificity of terms, the common change or shifting of meanings in medicine, and the constant expansion of the medical lexicon.

As in other technical fields, many translators and interpreters have elected to specialize in medical terminology. Unfortunately, translators and interpreters who specialize in the medical field do not have some of the luxuries enjoyed by those in other technical fields. First, their audience is not well-defined and can be extremely broad, ranging from those knowledgeable of medical science to those that have limited reading skills. Second, medical terminology is not standardized in many languages. For example, medical terms in English might be expressed in several different ways in a target language. And third, little dialogue exists between translators or interpreters about appropriate equivalencies of medical and health-related terminology.

While medical translators and interpreters face these challenges, the translation/interpretation industry is witnessing an increased demand for well-trained professionals, especially interpreters in the health care field. The Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP) developed and translated a series of medical glossaries in Amharic, Somali, Spanish, Tigrigna, and Vietnamese to provide an educational resource and promote dialogue among translators and interpreters. In developing these glossaries, translators confronted and addressed many of the common problems of translating medical terminology, especially how to handle medical terms or phrases with no direct linguistic equivalent in the target language.

A Growing Industry
Throughout the 1990s, cultural competency in health care increased in importance. This culminated with the development of standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services by several organizations and federal and state agencies. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights released the Guidance Memorandum: Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination—Persons with Limited-English Proficiency. The National Committee on Quality Assurance outlined standards for the availability of interpretation services. The American Medical Association also published the Cultural Competence Compendium to promote cultural competency efforts among physicians and their affiliated organizations.

Health care organizations and providers, now faced with cultural competency standards, are developing, expanding, or seeking translation and interpretation services. Meanwhile, as witnessed in U.S. Census projections, the population of patients with limited-English proficiency continues to increase. As a result of these events, the translation/interpretation industry is growing, but many people question the industry’s ability to meet the needs of the health care industry while still providing quality translation and interpretation services.

Needing and Building a Strong Base of Interpreters and Translators
Once health care organizations and providers determine the demographic characteristics of their patient populations, they will have a better understanding of the linguistic services that their institution needs to provide. For example, the Seattle metropolitan region represents one of the most diverse populations in the country. There are large Asian communities, including the Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese. There is also a large Hispanic/Latino population as well as Amharic, Tigrigna, and Somali-speaking communities. Providing the appropriate language services for all of these communities has been a serious challenge for Seattle hospitals and health care providers. Having well-educated and trained interpreters and translators on staff in the Seattle community has helped meet this challenge.

Bilingual medical glossaries are a starting point in the education of interpreters and translators. They can provide a foundation of terminology used in the medical field. However, as many experienced translators and interpreters know, glossaries have their limits and cannot replace actual work-related expe-
rience, particularly when the misuse of a term can cause injury or even death. No glossary is ever perfect, and users should be knowledgeable of a glossary’s pitfalls and problems.

**Designing the Medical Glossary**

In 1996, CCHCP began developing medical glossaries in Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean, Lao, Chinese, and Russian. These rather small glossaries were a great beginning to what needed to be provided—a resource for medical interpreters and translators working in the health care field. However, over the last four years, interpreters have not been completely satisfied with the earlier glossaries. Incorrect translations have been sighted. In addition, people realize that giving only the linguistic equivalents or co-ordinate lexical units is not enough to provide the user with the necessary information to make correct selections. These glossaries also have a small word count and their use as a teaching tool is limited.

Thus, CCHCP made the decision to expand its collection of bilingual medical glossaries in an effort to provide new languages and enhance these glossaries’ teaching aspects. CCHCP expanded the word list from 1,000 to 2,100 words based on a survey of medical professionals, professional interpreters and translators, nurses, and dieticians. Survey respondents proposed using only those terms or phrases that occur most frequently in a medical interpretation patient-provider encounter. This word list was edited to exclude many terms used by physicians outside of the patient-provider encounter. However, it did not exclude terms that were still used despite the fact that they might often be considered too complex for the average patient. The word selection also took into consideration that the potential audience for the new series of medical glossaries might include translators, interpreters, patients, doctors, nurses, and other medical staff.

Unlike the original medical glossary series, CCHCP elected to include English definitions with the selected medical terms to give semantic value or meaning to the co-ordinate lexical unit or linguistic equivalent. The new glossaries had additional space for the user to write notes, a section of abbreviations, and an introduction explaining the translation process and how to use the glossaries. CCHCP hoped that this new design would improve the usefulness of the medical glossary series as a resource and teaching tool.

**Translating the Medical Glossary**

At the onset of the translation phase, some translators expressed concern with regard to the ability to translate medical terminology into their own language. They sighted that it is not really a problem of understanding medical concepts, but rather conveying the exact meaning of English medical terms as succinctly as it is done in English. After meeting with translators and discussing the potential problems related to linguistic equivalence, the editor, translators, and reviewers of the medical glossary series decided to track the problem of equivalence throughout the translation phase. Periodically, translators for each language would meet and discuss how words lacking linguistic equivalence should be handled. Meanwhile, individual translators consulted with other professional translators and health care providers who speak their language about this problem.

Translators were responsible for determining the most appropriate and commonly used linguistic equivalent for each English medical term in their target language. In this project, linguistic equivalence was defined as the lexical unit or multiword lexical unit in the target language that conveys the same meaning or semantic value as the source lexical unit or word. Although several translators presented the problem of linguistic equivalence at the beginning of the project, was this really a problem in their language? In fact, for several languages this was a large problem exacerbated by the nature of the translation. The translator was required to select the linguistic equivalent based on a single word or collocation (phrase) and its definition instead of translating a larger passage, where the meaning of the passage is more important than the meaning of each individual word. Few problems of linguistic equivalence were identified in the Vietnamese and Spanish translations, while the Amharic, Somali, and Tigrigna translations struggled to find linguistic equivalence. More than one-third of the English medical terms or phrases failed to have linguistic equivalence in these Horn of African languages.

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Linguistic Equivalence

Translators from every language group provided informative examples of terms where determining the linguistic equivalent was a problem. The exact characteristics of these problems varied from term to term. However, three different categories became evident: 1) a linguistic equivalent exists, but is only used by an educated or select group; 2) the interpreted equivalent is sometimes different from the translated equivalent; and 3) there is no linguistic equivalent.

In the Vietnamese glossary, linguistic equivalent terms are readily available, but over one-quarter of the terms are used only by the educated or medical professionals. Excellent bilingual and trilingual medical resources have been developed in Vietnam to aid health professionals. The development of these resources can be attributed to early colonial rule by the French and to the later presence of Americans during the Vietnam War. For example, *artery* is translated using a term that CCHCP translators felt was an appropriate translation, but one which is not necessarily understood by all Vietnamese.

The translation of *insurance* in the Spanish glossary provides an excellent example of a term commonly used in the health care field, but one that can cause problems and confusion when translated into Spanish. Specifically, the proper written translation of *insurance* is *seguro* or *seguro médico*, but in interpretation it is sometimes more appropriate to use *aseguranz*. When medical terms or phrases lacked linguistic equivalence, translators struggled. In Amharic, there is no linguistic equivalent for *cell*, so trying to express the meaning of *cell* to an uneducated Amharic speaker is rather difficult. However, in other Amharic bilingual medical glossaries, the translation for *cell* is provided (typically as the transliteration of the English term). Since this term is borrowed, it has no meaning in Amharic.

In order to address these problems, translators considered the available options in working with medical terms that lack linguistic equivalence. Translators could borrow the English term. This is the nature of language—acquiring words to communicate. Borrowed words require a transfer of the lexical unit’s meaning from the source language to the target language. For example, *influenza* in Amharic is a term that has been adopted by the Amharic-speaking community. In some cases, borrowing a term is actually a transliteration—a special type of borrowed word that doesn’t have any meaning in the target language. For a medical phrase or collocation, translators can provide a literal translation, but sometimes a literal translation has no meaning. In Somali, one can translate *blood* and *pressure*, but when they are combined they have no meaning in Somali. Translators can also handle equivalency problems by coining or inventing terms in the target language, but these words are essentially meaningless unless a description and/or definition is provided.

Considering these options, CCHCP translators concluded that the most appropriate approach would be to provide not literal translations, transliterations, or coined words, but instead create word pictures consisting of a short explanation/translation conveying the meaning of the word. Although in many cases this methodology did not provide a concise solution, it prevented confusion and the development of a glossary with inappropriate terminology. Overall, translators felt as Eugene A. Nida stated in an article entitled, *Semantic Structure and Translational Equivalence: Analysis of Meaning and Dictionary Making*: “Perfect communication is impossible, and all communication is one of degree. The statement of equivalencies, whether in dictionaries or in translations, cannot be absolute. We are faced, therefore, not with a problem of ‘right or wrong,’ but with ‘how right’ or ‘how wrong.’”

With an understanding that terms or phrases lacking linguistic equivalence would be translated as word pictures, CCHCP developed a set of guidelines for the translation of the medical glossaries. First, all translations would use a consistent method and style of translation. Second, all translations would use a consistent method and style of translation. Third, all aspects of the translation process would be made visible to other translators and users of the medical glossaries. Fourth, all activities of the translation process would be recorded and followed carefully. And, lastly, translators were required to work closely, trade information, discuss problems openly, debate issues, teach, and learn throughout this experience.

A More Transparent Translation

During the review and editing phase, the editor and translators worked together to provide a more transparent translation. Each translation was coded to provide the user with some understanding of the level of difficulty translators faced in selecting
appropriate direct equivalents for the translation. A number was placed next to each entry to represent the type of translation that the original translator used for that particular English term or phrase. The designations are explained as follows:

1. A commonly used direct linguistic equivalent exists. The translation was done using a single word or a brief phrase that effectively conveys the meaning of the English term or phrase.

2. A direct linguistic equivalent exists, but only the educated and professional elite would use the selected word or phrase. The translation was done using a single word or a brief phrase that effectively conveys the meaning of the English term or phrase, but not all speakers of the target language will know or understand the target-language word or phrase selected for the translation.

3. A direct linguistic equivalent does not exist. The translation is difficult and requires additional explanation to convey the meaning of the English term or phrase.

After applying these numerical designations to each translation, this coding was analyzed to determine what percentage of the total number of entries involved words or phrases where a direct linguistic equivalent did not exist. As mentioned above, the frequency with which the number “3” was placed next to entries in Amharic, Tigrigna, and Somali was high, but “3” applied to less than two percent of the entries in Spanish and Vietnamese. And, although these findings might have implications for cross-cultural communication, these categorical designations are not static, and are heavily influenced by personal opinion, knowledge of the target language, and experience in translation/interpretation. In addition, language is naturally fluid, and these designations will change as the target language influences English and as the English influences the target language.

CCHCP created these designations to facilitate translation or interpretation by clearly showing how each translation was chosen and how well the entry will be understood. The coding also enables translators and interpreters to look at the translation in a different way. It may put up a caution sign to the interpreter when he/she uses a translation coded as 2 or 3. It can also be used as an educational instrument in interpretation instruction. The coding provides a window into the barriers and problems interpreters will face in the field of medical interpreting.

**Conclusion**

By admitting that linguistic equivalence is a problem, CCHCP hopes to promote dialogue among translators and interpreters. The medical glossary series is an excellent starting point in this dialogue. Interpretation service programs are using the medical glossaries to promote discussions among their interpretation staff by periodically meeting and reviewing terms that are marked as having no linguistic equivalent. Such discussions will improve the knowledge base of interpreters and translators as they learn what other translators are doing in the case of highly technical medical terminology. The medical glossary can also educate providers and health care organizations about the challenges faced in developing effective and widely accepted patient education materials in languages other than English.

Since bilingual medical resources are needed, addressing the problems associated with providing quality interpretation and translation is extremely important. Linguistic equivalence is a key problem faced by medical interpreters and translators, and word pictures are a potential solution. However, experience of, and dialogue among, translators and interpreters will be the only way we will determine what is the best way to handle linguistic equivalence.

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Communication is at the very heart of health care. A patient describes her symptoms, a doctor asks careful questions, a diagnosis is suggested, a treatment plan is negotiated. Listening and understanding what was said is the basis of the entire process. What happens, then, when provider and patient come from different cultures, speak different languages, and can’t understand each other at all?

This is the scenario encountered by thousands of people each year in hospitals and clinics across the United States. For many immigrants and refugees, and for some Native Americans, language and cultural differences become a terrible barrier to accessing quality health care from mainstream medical providers. Providers, for their part, are finding their practices becoming more multilingual and multicultural every year. The traditional use of family and friends to interpret is being discredited, as disasters of miscommunication are being translated into liability suits and complaints to the Office for Civil Rights (see inset, page 19). Separated by a language and cultural gap that makes healing very difficult, both patients and providers are starting to turn to a new professional who holds the keys to communication: the health care interpreter...

What is a Health Care Interpreter?
Health care interpreters are bilingual individuals, trained in interpretation skills and medical terminology, who facilitate understanding in communication between people speaking different languages in health care settings. You’ll find them in hospitals and clinics, at emergency rooms and diagnostic imaging services, in workman’s compensations exams, blood banks, dialysis centers, and a variety of mental health venues—just about anywhere health services are provided. They interpret for everything from clinic registration to psychiatric evaluations, from routine annual exams to bone marrow transplants, from chest X-rays to angioplasty. Theirs is the voice of the patient describing symptoms or asking anxiously for the results of the lab tests; theirs is the voice of the doctor explaining how to take the medication or sharing the news that there is no hope for a sick child.

Health care interpreters provide services through multiple arrangements. A small percentage are full-time staff members with a 40-hour work week and benefits, while many more are independent contractors with hospitals or interpreter agencies who are paid only for the time they interpret. Some are scheduled for appointments days or weeks ahead, while others are on-call or respond to pages. They provide services face-to-face, over the telephone, or in both modalities.

This is, however, an emerging discipline. Most interpretation in health care settings is still provided, unfortunately, by a variety of other people who have been neither screened nor trained, and who do not self-identify as being interpreters. In many places around the country, patients are still being expected to bring a family member or a friend to interpret, although this practice is not in compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Even more common is the use of unscreened, untrained bilingual clinic staff to interpret; these people are commonly medical assistants, medical technicians, receptionists, or even janitorial or food services staff. They interpret, often at a high personal cost, out of a desire to be of service. The lack of screening and training, however, translates into inaccurate interpreting and misunderstandings—sometimes with serious consequences.

Slowly, health care institutions are becoming more aware of the difficulty of interpreting and the problems associated with poor quality interpretation. An increasing number of institutions are seeking to professionalize their language services, first by recognizing interpretation as a specialized skill and role, and then by beginning to screen and train their interpreters. What does that process look like?

Screening, Training, and Certification
Screening of a potential interpreter’s language skills varies in formality and rigor. On one end of the spectrum, some institutions simply accept at face value a person’s claim that (s)he speaks a certain language pair. Some institutions have written screening tests, usually focusing on knowledge of medical
vocabulary and basic medical concepts. Some parts of the test may be bilingual. Other institutions may combine this with a short, informal oral interview, conducted by a speaker of the candidate’s language pair, to give a general assessment of the candidate’s fluency. More formal (and more expensive) is a structured oral screening test, using a scale developed by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages. There are several companies in the U.S. that will apply such a structured oral screening over the telephone and provide a written assessment of the candidate’s level of language skill. Finally, some programs screen by requiring some level of formal education in the non-English language combined with adequate scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Training is equally as varied. As mentioned earlier, most interpretation in the health care field is still being done by people with no training. Where training is available, it varies from a short “orientation,” in which the interpreter’s role and ethics are introduced and superficially discussed, to full-year certificate programs based at a college or university, which may total over 300 hours of instruction and practicum time. In a survey of 23 medical interpreter training programs done in 1997 by the Cross Cultural Health Care Program in Seattle and Asian Health Services in Oakland, California, the most common length of training was around 40 hours.

Formal certification is relatively rare. At the time of this writing, only the Department of Social and Health Services of the State of Washington has a validated process in place to certify medical interpreters, which is done in seven languages. The Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Association (MMIA) is developing a certification process for the State of Massachusetts in Spanish and Russian. California has a “medical interpreter” certification related to it’s court interpreter certification program, but it is not focused on clinical interpreting per se.

How an interpreter is screened, trained, and certified, then, depends largely on where (s)he lives, the specific organization (s)he works for, and the language pair (s)he interprets.

Just Another Venue?

Is the health care field simply one more venue in which professional interpreters may work, or is there something fundamentally different about medicine that requires special skills and approaches to interpreting?

Certainly, interpreting in any field involves listening and understanding meaning in one language and an attempt to reproduce the most equivalent meaning possible in another language. All interpreters must be committed to accuracy and have flexibility and stamina. Like other venues, health care has its own specialized vocabulary that the interpreter must learn in order to understand and reproduce its meaning.

However, medical settings create some interesting dynamics that require special skills from a health care interpreter. For example, most health care interpreting is done in a triadic setting, with the patient, the provider, and the interpreter in close proximity. The process is collaborative, not adversarial.

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The Right to an Interpreter

Around the U.S., hospitals and clinics are becoming more aware of their legal responsibility to provide linguistic access to their services for patients who speak limited English. For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act clearly supports the provision of interpreters as well as other methods to guarantee clear communication with patients who are deaf or hard of hearing. Also, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act states that no organization receiving federal funds may run its programs in such a way as to create discrimination on the basis of race, color, or country of national origin. The Office for Civil Rights, the national office set up to enforce civil rights law, has interpreted language to be an aspect of country of national origin. This means that any institution receiving Medicaid or Medicare, for example—essentially every major medical center in the country—must provide language access to those who need it. The institution cannot charge the patient for this service, and the use of family and friends is generally not acceptable. Some clinics provide language access by hiring bilingual providers, but in most cases, the answer is an interpreter.

An excellent summary of legal requirements to provide language services has been produced by the National Health Law Project. The 197-page booklet, Ensuring Linguistic Access: Rights and Responsibilities, can be ordered by calling the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation at 800-656-4533 or through their Website at http://www.kff.org.

Copies of a 1998 Guidance Memorandum from the National Office for Civil Rights, describing the responsibilities of recipients of federal funding to provide language access, can be ordered by contacting your regional Office for Civil Rights.
Health Care Interpreting—An Emerging Discipline

Continued

The level of trust present among all the players will have a major impact on the outcome for the patient. Patients often identify with the interpreter and expect him or her to “take care of things.” The topics being discussed are often highly personal, and sometimes acutely painful. Other situations can be emergent, with blood everywhere and time of the essence. Interpreters can be exposed to physical and emotional trauma and difficult ethical issues. Sometimes the interpreter’s own health can be compromised.

These situations require successful health care interpreters to have a curious ability to be both warm and caring and, to a certain extent, detached. They must inspire a patient’s trust, and then allow that trust to shift to the provider. They must be able to guide the flow of an interpreted session while staying in the background, helping patients and providers to focus on each other even when they seem more comfortable talking to the interpreter instead. They must be committed to supporting the patient-provider relationship while still being willing to intervene if they believe that a misunderstanding is taking place. They must stay calm under pressure, focused in the face of tragedy, unfazed by the often unusual things they hear or see. They must have exceptional people skills and good personal boundaries. And they must do all of this in an environment where people are sick and in a hurry, and often have no idea what the interpreter’s job involves. Health care interpreters have neither the anonymity of the booth nor the formality of the courtroom to shield them. They are daily on the front lines of the human experience, knowing that an error on their part could potentially have a profound impact on a patient’s life.

Future of the Field

Comparing the demands made of a health care interpreter and the state of interpreter screening and training today, it is clear that the field has a long way to go. However, there are reasons to be hopeful that health care interpreting will continue to grow as a more professional discipline. The first of them is simply demographics.

Consider these statistics from the U.S. government: as of 1996, 900,000 legal immigrants were being admitted to the U.S. every year, and in 1997, one out of every ten U.S. residents was foreign born. Fourteen percent of U.S. residents speak a language other than English at home. And by the year 2000, English will be the de facto second language of California. We are an exceedingly diverse population here in the U.S., and a multiplicity of languages is both one of our great strengths and great challenges. Even though immigrants and refugees are learning English at an unprecedented rate, continued immigration and high rates of relocation within the U.S. mean that almost all health care facilities in the country are reporting an increase in the number of limited-English speakers whom they serve.

There are also legal pressures on health care institutions which may boost the demand for qualified health care interpreters. In addition to the civil rights issues discussed earlier, medical centers are feeling some pressure from powerful institutions such as the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals and the National Council for Quality Assurance. Both institutions have included standards for culturally and linguistically competent care as part of their accreditation process.

Finally, there is some preliminary evidence to suggest that paying for an interpreter up front may actually be cheaper in the long run for the health care system than paying for the potential outcomes of miscommunication, such as increased number of visits, inaccurate diagnosis, inappropriate procedures, ER visits, and hospitalization. Our health care system is increasingly a managed care system, in which a service provider receives a set payment for each patient whose care he manages. Under this kind of a system, hospitals and clinics become concerned about the overall cost of caring for a patient over time, since they only receive a certain set fee per patient. Research is underway to examine the impact of various forms of interpretation on health care outcomes. Depending on the results, this type of research may encourage institutions to make more consistent use of interpreters in a clinical setting.

The final ray of hope comes from the many efforts being made on many levels to raise awareness and skill in interpreting. Local organizations, such as the MMIA, have been leaders in developing standards of practice for health care interpreters. A process initiated through the American Society of Testing and Materials is helping users of interpreters to

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I would like to think that as a physician I have an advantage in translating medical texts from my native tongue, German, into my dominant tongue, English. However, I still find that my path to a clean translation is strewn with land-mines. In what follows, I want to share with others how I use my resources to solve the problems peculiar to my dual role.

The problems I have encountered fall into three categories: linguistic, specialty-related, and ethical. Each raises several questions.

Linguistic Problems

Any medical translator must know the terms used in standard medical texts in the target language. Such text is often obscure, since doctors like to envelop their verbal pearls in jargon in order to appear authoritative. However, medical jargon is a hazard for the translator. For instance, German jargon does not correspond to English jargon, and I must constantly ask myself if a jargon-free translation renders the flavor of the original.

This problem is akin to that faced by a literary translator in translating racy dialogue, when that dialogue indicates locality as well as character. Phrases such as “Es handelt sich hier um...” do not carry a medical message, but add color to a paragraph. I prefer not to translate them, but that seems to me to be a matter of taste. At other times, jargon becomes a maze, and the writers never realize that they have not found their way out. The problem occurs both in English and German. I found an example of this within minutes of searching a single issue of an English-language journal: “These correlations rose significantly after the FDAA procedure and characterized both patients with schizophrenia and controls.” What the author meant, but did not say, was that the rise in correlations characterized the records of the patients.

I believe a translator must understand the sense of the original well enough to be able to insert the missing word without skewing the meaning. For example, the following sentence has a clear meaning in German, but its expression leaves something to be desired: Vor der Dopplerdruckmessung nach Belastung sollte die Sondenposition mittels Farbstift markiert werden, damit die Arterie nach Belastung schnell wieder aufgefunden werden kann. Clearly the authors meant the artery to be marked before exercise, and not before Doppler pressure measurement after exercise. They saw the term Dopplerdruckmessung nach Belastung as a single concept, encompassing measurement both before and after exercise. As a physician, I tend to visualize how I would carry out such instructions, and so, perhaps, I pick up the ambiguities more easily than a non-physician translator might. I could correct the sentence in my translation, but before I do that I prefer to alert the editor to the problem.

A second linguistic problem arises when the concepts described differ in the source and target languages. For example, the Pfortader in German is the portal vein in English. Another example: the German literature refers to a certain venous configuration as the Venenstern, a term that has no equivalent in English. My translation reads confluence of veins, because this term is a valid concept in English. It does not, however, appear in any textbook.

The third type of linguistic problem I have encountered is when a difference in medical culture makes direct translation impractical. Such a problem arises routinely when I try to find an equivalent for a medication brand name, or even the medication itself. For instance, I had to look through four drug compendia in order to find the drug Bifiteral, a laxative made by a European drug company. The brand-named drug is not approved in the U.S., although there is an equivalent brand. To indicate this, I used the original name, Bifiteral, and added its generic equivalent in parentheses: (brand of lactulose). An American reader can look up this generic term in an American pharmacopoeia if he or she doesn’t already know it is a laxative.

Sometimes the English equivalent of a German term depends on the specialty audience for whom the translation is intended. For instance, surgical anatomy is different from the anatomy of basic science. I found that out when I ran across the term “Arteria femoralis superficialis” in a German text. I knew there was no superficial femoral artery in Gray’s Anatomy, but lo and behold, it appeared in American surgical textbooks!

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Medical Translation: A Physician’s View Continued

Specialty-Related Problems

If I am unfamiliar with the specialty for which I am translating, I start on the same footing as a non-medical translator. The advantage that I have is that I can quickly familiarize myself with a medical specialty which I know little about, since I know the language and often the substance of the specialty. Nevertheless, I must study the specific terms expected by specialty readers. In such cases, rather than going to the library to check a few questionable terms, I need to have at least one specialized textbook next to my computer. The Merck Manual is always there (it’s a wonderful resource), but it’s not enough for specialty terms.

If the readers I am translating for are using an instrument with which I am not familiar (such as ultrasound), I must go to see that instrument. Only by seeing the instrument perform can I understand what my source text is trying to explain. I then use the target language textbook to compare classifications with that of the source text. If the text I am translating includes a classification, I always check a target-language textbook to compare classifications with that of the source text. I then use the target language’s classification if it differs from the source. I have learnt to be suspicious of any eponym or classification. Good places to check (apart from textbooks) are the Dorland or Stedman medical dictionaries. However, I have found that these two books do not necessarily give eponyms or classifications as they appear in specialty textbooks. Since I cannot possibly own every textbook, I find my material in many different places. These include our hospital medical library, the public library (especially good for books on drugs), the Internet, and the vast resources of our university, including its veterinary school.

Ethical Problems

Ethical problems arise when the physician in me objects to what I am translating. That happens when I find myself up against the problem of knowing that the text I am translating does not conform to what I believe to be medically correct. The obvious first step when confronted with this situation is to check my knowledge, but even then I find that I must at times translate statements with which I disagree.

The problem does not need correction if the text contains a medical error that does not mislead the reader. This is mostly the case in medical reports or in historical texts. Medical reports from abroad can often be criticized, but they are history in every sense of the word. Nothing can change what has already happened. Sometimes disasters created abroad must be corrected after the patient returns to the U.S., but for that to happen I must report faulty medical procedures accurately. Books or journal articles that describe research also need no correction, even when I am sure that they describe concepts that have been revised or discarded. Readers of such material must judge it for themselves. Faithful translation is the way to go, however much the physician in me cries: “wait, that’s all wrong.”
There are times, however, when the source text is not only in error, but can lead to future disaster. It is not history; it is history in the making. Sometimes the error is prescriptive; that is, it is part of a recommendation. Fortunately, I have not had to deal with such a problem, but if I did, I think I would contact the person who requested the translation. To show what might happen, here’s an account of a real-life problem that does not quite fall into the prescriptive category, but, rather, into one I would call descriptive.

When we were medical interns in England, my wife and I earned some extra income by doing medical translations from German-to-English for a Swiss pharmaceutical company. We enjoyed the work, and the company appeared to like what we were doing. Out of the blue, however, the work reached another dimension.

The company had acquired a set of beautiful illustrations of cardiac pathology—hearts dissected to show various cardiac diseases and the pathological process that created the anatomic distortions. A Swiss writer had written a text in an attempt to describe what the illustrations depicted and to comment on the treatment. The company had engaged a translator to produce an English version of the booklet. Because the translator was not familiar with English medical terms, we were asked to review his version.

We agreed to the request, but when we received the manuscript we found the English text to be unacceptable. We asked for the German source text. Now a medical intern, just out of medical school and with months of intensive reading to pass medical finals, knows a lot of current medicine. What we found was a German text that was based on outdated medical knowledge.

We were faced with a delicate triple task. Ostensibly, we were to create a stylistically acceptable version of the original translator’s English version. Second, we had to assure the company that this translator’s English version corresponded to the original German. Finally, we had to review the German version for discrepancies between the original commentator’s knowledge of cardiac pathology and what was acceptable in an English text. Moreover, we were faced with an assertion by the company that a well-known Swiss cardiologist wrote the original German text, and that his name was essential to establish the authenticity of the work.

For a while we struggled with the given material, but the cause was hopeless. Perhaps the German text was adequate for an audience of general practitioners, but we believed that we had a duty to the pharmaceutical company and also to their customers to provide more accurate and up-to-date information. Our solution was to talk to the man who had become our contact with the company and explain our reservations. We asked to be given some latitude in our revision, promising that the result would be a totally up-to-date commentary on the illustrations. The company agreed. They simply continued to attribute authorship and translation to the people who had written and translated the original version, with acknowledgment to us as translators. We felt this was a good solution.

In retrospect, I realize that we stepped out of our role as translators and became consultants. In our view, our duty to the client was not only to provide a translation that English doctors would enjoy reading, but also to maintain the company’s image as a valid source of knowledge. Clearly that is not what we had been asked to do, and we were not paid to be consultants. I believe we did the right thing. Apparently the company felt the same, for they accepted and paid for our corrections.

I believe that the key to solving such a problem is through communication between a translator and the editor. Questions of ethics must be asked, and they must be respected. As translators, our relationship with those who ask for the translation must include questions beyond the “what do you want?” variety. So far, those with whom I have contracted have always been willing to reach across the cultural divide. However, what if I disagree with the substance of a text and am told that it must be translated as it stands? In no way should my personal opinion stand in the way of a faithful rendering of a piece. If the piece simply states an opinion with which I don’t agree, I can still translate it. On the other hand, if I believe the work as it stands could prove to be dangerous to the end user, I must take it out of the personal realm by documenting that opinion, and then communicating it to the editor. If the editor still insists on a faithful translation, and this translation is to be published or applied to a patient, I must decline the work. At some level, I am still a doctor.
The ability to assess the difficulty of a particular job is one of the “trade secrets” that is developed unconsciously with translation experience. It is very useful for accepting/declining jobs, determining readiness for an ATA accreditation examination, negotiating for the best price with a client, and especially for developing self-esteem and gaining a professional reputation.

But how does one develop this ability? Is it possible to attach “markers” to translation or interpretation topics that may objectively classify jobs by grade of difficulty?

The field of medical documentation includes some objective markers that give adequate, if not perfect, clues to the difficulty that may be expected when contemplating whether to undertake a particular assignment.

Professional Implications

“Difficulty” is a concept indicating the absence of ease and comfort in performing a task. It is at least a human perception; we don’t know if animals have it. For the person involved in the task, ease and comfort in performance also induce efficiency and personal satisfaction: we do it fast, do it well, and do it with pleasure (at least, in getting it over with—not all tasks are appealing, even though easy).

Translation and interpretation are tasks that are inherently difficult. The uncertain record of machine translation stands as evidence. This inherent difficulty has implications that go beyond the communication itself:

Time: The greater the difficulty, the longer the task. If “time is money,” then more expense is incurred.

Skills: The greater the difficulty, the higher the skill level required to perform the task. The higher the required skill, the more education and experience (i.e., specialization), are required.

The higher the required specialization and the longer the task, the more resources will have to be consumed. This should be reflected in the calculation and pricing of the translation job. Like a spreading wave, the difficulty of the subject matter in translation and interpretation impacts upon the translator’s career and the profession.

Is Specialization Worth the Effort, the Time, the Expense?

Some say that “generalists” and “flat rates” are, and should be, the standard within the profession. This may indeed be valid within fields that present no great range of difficulty for translation, such as history, travel, hospitality, and social sciences. But there are many fields that do not have narrow linguistic limits, such as engineering, chemistry, law, and medicine. Certainly in medicine, with its dozens of sub-fields and “health-related professions,” there is a world of difference between the skills required of the lowest ranks and the highest ranks of professional. Appropriately, there are documents written for the least skilled health professionals and also documents destined only for the highly educated. Educational investment, skills, liability risks, and financial rewards vary along a consistent upward line that reflects the difficulty of the tasks encountered and the literature that accompanies them.

Medical professionals are expected to know their limits and not to accept what is beyond them. Otherwise they incur liability. On the other side, clients should pay for the level of service they get, no more and no less. But why should an easy translation be priced like a difficult one, as in flat-rate pricing? I know I hate being charged for the “average” number of hours assigned to my car repair job by some association of car repairers, regardless of how long it took. The problem may be that translators, interpreters, and others do not or cannot decide what is more difficult and less difficult in any particular case. If so, then we should be working to solve the problem of determining difficulty, not avoiding it.
Sources of Difficulty in Translation

The origin of difficulty in monolingual linguistic communication is multifaceted. Several factors play a role, often simultaneously:

1. Lack of ability of writers or speakers to express themselves well, producing a kind of mumbo-jumbo that has words, often lots of them, but little meaning. Some modern music lyrics fit the bill, while politicians avoiding discussion of a thorny issue frequently rely on meaningless discourse (“First, let me say...” is a sure indicator!). I once got fired from a simultaneous interpretation job because I insisted on waiting until the speaker made a meaningful statement; I would not regurgitate the flow of broken words and phrases used as filler. This is “incidental” difficulty.

2. Inability of the reader or listener (through lack of mental capacity, education, or experience) to comprehend the particular type of discourse—one is simply out of one’s depth. This, too, is “incidental” difficulty.

3. Factors in the document (for translation) or the discourse (for interpretation) that make it esoteric or rare: it was produced for a special group of readers or listeners who already have training or experience in the modes of expression used. Examples are archaic writings (e.g., Early English) and scientific-technical documentation, i.e., documentation proper to a particular interest, trade, or profession.

When the additional factor of bilingual or multilingual communication is added, we have a profound mixture of sources of difficulty. No wonder examiners, advertisers, and other people grading the difficulty of linguistic products have a problem!

Our intent here is to illustrate a practical solution. First, decide whether the difficulty lies in the people or in the special type of language involved. Compare with peers. The first and second factors listed above may be addressed simply and directly through remedial measures to reach the norm. Then, address the issues involved in the third factor above:

- Are there levels of difficulty within scientific-technical documentation? Of course—the Introduction to Chemistry textbook is different from a Laboratory Procedures manual.

- Who decides what is difficult in a document—difficult for whom? For a student in the field? A general practitioner? A specialist? We cannot ignore the relativity of the concept of difficulty within professional language. Otherwise, tiered examinations would be meaningless—a student and specialist would take the same examination.

- Are the levels of difficulty static? No. With increases in knowledge we expect changes in levels of difficulty of terminology within a field. What is meant by basic knowledge and basic level of difficulty now differs from what it meant 20 years ago.

Society has already partially answered these questions in a practical way. Science and technology are knowledge-related fields and society stratifies these professions on the basis of acquired knowledge and skills. Professional language matches the different levels of stratification. Let us apply this technique to medicine, a very large profession in most of the world.

Medical Documentation

The medical translator and interpreter face a field that has already stratified the skills required to perform certain jobs and also the documentation categories that match those skills. The difficulty of the content and language of a particular category of document is linked, in most cases, to the professional skill level of the reader. As a result, two closely related and overlapping guides to documentary difficulty exist: the professional level of the reader (For whom was this document intended?) and the type of document in question (What type of document is it?). Both are objective measures of difficulty in the sense of being field-determined. They have nothing to do with the education, language skills, or experience of the translator or interpreter.

For Whom Was This Document Intended?

There are three broad categories of medical occupation: technician, nurse, and physician. Within these categories many auxiliary occupations and subspecialists exist. All these occupations

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have determined a knowledge and skill level appropriate to the tasks at hand and have indicated who is certified to perform the tasks. If you know the occupation(s) of the intended readership of a piece of medical documentation, you can, in most cases, accurately determine the level of difficulty of the documentation itself. This is perhaps so obvious to those within medicine that it does not need statement.

Experienced medical translators and interpreters are indeed aware of it when accepting or rejecting a job or when determining the style or register of translation—they tease out the implications of the occupation of the readership or audience, if known. A subliminal reprise in the job acceptance ballet is the question: Am I able to translate/interpret for this reader or listener? If I am, how long will the job take and what will be my charge? For those who are not already conscious of it, this should become an internalized routine when discussing a job offer over the phone or by e-mail.

What Type of Document Is It?

In many cases, the translator will not be able to find out the occupation or field of the intended reader, or the intended audience in the case of interpreters. Many of us get work from agencies and some agency personnel do not have this information, either because they never asked for it or for some reason it was not made available. In such cases, the next step is to ask about the title or type of document. Medical documentation falls into two general types (general health care writing for lay people is not under review here): “reports” and “special-purpose” documents. The first is intended for insertion into a patient’s medical record. The second is intended for sharing information, for education within the multiple branches of the medical profession itself, and for communication with institutions in the outside world (insurance, legal, government, etc.).

It is worth listing the names of these documents since they are almost uniform in presentation and very specific in content. If you can get the name of the medical report or special-purpose document, you will often have a very good idea of what level of difficulty you are facing.

Patient Medical Record

There is a somewhat standard method of creating and maintaining a patient’s medical record. This is more closely adhered to in an in-patient setting (hospital or clinic) than a doctor’s office, where less people may be using it. The order of the reports that follow also adheres to this method, and is typical of a single episode of illness and care.

1. History and physical examination (H&P)
2. Physician’s progress notes
3. Consultants’ reports
4. Operative reports
5. Laboratory reports (chemistry; radiology: ECG, EEG, CT, MRI, sonography)
6. Nurses’ progress notes
7. Client assessment, review, and evaluation (CARE)
8. Medication list
9. Discharge summary—Orders*

(*In the case of a hospital stay, the discharge summary and orders will be #1 and the physician’s history and physical examination will often be called the “admission history and physical examination,” and placed at the end of the physician’s section of the hospital chart.)

Who are the intended readers of the patient medical record or any of its component reports? Primarily physicians, since they have responsibility for the overall therapy. Nurses have their own section (# 6 above), and so do dietitians, respiratory technicians, physical therapists, pathologists and laboratory technicians (#5), social workers (#7), and pharmacy representatives (#8). Nurse practitioners, physician assistants, medical record administrators, and medical record technicians are also trained to read full patient medical records for clinical or non-clinical reasons. The knowledge or skill attached to individual parts of the patient medical record is closely tied to the title or occupation of the medical person. If you have to translate an entire patient medical record (or interpret it), you will face the whole range of both general and specialist medical terminology. Much of it is repetitive, both within and between episodes of care. That said, there is always room for surprises. Only a skilled translator/interpreter should undertake this task since the consequences of error may be very serious, in addition to bringing disgrace upon the translation profession.
**Special-Purpose Documentation**

1. Clinical trial reports (IRBs, CRFs, consent forms, status reports, completion reports)
2. Research articles
3. Case studies
4. Drug prescribing information (a package insert required by the FDA for every marketed drug). For medical devices, instruction manuals or package inserts serve the same purpose; (see #11)
5. New drug applications (NDAs) or related applications to the FDA
6. Consent forms
7. Communicable disease reports to a state or federal agency
8. Medical reports to a third party for grants or reimbursement purposes
9. Depositions for legal use
10. Medical device or drug patents
11. Manuals and package inserts for equipment, devices, quality control, etc.
12. Legislation, regulations, guidelines, standards, and procedures relating to medical products and practice.

The readership of “special-purpose” medical documentation is very large and variable. Once the title of the document is known, however, a clue is generated that may be followed up. It is the best indicator we have at present. There is no occupation-related formula that will cover “special-purpose” documentation such as we had for patient medical records. Not even the physician can be automatically included in the intended readership. It is an area that needs much more research, but some issues and practical solutions will be discussed below.

**Discussion**

In the case of the patient’s medical record, recognition of different levels of difficulty within categories of medical documentation may be a problem. One cautionary area needs to be mentioned: the history and physical examination (H&P). All H&Ps are not alike. The range of medical conditions of the patient may cover very common problems like injuries, nasal congestion, or indigestion, as well as rarer metabolic disorders, cancers, neuropathies, or syndromes. These last conditions will fatten the H&P with consultant reports and more specialized laboratory tests. The terminology used will match the range of disorders. Therefore, the H&P is a document type that requires some caution, and it may turn out to be a dream or a nightmare for the translator. Most of the other reports, however, are relatively straightforward: nurses notes will always describe symptoms and responses or reactions. Laboratory reports will normally be “routine” with occasional specialized tests, but even the presence of these may be expected if the admitting (provisional) or final diagnosis is known.

With regard to “special-purpose” documentation, the picture is not yet clear. The range of difficulty within and between the classes of documents mentioned above depends not only upon the level of medical knowledge used, but also on the level of knowledge of allied medical or completely nonmedical fields. Medical practice interacts closely with the industrial, legal, insurance, commercial, and governmental systems in a modern society. Many of the documents in the “special-purpose” category are hyphenated medical in character: medico-legal, medico-engineering, medico-economic, medico-bureaucratic, and so on. They straddle two or more professions. One may be very skilled in handling the medical arm of the document or discourse, but fall down on the nonmedical. These are areas for continuing education of the medical translator/interpreter. It would be an enormous benefit to the profession if systematic courses in “hyphenated medical” terminology and meaning were offered at a national or regional level. The ATA conferences do produce an occasional paper on microbiology, biochemistry, medical engineering, etc.—excellent in themselves, but far from adequate for the continuing education needs of the profession.

The best practical response of the translator/interpreter in this area of “special-purpose” documentation is to develop mental pictures of the difficulties that may encroach from these “marginal” fields and to respond accordingly. When discussing a “special-purpose” document with a client, spend a few minutes teasing out the indicators that will provide a clue to the content. If the subject or topic seems to be more nonmedical than medical, and you are uncomfortable

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about it, you still need as many clues as possible before deciding to reject—perhaps the influence from other fields is relatively minor. Here are some typical parts of a deal-making conversation:

“Your say it is a patent—do you know what the patent is for? A drug? A medical device? What do the drawings look like? Are there a lot of unusual characters—with subscripts, superscripts, etc.? Can you describe them?”


“So, it is a package insert (or user instructions/manual/brochure). For what product? Are there pictures, drawings? Do you know what branch of engineering it represents (electrical/mechanical/chemical/software)?”

“So it looks like an article from a medical journal—did you check for an English abstract to find out what it is about? (The abstract may be at the end of the article). Did you get a general idea from talking to your client of what it is about, or who the readers will be? Is it for publication or internal research only?”

(Here, the document is a “mystery” to the agency project manager.) “Do you know Spanish (French, Russian, etc.)? Good. Will you look at the first sentence of the first paragraph on page 3 and the first sentence of the first paragraph on page 5 and read them out to me? Better still, send me a sample. I have a 24-hour fax machine and will send you back an answer within 15 minutes.”

With experience (the wider the better), one becomes very good at this pas a deux—with an occasional surprise: a document that turns out to be highly deceptive, both in its title and in the first few pages. When requesting a sample, make sure that at least one of the pages comes from a place about 70 percent of the way to the end. Just as in a tumor, the core of a document is the best location for sampling.

**Conclusion**

Classification of jobs by difficulty is a constant task for the interpreter and translator. It is inherent in the practice of the profession and we should not shirk it, both for our own self-esteem and out of respect for the client. In medicine, the best approach to the task for translators is through the intended readership, or for interpreters through the intended audience. Begin to develop a list (a mental one is sufficient) of the types of material you encounter and link them to what you know about the reader, and secondarily to the technical title of the document if it has one. Gradually you will build up a mental library of named documents you can handle and those you still cannot face (we all have them) due to their inherent difficulty as described above. You will become conscious of the time factor involved in your work, and with these two important variables for pricing under your control (skill level and time), you will be able to put a fair price upon your job. You will also impress clients if you can discuss the job in terms they use every day.
Recently, I received a change of address notification from a fellow translator. In his message he emphasized that, despite moving to a different time zone, he would still be available to his clients from Europe and from the West at the same hours as before. (In our office, we will answer the telephone from 7a.m. Pacific Standard or Daylight Time [fortunately, we are early risers] to accommodate our German clients.)

The widespread use of e-mail and/or FTP sites for transmitting source documents and returning the translated work has reduced distance to a non-issue. Communication via e-mail has made inroads on telephone talk, even though a quick call sometimes seems unavoidable…and is not always welcome (see Dealing with the Time Difference, page 30).

Particularly for translators working from German-to-English, translation requests from German agencies or companies seeking native speakers living in their language environment have become commonplace. Many German translators listed in translators’ directories on the Web can attest to translation inquiries not only from German-speaking countries or the U.K., but also from places associated with neither English or German. The ever-growing number of Canadian translators joining the ATA is certainly an indication of intense cross-border competition between two friendly neighbors.

Individual translators are increasingly becoming global contractors. Working for clients in other countries can be lucrative, but it also poses a set of new challenges. This article attempts to discuss some of the issues related to the international translation trade from the perspective of a translator working between German and English. It is neither complete, nor will it offer ready-made solutions for all problems. I very much hope that other translators will want to contribute their experience and insight on the topic.

**The Basis for Reimbursement—Word Count, Line Count, or What?**

In the U.S., translators are paid per word. The word count is mostly based on the target document, even though there are also agencies that will use a source-language count. In Canada, it is more common to reimburse translators for the word count in the source document.

German, as we all know, makes do with fewer words than English for the same text. This has obvious implications on the grand financial total of a project. While some agencies take this into account by either offering a higher word rate for work from English-to-German (target count) or adding a percentage (source count), others do not.

In Germany, the common practice for billing and paying for translation service is per line, one line consisting of an average of 50 to 55 characters (including spaces). Some clients may be prepared to pay per word if asked for it, but it is not standard. Before agreeing to a line rate, you will have to do your math and compare words and lines in a document. For an approximation, see the next section.

...Working for clients in other countries can be lucrative, but it also poses a set of new challenges...

**Estimating Length and Time of a Project**

There is this new client from Germany who requires 340 lines from German-to-English for the day after tomorrow. Is this manageable? We all know how many words we can approximately translate in a text of a certain difficulty per day, but not so many of us will know their average translation speed in lines.

If you need to convert lines to words without access to the electronic file, this formula is based on empirical experience:

\[
\text{The number of lines multiplied by 9-10 for an English source text and by 8 for a German text approximates the word count for a document, if your basis is 55 characters per line.}
\]

You can check this by opening a document at random, dividing the character count (include spaces) by 55 to obtain the line count (don’t use the line count in the Word window), then multiply it by 8 or 9 and compare the result to the word count of the document. In our example here, the client is asking you to translate approximately 2,720 words.

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The Translator as Global Contractor Continued

For a larger project, your German client may want the translation to be completed in the 39th week. Are you baffled? German calendars usually have a week count, and the week number is quite frequently used as a reference. But don’t pull out your North American calendar and start counting. There is an international standard, DIN EN 28601, which regulates the week count in Germany. If you don’t have access to a German calendar, an Australian one will also do (they use the same convention), or simply follow the guidelines established by the German National Metrology Institute: “...the first week of the year is the one that includes the first Thursday.” Remember that the German week starts on Monday. Accordingly, the first week of the year 2000 began Monday, January 3. Your Excel program may present you with a U.S. week count, which does not follow the above DIN standard.

Dealing with the Time Difference
The time difference between your office and your client’s is crucial for communication and deadlines. A due date for your German client of Tuesday at 4p.m. means, in effect, that you will need to deliver your document by Tuesday at 7a.m. (realistically, Monday night), if you are on Pacific Standard Time, or Tuesday at 10a.m. if on Eastern Standard Time. Then there are these pesky periods shortly before the end and beginning of our daylight savings time, when the German and North American concepts of when daylight savings starts and ends do not necessarily coincide…

Fortunately, there is the Website of the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt, available in either German or English, which has several pages devoted to time, daylight saving, week count, and so on. The address is http://www.ptb.de/deutsch/org/4/43/432/dars.htm.

Payment in which Currency?
If you work for a client in Germany or elsewhere in Europe, you may be able to negotiate payment in those familiar U.S. dollars, particularly if the client has subsidiaries in America. More likely, though, you will be offered reimbursement in either the currency of the country or in euro (€), the new European currency which has been negotiable since January 1, 1999. However, the euro will not be in circulation in the form of bills and coins before 2001.

If you want to have a quick glance at today’s exchange rate, to calculate your earnings or the taxes you may owe, try http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic.

The Nitty-Gritty of Electronic Money Transfers
Your German client will not want to send you checks. Nor is it advisable, because your bank at home may not be prepared to negotiate them. In Germany and many other European countries, bills are almost exclusively paid for through the transfer of money from one account to the other. This is theoretically not a problem internationally either. In practice, it can be cumbersome and costly for you. When your client’s bank does not use the same intermediary as your bank, the charges for you will likely increase and the transfer will take longer. It is worthwhile comparing bank charges for international transfers.
As the European currency is converted into U.S. dollars when it enters the country, you have no control over the exchange rate. Another option, of course, is maintaining an account in the country where your client(s) reside and initiating a transfer into your account in the U.S. whenever it is convenient for you.

Liability Issues with International Clientele

Do you have liability insurance? Rest assured that, for the most part, all the work you perform within the country where your insurance is based is covered. As far as work outside this area is concerned, read the fine print of your insurance policy. Your projects for clients in Germany, Switzerland, or elsewhere may or may not be covered. But, after all, it is America that boasts a reputation as the most litigious country in the world...

Taxes

Finally, taxes. Earnings from foreign countries are taxable. For more information, talk to your accountant.

Health Care Interpreting—An Emerging Discipline
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identify quality service. National organizations such as the National Council on Interpretation in Health Care, with its free listserv, connect people all over the country and help to disseminate new ideas and materials and stimulate discussion of key issues. A growing number of medical schools such as that of the University of Washington include classroom instruction on how to communicate through an interpreter. In meeting rooms, board rooms, and examination rooms, many small steps are being taken to move health care interpreting from the status of an ad-hoc, chance process to being a discipline of skill and art. The end result will be a new specialty in the old profession of interpreting and, more importantly, improved health care for the many patients whose very lives may depend on the quality of the communication facilitated by the health care interpreter.

Author's Note: I welcome comments or questions regarding health care interpreting. You can reach me by e-mail at cindyr@pacmed.org.
I am the co-owner of Globe Language Services, Inc., in New York City, a dual agency that specializes in the translation and evaluation of foreign educational credentials. I used to teach foreign languages in grade school and high school, and later in college, and then worked in the international office of Oklahoma State University for many years, which is where I learned there was a difference between translation and evaluation. This article describes a specialized area within the field of translation—educational documents. The first thing we have to realize is the importance of translations of this type, because how you translate the document may determine whether or not that person gets a degree or a job. Just imagine going to another country with your bachelor's degree only to have it translated as an associate's degree. Obviously, that could affect you drastically in the job market. This demonstrates why an accurate rendering of an education document is so crucial to your client. It’s probably as important as any translation you do in terms of helping people.

One of the questions we have to ask ourselves when translating an educational document such as a diploma is: “Should I analyze it or should I just describe what’s in the document?” Are any of you familiar with Jack Child’s *Introduction to Spanish Translation*? I personally feel a broader title would be acceptable, because any translator would benefit from this text. Anyway, Child presents a scale that goes from the lowest level of translation (word-for-word, where you don’t worry about the overall meaning) to the highest level (where the translator reads the document, assimilates it in his or her own thinking, analyzes it, and then reproduces it creatively in his or her native language). And then there are levels in between. The question is, on an educational document, what should we do? Should we sit down and analyze it? What is it? Is it a *baccalauréat* from France? Should I tell people exactly what that is in the United States? As a translator, is that my job? My feeling is we don’t have to analyze the document, or assimilate a diploma and then recreate it. We only need to describe what’s on that document. If we analyze the document and try to recreate it in English at the educational level that it represents in the U.S., what we are doing is called evaluation. There is an entire profession out there consisting of evaluators who are going to do the evaluation. That’s their job. What we need to do is simply translate the document, describe it, and then let the evaluators analyze it. So, in a way, this makes it easier for us as translators.

What is an evaluator and what do they do? An evaluator researches foreign educational documents and recommends the closest U.S. equivalents of those documents. Evaluations are required by U.S. schools, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, licensing boards, and federal, state, city, and private employers. The U.S. is very generous in accepting education from other countries; basically, if any education is accredited in another country, it is accepted at face value. However, someone must scrutinize the foreign documents to determine their eligibility for acceptance, and thereafter establish their U.S. equivalents. Of course, documents not in English must be translated. Let’s discuss translating for evaluators. What, specifically, does the evaluator need from the translator?

The first thing a translator asks is, “Who’s going to receive my translation?” The translation may be good or bad, but it’s only as good as the level of understanding of the person receiving or utilizing it. Practically speaking, the translator has to please the client. If the client has certain requirements, the translator must consider those requirements. I would say that when translators translate transcripts and diplomas, the people who will ultimately receive and work with them are evaluators.

What do we do when the client is an individual who requests an analytical or evaluative translation?

That’s exactly what you don’t want to do. Somewhere along the line someone who knows evaluation will look at that document. Ultimately, your translation of any educational document will go to an evaluator. You can rest assured that eventu-
ally someone who knows the system of education you’re translating will receive your translation. They will know the grade scales and the names of the diplomas. You don’t have to worry about that.

So, when you ask who’s going to receive an educational translation, it’s going to be an evaluator. Admission officers at institutions of higher education are trained to be evaluators. That’s where we all came from originally, from the universities. Even if the translation is sent for state licensing, such as to engineering boards, boards of education, etc., there are evaluators there, and that’s what they do—they evaluate.

Now, if you want your translation to be rejected by an evaluator, the best thing you can do is try to analyze and evaluate that diploma and tell the evaluator what it is. Therefore, what a translator needs to determine is what the evaluators will need. First, they will need the name of the university on the foreign diploma. If you translate the name of the university, which translators tend to do, that’s okay; however, there is a book that has the official translations of the names of foreign schools: *The International Handbook of Universities and Other Institutions of Higher Education*. If you’re inventing your own translations, yours may be better, but they’re not “official.” So what can a translator do? If you’re using a translation that’s not in the *Handbook*, you’re prejudicing your client, the student, who is going to have a harder time. The evaluator/admission officer is going to say that the school is not accredited. So now it’s another hassle for the student. He or she will come back to you and say, “Look, they’re not accepting my application because of your translation. They claim my school’s not accredited.” If you’re going to translate the name of the school, consult the *Handbook* and use that translation. You will be doing a great favor to the student, believe me.

The next point is to always put the name of the school in parentheses in the native language. Even if you are going to take it upon yourself to translate the name, albeit correctly for you, your translation might be considered incorrect by the evaluator. Then the evaluator can at least look it up in the native language in the *Handbook*. As long as the evaluator can find the school listed there, the student is okay. Translating the name of the school is, in my opinion, not necessarily good unless you use the *Handbook*. This publication also has a breakdown of the schools (faculties) within the institutions, including majors offered, and so on.

**What about non-Latin-script languages?**

My suggestion in these cases is to transliterate the words in parentheses into Latin script. I would transliterate whatever words are in the name of the university. In these languages, you will need to translate the names of the universities. That’s why the *Handbook* is so important to you. You can also get lists of schools with translations from consulates and embassies. At any rate, official translations already exist.

However, the most difficult part of a translation is the name of the degree itself, the diploma or title. That is the part that will be evaluated for U.S. equivalency. For example, you see a French *baccalauréat*. Is the translation “bachelor’s degree?” Definitely not, and this is the problem. The minute an evaluator sees that type of translation, the translator is thrown out. That’s why most schools, at least in the New York metropolitan area, have a list of translators or translation agencies they will use. The schools communicate with these individuals, and the translators know what the schools want. If you want to build your client base, work with the admission officers of your local colleges and universities. In turn, they will recommend you to their international applicants, since it helps school officials to have translators who understand what they need. It is a lot of trouble for them to receive translations that say, for example, bachelor’s degree for high school diploma. And many mistakes have been made along these lines, e.g., admitting high school graduates as graduate students. Then it’s a disaster for them; the evaluators can lose their jobs, not to mention the harm done to the student.

**Whom do we address at the schools?**

The admission office. Call the school and ask who’s in charge of foreign applications. There’s usually a separate person or office that deals with these. We’ve done this with all the local schools in our area, and they’re quite happy to find someone who’s aware of what they need.

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Educational Documents: Translation or Evaluation  Continued

What about the abitur diploma from Germany?
From the evaluator’s point of view, the abitur generally represents completion of high school and up to one year of college credit. You, as the translator, don’t want to shortchange the student by evaluating the certificate as a “U.S. high school diploma.” That’s not fair to the student because it represents a higher level of education. So, what’s a translator to do?

There are benchmarks common to most education systems throughout the world. First comes primary school, followed by secondary, followed by undergraduate education, graduate education, and upper graduate education, such as the doctorate. When we translate a secondary school diploma, a bachillerato from Colombia, for example, we will put “secondary school diploma.” This is the benchmark for Colombia. We are not saying it is a high school diploma in the U.S., but that it’s a secondary school diploma from that country. Of course, always put the word as it appears in the native language in italics, since that’s what the evaluator is going to look at; he or she will want to know what the original says. Therefore, for an evaluator the abitur represents a high school diploma plus up to one year of undergraduate credit. This is the secondary school benchmark in Germany, but represents more than that in the United States.

What about the other information on the document?
The rest of the information does not have to be in the original language in your translation (see more on this below). All the other information is very important and needs to be in English, because the evaluator must know data such as date of birth, dates of enrollment, graduation, and so on. The date of birth can be very important if it appears on the document. The diploma may indicate a master’s degree and the person’s age as 14 years when completed. A lot of information appears on a diploma that an evaluator needs to verify for cross-reference purposes in terms of evaluation. This is especially true in languages with different scripts, such as Russian, Chinese, and Thai, for example. I think we can safely assume that not very many admission officers read all of these languages, which is why school personnel are very dependent on the translator. This is another reason why it’s extremely important for you to earn the trust of school officials. Yes, in French, Spanish, or other Western European languages, it is easier for them to verify words, dates, and general information in the originals, but I don’t think you can expect them to be totally fluent in all the languages with Latin script either.

What about the authenticity of each document?
That’s not specifically the translator’s job. Legally speaking, people can bring us a handwritten message on a napkin, and we can translate it. But, when you realize the evaluators are responsible for ascertaining authenticity, what do you do upon receiving the same diploma every day with the name whitened out and a new name written in? Legally, yes, you can translate that diploma and certify the translation. However, the evaluator is going to catch on sooner rather than later. So, if you can be aware of forgeries and reject them, it’s better to lose one client than to lose the university that’s sending you clients every day, notwithstanding morality and our society. In New York, for example, there are companies that duplicate foreign university seals not to mention diplomas, transcripts, you name it. And guess who’s selling these forgeries on the open market? Translation agencies.

How does one translate grades?
This is the other red-flag area for translators. My suggestion is don’t interpret the grades, since that’s an evaluator’s job. There are publications that list foreign grades and give equivalents in terms of the U.S. grading scale of A, B, C, D, and F. The evaluator does not want you to do this because you are going to do it incorrectly. It will be more difficult for them to deal with your translation and they will want to get rid of you. What I would recommend is that you contact the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) at www.NAFSA.org, and obtain a list of country-specific books that contain information about each country’s educational system, including the translations of grades accepted in the field and bilingual glossaries.

Do evaluators appreciate it if you put, along with the English translation, the words for foreign-language grades in the original language in italics?
They will love you if you do this. That would be fantastic,
because the evaluators are trained to know the grades, the
diplomas, and the schools for the countries they deal with.
Those are the three things we can assume they know in the for-
eign language, at least in most languages. In the books and
charts evaluators use, the foreign-language terms and the
English equivalents are given. So, if you write them both, even
if the translation is off, they can go back to the original lan-
guage. When in doubt about any point of information, it does
not hurt to put the foreign words in parentheses and italics
along with the translated words.

What about the translations of the French grades Très bien,
Bien, Assez bien, Passable, and Ajourné.
The reference book on France, which all evaluators use,
translates French grades as follows:
Très bien — Very good
Bien — Good
Assez bien — Good enough
Passable — Satisfactory
Ajourné — Failed
I am suggesting that evaluators appreciate such direct trans-
lations. It is when the translator evaluates the grades and trans-
lates them as A, B, C, D, or F, for example, that the line is
crossed between translation and evaluation.

Do we have to explain what a baccalauréat is in our trans-
lation?
No. Footnotes, a translator’s opinion, or interpretation are
precisely what is not wanted. Just describe what you have in
your hands, and that’s it. This actually makes it easier for you.
Most NAFSA books also contain the translations that all eval-


ators use for the different degrees and diplomas. If you use
these, then it’s fine to translate these terms, always remem-
bering to put the original in italics. The evaluator will not have
any problem with this. Considering the French baccalauréat,
there is no translation. You can use baccalauréat as long as you
put it in italics; it’s not a bachelor’s degree. In the reference
book on French education, the word baccalauréat is used
throughout, however, it is translated in one place as
“Secondary school leaving examination.”

What if I’m translating a resume—shouldn’t I put foot-
notes about the education?
There are two mistakes here. First, you’re making a mis-
take worrying about this, because it’s not your job. You don’t
have to do that. Second, somebody, someplace, even if it’s the
employer, is going to have to evaluate the educational docu-
ment itself. And if they don’t have the good sense to call a pro-
fessional evaluation service, then the employer is making a
big mistake. What you could do, as a favor to your client, is
give them the name of an evaluation association and tell them that if they
need an evaluation of their documents, they can go to a professional organiza-
tion that does that. This would be the best thing you could do for that person
and for the employer. You may want to refer your client to the Association of
International Credential Evaluators (AICE), at www.AICE-eval.org, for a
list of reputable evaluation services.

Should we add a footnote stating the
document needs to be professionally
evaluated?
No, I wouldn’t put any footnotes.

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If an individual comes and doesn’t say he or she is going to try to get into a university or doesn’t say what the translation will be used for, what do we do?

What I’m saying is that eventually an evaluator is going to look at it, even if it’s the employer.

What if the client insists that we put in the explanation of what the degree is?

I wouldn’t do it. Almost every person educated in another country, including a lot of us, will insist that they have the equivalent of a Ph.D., because “the education is different in our country.” That’s the first thing you’re going to hear. “In my country we study six days per week, all day, and we know a lot more than Americans, because I’ve talked to American students and they know nothing. American education is horrible, and you should really award me a doctorate here, although it says bachillerato.” That’s a normal response, and, should I go to another country, I’m sure I would do the same (“Hey, don’t underestimate my education, this is my life!”).

Isn’t there a possible liability involved if the translator adds information to a translation?

Exactly. On the one hand, an evaluation always contains a disclaimer. “These are recommendations only, we are not responsible...” An evaluator can only recommend, since there’s no law. A translator, on the other hand, does not have this freedom—we’re supposed to be translating. A certified and notarized translation becomes a legal document; it must be faithful to the original. So, assume that a translator is more liable than an evaluator.

What about transcripts?

It would probably help you to request some college catalogs with the names of courses in U.S. schools. For example, in mechanical engineering, the courses may be very similar in the foreign country. This could help you as translator. If not, a literal translation of the names of the courses is preferred. Evaluators are going to know what the courses are; seeing a transcript in mechanical engineering will not be new to them. On the other hand, you may be asked to translate a course in mechanical engineering from the home country as civil, mechanical, and electronic engineering all rolled into one, because this is going to meet some specific requirement in one of those areas at the U.S. school. The translator needs to be careful. Evaluators will also certainly question translations that exactly match their own curricula. I think it bears repeating: you don’t need to evaluate.

Would a document in a language such as German need to be translated?

Yes, it would. There’s a good chance the evaluator is not totally fluent in German, for instance. It is possible to know the German system of education and not be fluent in German. This is a good subject for debate within the evaluation field. Therefore, the evaluator may not be able to read the other data in a foreign-language document, but he or she must make sure all the information in that document fits for validation and authentication purposes.

In conclusion, I would suggest providing descriptions to make things easier on yourself. It’s not our job to evaluate these documents in order to translate them. If a student insists on evaluation, don’t translate this type of document for that client. Lose one customer, but don’t lose the goose. Please the school, because the school is going to be sending you clients all the time. If one person wants a doctorate for a high school diploma, lose that person. The evaluator is going to give credit where it’s due. The translator is the one who stands to lose.

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Websites:
1. www.AICE-eval.org
2. www.globelanguage.com
3. www.NAFSA.org
In the spring of 1997, German Language Services in Seattle received a short document from a biopharmaceutical company for translation from German into English. What at the time appeared to be a one-time job soon ballooned into a major project, which, by the end of 1999, encompassed more than 700 documents totaling some 5,000+ pages. None of the documents were available in electronic form, and virtually all of them were poor-quality faxes unsuitable for scanning, thereby precluding the efficient use of translation memory technologies. As often happens with projects of this magnitude, the documents did not arrive at regular intervals, but rather in batches of five to 10 at a time, often with very short turnaround times. As a result, several translators had to work on the documents simultaneously. As project managers know, large-volume projects pose unique logistic challenges, especially if they continue for several years. First and foremost, the translation company must spend a great deal of time identifying and supporting the client’s terminology needs, constantly revising and updating the project glossary.

This particular project involved another unusual challenge in that the German partner company continued to revise—to varying degrees—many of the original documents, and all of these revisions had to be incorporated into the original translations. In many cases, the person who had translated the original document was not available to revise his or her own document, and a different translator had to complete the task. Although the translators were able to consult a client-specific glossary to ensure consistent use of terminology, many found it difficult to adjust to their colleague’s stylistic idiosyncrasies. It became apparent that this problem could only be alleviated by establishing style guidelines that every translator would follow.

Even more so than in matters of terminology, it is very difficult to find consensus among translators as far as style issues are concerned. This is not surprising. One would be hard-pressed to find a stylistic problem for which there was widespread agreement among different style guides. Nevertheless, style guides are valuable resources that help establish common ground among translators.

More so than other aspects of language, style questions not only elicit widely different opinions, but over time these opinions may undergo significant change. For example, in a 1969 survey conducted by The American Heritage Dictionary, 44 percent of the members of a style panel found the use of hopefully as a sentence adverb acceptable (as in “Hopefully the deadline will be met.”), while in the most recent survey only 27 percent deemed this usage acceptable. In general, however, opposition to new stylistic forms tends to become more lenient over time. While a generation ago many people frowned on the use of data as a singular noun, this usage, with notable dissonance from the American Medical Association, is now widely accepted.
Adjectives Derived from Proper Names

In general, capitalize adjectives derived from proper names. However, note that many common adjectives, such as *eustachian tube*, are no longer consistently capitalized. For current capitalization practices, consult the current edition of *Dorland’s Medical Dictionary* or *Stedman’s Medical Dictionary*. Note that under the new German spelling rules, adjectives derived from proper names are no longer capitalized, for example, *das ohmsche Gesetz*. However, capitalization is maintained if the basic form of the proper name is accentuated by use of an apostrophe (e.g., *Einstein’sche Relativitätstheorie*).

Hyphenated Compounds

In titles, subtitles, or headings, do not capitalize the second element of a hyphenated compound if: a) either part is a prefix or suffix, or b) both parts together form a single word.

Chemical Descriptors

At the beginning of a sentence or in a title, subtitle, or heading, do not capitalize prefixes denoting locant or stereochemical information when these prefixes are followed by a hyphen and a chemical name. However, capitalize Latin chemical descriptors that are not part of a chemical name, and Greek and Latin prefixes indicating multiplication (e.g., *bis* and *tris*). If the prefix in these contexts consists of a single Greek letter, capitalize the first non-Greek letter but not the Greek letter itself (e.g., *β*-blockers). The expression *cis-Diaminedichloroplatinum (II)* is a widely used antitumor drug. The term *cis and trans isomers* was used in the process.

Department and Division Names

Capitalize the names of departments and divisions if they refer to a specific unit within the company.

Eponyms

Eponyms are phrases or names, often accompanied by a noun, which are based on proper nouns. Capitalize the eponym, but not the accompanying noun. For derivative or adjectival forms of a given eponym, consult a current medical dictionary to determine whether capitalization is indicated.

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Eponyms are phrases or names, often accompanied by a noun, which are based on proper nouns. Capitalize the eponym, but not the accompanying noun. For derivative or adjectival forms of a given eponym, consult a current medical dictionary to determine whether capitalization is indicated.

Hyphenated Compounds

In titles, subtitles, or headings, do not capitalize the second element of a hyphenated compound if: a) either part is a prefix or suffix, or b) both parts together form a single word.
column of a table, also called a table stub), use the capitalization style for sentences.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flow Rate</th>
<th>Pressure in Tank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target value</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual value</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tests**
Capitalize exact and complete², but not shortened or generic⁶, titles of tests. See the *AMA Style Guide* for an extensive list of capitalization practices for various tests and scales.
- hemagglutination inhibition test
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale

**Titles, Subtitles, and Headings**
Capitalize all major words in titles, subtitles, and headings, regardless of the number of letters.² Major words include nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.¹² Do not capitalize a conjunction, article, or preposition of three letters or less, except when it is the first or last word in a title, subtitle, or heading.² In infinitives, capitalize to.¹ Note that in English as well as German some conventional terms retain their initial lowercase letter (e.g., pH, mRNA) at all times.¹ In many bibliographic references, only the initial word of a title is capitalized.
- Measurement of pH Values
- Specifications for the End Product (25 mg/mL)

**Trademarks and Proprietary Names**
Capitalize trademarks and proprietary names², and maintain any idiosyncratic capitalization or punctuation used by the manufacturer.¹ Note that some former trademarks are no longer protected in the U.S. and thus need not be capitalized¹ (e.g., aspirin).
- MilliWrap membrane seals
- Teflon injection

**Numbers**
For non-scientific texts, many of the style guides cited here as references support a rule in which numbers ninety-nine and below are spelled out, and numbers 100 and higher are expressed as numerals. However, medical and biopharmaceutical texts are often governed by a different set of rules. For many of these texts, it has become commonplace to represent all cardinal numbers as numerals.

**Consecutive Numbers**
Two numbers immediately following one another may be difficult to read and should be avoided. Reword the sentence if possible. In general, a numeral should be used to express a number associated with a unit of measure, and the other number should be spelled out.³
twenty 5-g aliquots
(not: 20 5-g aliquots)

**Dates**
Maintain the German day/month/year format, using a three-letter abbreviation for the month. This format has the advantage of mirroring the German style, thereby creating less ambiguity.
- 10. April 1994 → 10 Apr 1994
  (not: 4/10/94)

**Decimals**
Note that in German the decimal marker is typically represented by a comma. However, in some cases one might encounter a period in the German source text, for example, when a given value is generated by a piece of equipment geared to the U.S. market. When using decimal fractions smaller than 1.0, place a zero before the decimal point, except when expressing the statistical values for P, α, and β.² The use of a single zero after the decimal marker should be maintained (e.g., 27.0⁰C ) since it typically conveys the precision of a given measurement.
x > 0.05 → x > .05 (not: x > .05)

**First Element of a Sentence, Title, Subtitle, or Heading**
Avoid placing a number at the beginning of a sentence, title, subtitle, or heading. If it is not possible to rewrite the sentence to accommodate this rule, the number should be spelled out.⁴ In this case, use a hyphen when spelling Continued on p. 40
out numbers from *twenty-one* through *ninety-nine*. Do not use commas or *and* when spelling out numbers greater than 100 (e.g., *two hundred sixty-four*).

Three lab technicians prepared 6 cultures each.

**Fractions**

Follow the model of the source text when deciding whether to use fractions or decimals. In scientific writing, decimals are preferred, but the author of the original document may use fractions for less precise measurements.

2½ days

**Long Numbers**

Use a comma to separate the digits in large numbers (10,000 or higher) into groups of three, counting from the left of the decimal point. Note that the client may ask you to write long strings of numerals according to the Système International (SI) convention, which states that, for numbers with five digits or more to the right or left of the decimal point, every group of three digits on each side starting from the decimal point should be separated by a half-space (e.g., 23 500 or 0.764 32).

20,000-L fermenter

**Ordinal Numbers**

Ordinal numbers generally follow the same rules as cardinal numbers. To express an ordinal number, use the numeral and a two-letter suffix (-st, -nd, -rd, -th). This rule does not apply if the ordinal number is the first word of a sentence or title, or if the ordinal number represents a proper name (e.g., *Fourth of July*).

Specify the parameters for the 3rd assay. (not: 3. assay or third assay)

**Percentages**

Use numerals and the percent sign (%) to express specific percentages. Unlike the German convention, there is no space between the numeral and the percent sign. The symbol % must be repeated for each number when specifying a range of percentages.

between 4.0% and 16.7%. (not: between 4.0 and 16.7%)

**Plurals of Numerals**

To form the plural of a numeral, add an *s*, but not an apostrophe.

1990s

**Ranges**

In numeric ranges, connect two numbers with the word *to* instead of an en-dash. Numeric ranges often include negative values, and using *to* avoids confusion between the en-dash and the minus sign.

Store at -20°C to -10°C.

**Roman Numerals**

If part of an established terminology, do not change roman numerals to arabic numerals.

type II error

**Temperatures**

Do not convert Celsius into Fahrenheit. The numeral and the temperature symbol (°C) should be adjacent with no intervening space, although a different style is found in most German and some U.S. publications.

30°C (not: 30 °C)

**Time**

Convert the European 24-hour clock to the conventional American a.m./p.m. time format. For 12 o’clock (12.00 Uhr or 24.00 Uhr), simply use 12:00 noon or 12:00 midnight.

14.30 Uhr → 2:30 p.m.

**Conclusion**

The style rules listed above are meant to illustrate the breadth of style decisions a translator faces before embarking on a medical or biopharmaceutical project. These rules are neither all-inclusive nor absolute, and in some cases the selected convention is somewhat arbitrary. Legitimate alternatives can be found in many current style guides. For example, an argument could be made for writing *Roman numeral* instead of *roman numeral*. Because examples of such alternatives abound, consistent use within and across documents should be a translator’s primary concern. When embarking on long-term projects involving more than one translator, it is important to decide upon project-specific style conventions at the outset. The rules cited in this article were developed with the client’s input, which is generally a good practice, especially when dealing with a client who is well versed in industry-specific
writing styles. In my experience, clients are very appreciative of one’s effort to standardize the stylistic elements of a translation, so the time invested is well spent.

References
Proverbial structures or “pre-fabricated” structures make up a large part of any language. Proverbs are used to classify, judge, describe, exaggerate, support, denounce, play, joke, etc., and appear in texts of many different styles and purposes. As pre-set parts of speech, encoded with cultural traditional meaning and strongly varied from culture to culture, proverbs appear universally in every language on earth.

...As pre-set parts of speech, encoded with cultural traditional meaning and strongly varied from culture to culture, proverbs appear universally in every language on earth...

Advertising and marketing texts often abound with proverbial structures, but with the exception of highly technical text, proverbial structures are part of any type of text material. As linguistic “pennies” or “Sprichwörter,” they serve us in many ways. Despite their omnipresence, it is not easy to define where the borders lie between a proverb and a casual expression or a fashionable word creation. The following distinctions may serve as a guideline for the most basic linguistic appearance forms of proverbial structures:

Proverb (Sprichwort): Real proverbs always show the same inflexible syntax and form. The proverb is used as a whole sentence for a variety of purposes. Examples are:

- *Hunger ist ein guter Koch.*
- *Wenn zwei sich streiten, freut sich der Dritte.*
- *Where there is a will, there is a way.*

Proverb sources include oral tradition, the *Bible*, popular almanacs, and even newer literature. The process of proverbial formation never stops, and new proverbs constantly evolve while others disappear from linguistic use. Modern advertising as well as films and television shows have begun to serve us as our latest sources of proverb evolution. To give an example, the popular saying, “A picture says more than a thousand words,” was actually invented as an advertising slogan. The slogan became so popular that it was translated into German and now leads an independent proverbial life as “Ein Bild sagt mehr als tausend Worte.”

Proverbial Expression (Sprichwörtliche Redensart): A verb expression that is built flexibly into the context of a sentence.

- “Die Felle davon schwimmen sehen” or “To split hair” can serve as examples.

The number of proverbial expressions by far exceeds the number of “real” proverbs. Our language abounds with examples of these expressions that have their roots in all areas of modern and historical life. The *Bible* has given us expressions such as “To cast the first stone,” but our historical existence as hunters and gatherers has left “jemand durch die Lappen gehen” (animals were corralled into a ring of trees and rags hung up to suggest a cage). We “build a house of cards,” “rob Peter to pay Paul,” and “know the ins and outs” of our fields. The list is endless and everyday speech is laced with these proverbial references that are themselves rich in cultural metaphor and historical meaning.

C. Quotation (Sentenz): These phrases are used with knowledge of source and author, and are quoted to imply a similar context: “Die Axt im Haus erspart den Zimmermann.” If you live with children or teenagers, you will also know popular movie quotations such as “To infinity and beyond” or “Houston, we have a problem.”

D. “Winged Words” (Geflügeltes Wort): These are phrases that are used without knowledge of the source and author. They can be considered quotations on their way to becoming proverbs. An example could be:

- “Da wendet sich der Gast mit Grausen”

The German popular compendium “Geflügelte Worte,” initially published in the late 19th century, is, until today, a household staple.

Given this overview of the different existing proverbial structures, we are faced with the difficult problem of translating them into similarly acceptable structures that not only make sense, but also carry comparable cultural implications.
Proverbs can be considered as encoded cultural message carriers. Taking the example of the most popular German proverb "Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund," you can already see that Morning Hour has Gold in Its Mouth is a meaningless translation. The closest English equivalent is "The early bird catches the worm," which uses an entirely different set of metaphors.

While some proverbial material is almost identical in both languages due to the process called Entlehnung, or easily looked up even in general dictionaries, some proverbial structures can be quite challenging to work with. Here are some suggestions on how to proceed when you come across a structure that might be "pre-fabricated speech."

**Identify Proverb:** Is there metaphoric content, figures of speech such as alliterations ("Kind und Kegel"), or unusual syntactic structure? Remember that cultural metaphors vary greatly from language to language, such as in "Leseratte" and "Bookworm."

**Explore Meaning and Implication:** You need to know what the proverb is supposed to replace in the speech. Instead of forming an original phrase, the writer has chosen to resort to a pre-fabricated phrase. In most cases this is done very deliberately to invoke certain associations with the reader. There are many examples in literature and in general writing where the use of proverbs implies certain characteristics of a speaker. Writers such as Gotthold E. Lessing or William Shakespeare used proverbial frequency as a means of identifying a speaker’s education and social background. Interestingly, the same technique is still employed in modern movies, such as those made by Disney. Some examples of proverbial speech implications are:

**Giving metaphoric power to speech:** “Funkelnagelneu,” “stocksteif,” and “pale as a sheet.” This use is waning some, but was very popular in the 50s and 60s. In modern texts, such proverbial exaggerations are most likely ironic.

**Making speech more folksy:** Advertising uses proverbial structures because of their subconscious popular appeal. If you translate marketing materials, your attention to proverbial structures is particularly important.

**Relating to common experience:** This use of proverbs is particularly important in the political context of propaganda and campaigning. The German Nazis were masters at employing proverbs to invoke popular sentiments, but scientific analysis of speeches written for and by master politicians around the world has found striking similarities in the use of fixed linguistic structures. Presidential hopefuls for the 2000 presidential election seem to have several proverb experts on their teams.

**Context:** Be sure to carefully question the context. Proverbs are now far more frequently used “tongue in cheek” with a humorous twist. The so-called anti-proverbs are becoming very common in advertising and graffiti. These word plays are so appealing because they are based on something we all know and will therefore find funny collectively. German authors such as Bertolt Brecht or Günter Grass, just to name two, have also played with proverbs to challenge tradition and our perception of “business as usual.” Play with proverbial structures can be very challenging to translate, as the cultural implications must not only be recognized, but also adapted to the “twist” or joke. For a while, the tendency in translation was to eliminate such proverbial references and to replace them with common language. Consider the following poem from Brecht’s “Mutter Courage”:

Von Ulm nach Metz, von Metz nach Mähren!  
Mutter Courage ist dabei!  
Der Krieg wird seinen Mann ernähren  
Er braucht nur Pulver zu und Blei.  
Von Blei allein kann er nicht leben  
Von Pulver nicht, er braucht auch Leut! (4,1421)

“Von Blei allein kann er nicht leben” refers to the biblical proverb “Man cannot live by bread alone.” Translation should at least attempt to incorporate this reference. The suggested translation “He cannot live by lead alone” would even include the rhyme “lead/bread.” However, published translations of the play have not taken up such proverbial references.

Continued on p. 44
Form and Style in Translation: In addition to preserving the original meaning of the structure with all its implications, the rhyme, alliteration, parallel construction, etc., should be matched wherever possible. Research has found three case scenarios of proverb translation:

**Total Equivalency:** The proverb or expression exists in both languages at the same level and uses a similar metaphor. Often, the source is the same. Example: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle”… (“Eher geht ein Kamel durchs Nadelöhr…”)
The best translation strategy in this case would be to look up the exact wording in a proverb or quotation compendium. A brief bibliography at the end of this article gives some suggestions on resources you might wish to consider for your library of translation materials.

**Partial Equivalency:** The proverbial structure is easily recognized, but needs to be adapted for translation. Example: “Einem platzt der Kragen” is best translated with: “Someone hits the roof.” The best strategy to follow is to replace the structure with something that sounds right to you in the context and will be easily recognizable to the reader in the target language. There will be considerable variation in the choice of metaphor.

**Null Equivalency:** The proverb is well recognized in one language, but the other language does not support it. To give another example from literature, Brecht’s *Kaukasischer Kreidekreis* used an Arabic compendium of proverbs that the author had found in a library in his California exile. “Als sie das Ross beschlagen kamen, streckte der Roskaifer die Beine hin, heißt es.” Other colloquial examples with null equivalency in English include expressions such as: “Kein Aas kümmert sich darum.” The best strategy for those cases is probably to analyze the context of proverbial usage and decide whether it needs to be, or can be, matched at all. Then translate what fits best in the text, possibly omitting the proverb. It is important to NEVER translate a proverb literally just to have something there.

The most fascinating aspect of the translation of proverbial structures is the fact that more than any other language structure, these “pre-fabricated” expressions have the power to appeal to a target reader’s subconscious knowledge of language—if they are translated right.

**Translation of Proverbs in English<>German Contexts**

**Helpful Materials:**
(Prices verified at several online bookstores)

- **Beran, Margret.** *Hitting the Nail on the Head. 3,000 Redensarten Deutsch-Englisch.* Ismaning: Hueber, 1995. ($15)
  
  *Good compendium of proverbial expressions. Many useful suggestions on translating a German expression with a fitting equivalent.*

- **Drosdowski, Günther and Werner Scholze-Stubenrecht.** *Redewendungen und sprichwörtliche Redensarten.* Der Duden, Bd. 11. Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1992. ($20)
  
  *Thorough and complete, the Duden edition has been criticized for not including more recent language formations and its somewhat trite selection.*

  
  *This excellent collection is no longer available in print, but if you can find a copy, by all means you should add it to your library.*

- **Mertvago, Peter (Ed.).** *Dictionary of 1,000 German Proverbs With English Equivalents.* New York: Hippocrene Books, 1996. ($10)
  
  *This collection is well organized for easy access and also takes into account newer proverbs such as “Garbage in, Garbage Out.”*
Realization

When did I realize I had an interest in translating German writing? When I was a first-year graduate student in Yale's German program in the early 1950s. While browsing in Sterling Library, I came across a novel by Siegfried Wolf that bewitched me, so I decided to translate it into English. *Flamme und Feuer*, which I translated as *Flame and Candle*, was published in 1943 by the Rowohlt Publishing House near Hamburg, Germany. This short novel was written with a lyrical flare that charmed me. The plot was simple: a young German soldier recovering from war wounds in a hospital recalls the deaths of a fellow soldier friend and two lovers—an elegiac setting that glistened with the sensuous and nostalgic magic of a deft prose.

What struck me about the novel was its total lack of Nazi ideological content, though it was published in wartime Germany. I wrote a letter of inquiry to Rowohlt asking about the author, and was told that he had not been heard from since the publication of the novel (*verschollen oder gefallen*?). I also learned that the novel had been translated into French and published in Paris in 1944. Fired up, I submitted it to Pantheon, a new American press (with German-language connections) founded by Helen and Kurt Wolff, the first publishers of Franz Kafka. It was returned with a note advising me that it did not “fit into our program.”

In the fall of 1999, I resurrected the novel and submitted it to New Directions, where it was rejected for its sentimentality and cloying rhetoric. Oh well. I still would like to see it in print, if for no other reason than as a memorial to its unknown author.

I mention this right at the start, because early on I realized I had an interest in bringing German literary works into English. But that realization was suppressed while I finished my Yale degree and embarked on a career in higher education. It was not until 1961–1962, while on a research fellowship in Germany, that I discovered Günter Grass and *The Tin Drum* and became enthused again.

Reaching

How did I succeed in reaching a modicum of success in translating contemporary German authors? When I compared the original of *The Tin Drum* with Ralph Manheim's amazing translation, I realized that a small omission here and there changed the tone of one passage or another. Only years later, in a conversation with Manheim, did I discover that he omitted nothing and had no explanation for the lacunae. To this day I do not know whether it was an editorial preference and/or intervention or a simple (but disturbing) production error. Be that as it may, I read all of Grass’s work I could find, including his poems and plays.

In 1965 a short play intrigued me so much that I translated it and sent it to Grass himself. The next thing I knew I was contacted by his dramatic agent in New York, Ninon Tallon Karlweis, the French-born widow of a German actor. I visited her, and in our first discussion, when I mentioned that, to me, reading Grass was like turning the pages of a photograph album, she conceived of staging a miscellany of work by Grass. From that came *An Album of Günter Grass*, which premiered in the winter of 1965 at Penn State University, where I was then teaching. Then in the spring of 1966, Ninon Karlweis produced it, with Dennis Rose as director, in a small venue off-Broadway, the Pocket Theater. Opening night saw Grass and other German literary luminaries in attendance. It was a great success and later toured college campuses across the U.S. under the title of *The World of Günter Grass*.

Ninon Karlweis asked me to translate the longest play by Grass, the three-act *The Wicked Cooks*, which I did, not realizing that it had been published previously in a very flawed translation. My translation premiered in New York in the spring of 1967, but it ran only two evenings. The director of the play, even though he had an excellent cast, had totally ruined the production by emphasizing violence in direct contrast to the menacing quiet threat that permeated the plot. He thought his audience would not “get it” otherwise. A *New Yorker* review stated: “Sometimes in the din, the authentic voice of the author can be heard.” In 1967 it was published by Harcourt

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Musings on the Translation of German Literature Continued


When Ralph Manheim was translating the Grass novel Local Anesthetic in 1970, I was translating his play Davor, which dramatizes some scenes from the novel. The confrontational aspect of the play, in which young Berlin rebels challenge the establishment of the time, helped me solve the dilemma of translating the title. Davor, an adverb, means to be in the physical presence of something (a wall, a window, a house). To me, this term also carries with it the sense of a psychological barrier, a mental dilemma. I thought of “uptight,” a word heard frequently at the time, and that’s how I titled my translation. The German production of the play, on a proscenium stage in Cologne, had been a complete flop (in one scene, the boy and girl protagonists of the play converse while riding bicycles in figure-eights on the stage).

For a symposium on the work of Grass, which I organized at the University of Texas in the spring of 1970, Uptight was produced and directed by a brilliant young drama student, Laird Williamson, who cast it with student actors to perfection. There were no intermissions in the 13-scene play, which took place before a small audience that was seated around a lowered stage. Ramps permitted the two bicyclists to ride down onto the play area and up again and around behind the spectators—a lively and boisterous scene, quite unlike the tame figure-eights on the Cologne stage.

Ninon Karlweis flew in from New York to be present. The play ran for five sold-out performances.

One year later, in the famed Arena Theater in Washington, D.C., Alan Schneider, the director who discovered Edward Albee (Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf), brought his own version of the play to life. It was a stunning success and ran with sold-out performances for six weeks. However, because neither Helen Wolff nor Günter Grass could make sense of the title word “uptight,” and the printed version was about to appear with a different title, Max (after an unseen dog that the students threaten to burn in public), Schneider had to get special permission to use the title Uptight. I had wanted to publish the play in the Grass Symposium special issue of Dimension in 1970, but the publisher allowed me to print only four scenes that I selected myself. So, my first forays into the publication and production of a literary work by a contemporary German writer circled around Günter Grass. I had translated short prose and some poetry by him for the production of the miscellany, and had experienced a failure and a success with two of his plays.

Realities

How did I manage to go beyond Günter Grass in my translation endeavors? In the succeeding years, while editing, publishing, and translating for Dimension (1968–1994, 20 volumes, plus special issues), I became acquainted with literally hundreds of German authors and their translators, some dozen or so of whom became my good friends. During that span of time, I also kept an eye on the work of German writers printed by various American publishers. To my dismay, I discovered that the publication of translations of literary works by German authors was very small compared with works by French, Russian, Italian, and Spanish-language authors—German ranked sixth or seventh in the annual survey published by Publishers Review. And, moreover, I also discovered that few American publishers made any attempt to check the accuracy of translations they did publish. At the time, I reproached them for this carelessness (there were many errors, such as, and this was many years ago, Stausee [an artificial reservoir of water] being rendered as Lake Stau, and, more recently, in the millennium book by Günter Grass, My Century, the Spanish Civil War song “Wir sind die Moorsoldaten” (“We Are the Soldiers of the Swamp”) was called “The Song of the Moorish Soldiers”).

I now realize that it is incumbent on the translator to submit as correct a translation as humanly possible, and that it is a rare translator who can do that without the aid of a second reader. I have the good fortune to be married to a trained Germanist and fervent reader of literature who is, additionally, an exacting proofreader who reads and minutely compares the first draft of my translations (a lengthy and productive process that inevitably reveals omissions, misunderstandings, stupid mistakes, and infelicities). After polishing and revising the first draft, I query the author if there are any neologisms or questions I have (those authors I have translated have always been forthcoming with answers to queries). Another reading by a copy editor in a publisher’s office con-
tributes, through queries, to a final version that I always hope (though usually in vain) is perfect.

So, what is a translator to do in order to find a home for a work? Study the literary marketplace. Placing a translation is a marketing enterprise, and a translator must, in many instances, be a substitute for an author's agent and be eager to sell a product. Be sure to check which publishers are publishing which authors. A dedicated translator will read as many books as possible by American authors, and will keep up with books by German authors. Also, be poised to take advantage of luck.

After my retirement from the faculty of the Department of German Studies at the University of Texas at Austin in the spring of 1992, I had the good fortune to be present at a meeting of German and American translators in New York. Here I met George Braziller, the admired founder of a distinguished press that specializes in art books, but also publishes translations on a regular basis. For decades he was the American publisher of Nathalie Sarraute, originator of the roman nouvell. He asked me if I would translate a novel by Michael Krüger, who, in addition to being a novelist and poet, is the director of the Hanser publishing house in Munich. I said I would, and in 1993, *The Man in the Tower* appeared. Krüger's novel, *Himmelfarb*, followed in 1994.

Meanwhile, in 1992, I had met Munich novelist (and Duisburg University professor) Gerhard Köpf, and become enthused about his work. I asked him which novel I should translate first into English, and he mentioned *There Is No Borges*. After George Braziller published *The Man in the Tower*, I queried him as to whether he would be interested in translating first into English, and he mentioned *There Is No Borges*. After George Braziller published *The Man in the Tower*, I queried him as to whether he would be interested in reading the Köpf novel. He was, so I sent it to him. He called me immediately asking, “Who is this man? Why haven’t I heard about him?” And he published the novel in 1993. That work was followed, in 1995, by another novel, *Papa's Suitcase*, a tale of an adventuresome young German bookseller and Hemingway fan.

When Braziller was unable to publish other novels by Köpf immediately, he agreed to let me query other publishers. As a result, two of Köpf’s short novels appeared in 1997 under the Camden House imprint, *Innerfar* and *Bluff*, or the *Southern Cross*, in one binding. In 1996, Camden House asked me to recommend a novel, and I sent them my translation of Ulla Berkéwicz’s *Angels Are Black and White*, which was immediately published. Köpf’s *The Way to Eden* and another novel, *Nurmi*, saw print with Camden House in 1998. Camden House has since been bought by a British publisher who will no longer publish contemporary novels in translation. Luckily, Köpf and Braziller resumed contact early this year, and now Braziller will publish Köpf’s *Piranesi’s Dream* in July of 2000.

Few German publishers have agents to try to place their authors in English translation in the U.S., although they publish authors whose works may be translated into a dozen or more languages around the world.

A translator who becomes interested in the work of an author should first query the author, or the German publisher, about whether a specific work is being considered for publication in America or is being translated. Once a translator has decided that a work really should be translated, and a green light from an author or publisher is obtained, then in all likelihood it will be up to the translator to find a publisher. I have done this with the two authors mentioned above, Köpf and Berkéwicz. I am currently seeking a publisher for novels by three other authors: *Haiti Chérie*, by Hans Christoph Buch, the second novel of a trilogy (the first appeared several years ago); *Death and I, We Two*, by Arnold Stadler, which is now being read by a publisher in New York; and *The Turtle Feast*, by Tirolese author Joseph Zoderer. And I am hard at work translating yet another novel by Köpf and the most recent one by Stadler.

Establishing a reputation as a literary translator is difficult, and finding a publisher for a translation is as difficult as finding a publisher for any author. Professional literary translators who can support themselves by translating are a rare breed—Ralph Manheim succeeded, but only because he translated from French as well as German, and only because he was indefatigable. Most literary translators have another mode of enterprise for their livelihood, because literary translators are usually paid poorly. Generally, translators are advised not to undertake a translation without having found a publisher, but that is a kind of Catch-22 situation, an unbearable Hobson’s choice that threatens their initiative.

The decision must be an individual one. A translator must have a deep

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Musings on the Translation of German Literature

interest for the work of an author, and generally have a temperament and literary acuity (and, of course, skill as a translator) that fits an author’s mind and style. And the translator must often be willing to take a risk in seeking a publisher for his work.

Resources

Luckily, those interested in contemporary German literary works (including the various genres of writing) have a new resource in The German Book Office, located at 1014 Fifth Avenue (the address of the Goethe Institute in New York), Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10026. The project director is Dr. Andrea Heyde, who can be reached at (212) 794-2851. The purpose of The German Book Office is to serve as a source of information about German books today. I have found the office to be cordial and eager to help in furnishing me with information about authors, publishers, and books.

The Translation of Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions


At a pricey $180, this two-volume set is both the most comprehensive and most expensive idiomatic dictionary on the market. Unless you work with literature and idiomatic material a lot, it is probably not necessary to spend that much. The books are very well organized and even give variations of expressions.

Notes

1 This ingenious expression for proverbs was “coined” by the Berlin theater critic Herbert Ihering.
5 Deut. 8:3; Matt 4:4; Luke 4:4.
The Guide is structured along familiar lines and covers the following areas: language basics, language conventions, Spanish-language forms of classical authors' names, literary and grammatical terminology, linguistic terminology, biblical names and allusions, and a nimble dictionary of grammatical and lexical doubts. The material is clearly presented and uses good examples that reveal a comfortable familiarity with the Spanish-speaking world.

The section on gender and number is careful to explain the differences between Peninsular and Latin American forms, and instructs us on how to use foreign words that have entered Spanish. “Babysitters,” “hooligans,” and “managers” can be either masculine or feminine, but we refer to “la beautiful people,” “el homo sapiens,” and “la jetset.” This chapter will be very helpful to those who would like to order more than one beefsteak, cocktail, or yogurt in Spanish. As a translator, I particularly enjoyed the list of “plurals that are found in prepositional and verbal expressions,” because each phrase is accompanied by an English equivalent. I’m always interested in colloquial ways to say things like “to compliment,” or “in spite of all the obstacles.” And I appreciate gaining a deeper understanding of the subtle shades of meaning submerged between “de todas maneras” and “de todos modos.” Speaking of meaning, there are nearly 30 pages of detailed explanation on the use of prefixes and suffixes.

Copy editors will appreciate the section on bibliography preparation as well as the many lists of, for example, titles for nobility, religion, academia, and so on. A fairly extensive professions and occupations chapter lists a variety of career paths, such as “defensor del pueblo” for “ombudsman” and the charming “ferroviario” for “railroad worker.” But it doesn’t list “canillita,” the word for a young newspaper vendor in the Río de la Plata region. The geographical terms chapter is also rewarding, especially the section that deals with nationality and “other place” identifiers. While not exhaustive, the list includes both “borinqueño” and “puertorriqueño,” and the next time I listen to Rodrigo’s Concierto de Aranjuez, I’ll know that people from that part of Spain are called “ribereños.”

The arrival of this book says a great deal about the state of the Anglo-Hispanic world I inhabit. The most remarkable feature of this publication is, I think, that it is written in English. This represents a perceptible adjustment in English-speaking circles vis-à-vis the growing Hispanic presence in the United States. Kudos to all those involved for recognizing this, and for a job well done.

Termium® and Termium Plus® on CD-ROM in Windows 95 and Windows 98/NT versions
Produced by:
Translation Bureau of the Public Works and Government Services of Canada (Ottawa Ontario K1A 0S5, Canada). On the Internet at http://www.translationbureau.gc.ca
Price:
$395 ($325 for update) in the U.S.
Contact 800-TERMION
Reviewed by:
Sharlee Merner Bradley

Many translators from and into French have found Termium® to be their first reference source when seeking an equivalent to a new term. This product is one of a new breed that is a development of the traditional dictionary. It is not just a glossary, a term implying very limited subject matter, nor is it the content of a printed dictionary in electronic format. A good indication of what it is would perhaps be the term “database,” and actually, the sources in each language from which the terms are taken can be accessed if desired.

The producers of Termium®, the Translation Bureau of Government Services in Canada, first introduced the

Continued on p. 50
translating public to their in-house tool by leasing it. We either had to pay an annual fee to use the disk or pay a heavy price to own it. After several years, to our mutual benefit, the disk was made available for purchase at a lower and more reasonable price. I bought the 1996 CD-ROM when it was issued and found it to be an essential resource.

The 1999 version has a new, easier-to-use interface that is now true Windows. As a matter of fact, it is somewhat similar to the interface on the other popular French database Le Grand dictionnaire terminologique, formerly called Le Doc, and to Stedman’s medical dictionaries. With an industry standard, it is becoming quicker to access a desired term as the learning curve flattens out.

Other improvements to Termium® include a 40 percent renewal of terms out of a total of three million–more than 200,000 new terms, 100,000 new records (the contextual source of each term), and more than 80,000 changes to existing records.

The most notable of all the innovations is a different version called Termium Plus®. In addition to the features mentioned above, it includes a style guide, thesaurus, and a reference on Canadian style.

On the “title page” of The Canadian Style, we find a curious copyright that is new to me: Copyright © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada (1997). An example of its content is the section on geographical names. In a bilingual country such as Canada, the choice of a geographic name can be problematic. The government established a committee on geographical names that issued the following guidelines:

- The official form of a geographical name is the one adopted by the provincial or federal authorities in whose jurisdiction an entity lies. This name can be found in the Gazetteer of Canada.

- Certain geographical names of pan-Canadian significance have well-known official forms in both English and French.

- All other geographical names have only one official form, which is the one to be used on federal maps in either official language.

- In documents, it is permissible to translate the generic portion of names of geographical features, that is, the portion that indicates the nature of the entity (Lake in “Arrow Lake”), but not the specific portion that names the entity (Arrow in “Arrow Lake”).

- Names of inhabited places retain their official form in both English and French texts, e.g., Montréal (Que.), Saint John (N.B.), and St. John’s (Nfld.).

The style guide, Le guide du rédacteur, is a useful tool for translators into French. It contains helpful information on abbreviations, capitalization, punctuation usage, and an index.

The Lexique analogique provides many choices, especially for words that are commonly used and challenging to translate. For example, under English framework, there are 10 French words, such as cadre, squelette, armature, and a cross-reference to five other English headwords, such as environment and background.

As a new service to translators, Termium Plus® has been made available on the Internet for a price. There was a free trial period last year, but my information shows a subscription price for unlimited access ranging from $25 (in the U.S.) monthly to $225 yearly. There are, however, four publications available at no charge on their Internet site:

* Year 2000 Bug Glossary

* Trilingual Internet Glossary (400 entries) in English, French, and Spanish

* Women in Development Glossary

* Bilingual List of Titles of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers

The main difference between Termium Plus® on the Internet and on CD-ROM is that, in addition to being updated monthly, the Internet version contains 50,000 Spanish equivalents. Perhaps in the not too distant future the Canadian Translation Bureau will make the Internet version available at no cost to us. In the meantime, the CD-ROM version is an essential resource for a freelance translator.

Termium Plus®

Produced by:
Translation Bureau of the Public Works and Government Services of Canada (Ottawa Ontario K1A 0S5, Canada). On the Internet at http://www.translationbureau.gc.ca

Reviewed by:
Françoise Herrmann

If you pledge allegiance to the brightly colored and sweet world of Macintosh, you are in for a special treat from the Translation Bureau of the Public Works and Government Services of Canada: Termium Plus®. This is Internet-based Termium®, Though you may initially be a little disappointed to hear that the long-awaited August 1999 Termium® CD-ROM update is only available for DOS/Windows users, there are, in fact, some clearly significant advantages to Internet-based Termium® (termed appropriately Termium Plus®) for all users.

This is first reflected in the price structure. Internet-based Termium Plus® is offered on a subscription basis. For individuals, the yearly subscription rate is $225 (plus tax), or slightly more on a monthly basis ($25, plus tax). And on a subscription basis, Termium Plus® offers more than the CD-ROM version. Where Termium® CD-ROM users deplored lapses in updating promises every year, Internet Termium® users now have access to a newly updated Termium Plus® every month. The Canadian Translation Bureau database is “swept” every month to include new and modified records, which provides a perfect design solution for keeping up with the terminological frontier. And in addition to this unprecedented technological-terminological match, Termium Plus® users also have access to 50,000 terms
in Spanish (unavailable on the CD-ROM version) and three style manuals. Are you still disappointed?

Access to the Internet-based Termium Plus® occurs via your Internet service provider, an Internet browser, an account name, and password. So the first step for access (once the aforementioned has been secured) is to bookmark the address www.termium.com, which takes you to the Termium® home page, where you click on the consultation link for access to Termium Plus®. Following successful login with your userID and password, a split screen will appear where the left frame is designed for searching and the right frame displays the search results (i.e., the contents of the records searched). This split screen design, combining both search and result functions on a single display, offers much navigational improvement compared to the separate, toggle display design of the previous CD-ROM version. In addition, a choice of one of three languages for the interface is available with a single click.

Besides these much-improved navigational aspects, and any potential Internet-related risks such as downtime, how does Termium Plus® fulfill its primary purpose as a tool for assisting translators in keeping pace with the speed and movement of terminological developments?

If you are a freelancer specializing in medical translation and the project flow suddenly hicups, you may occasionally find yourself accepting projects in other domains. If this is the case, and you are having trouble with “purified polypeptides” and “reverse transcriptase” methods of cloning, Termium® is tried and tested (positive) for the related fields of biochemistry and microbiology. You may also experience real trouble with “toenailing” when it comes to “bricolage” or more serious construction projects. Mercifully, Termium Plus® can also help with the coarser anatomy of house-building. The record for “toenailing” displays the information shown in Table 1.

This information, which is presented in a fairly typical format, supplies, in addition to glossing by domain, a definition of the term and, in this case, glossing and indexing in all three languages: French, Spanish, and English. This is to say that Termium® continues to supply a wealth of fingertip assistance when translating, where many specialized (and heavy) monolingual and bilingual dictionaries would be needed. Occasionally, and these instances are rare, there are “no-hits,” but you may also qualify (in exchange for a break in subscription fees) to participate in building Termium® by submitting records for inclusion in the database.

In supplying monthly updates, Termium Plus® seeks to keep abreast of terminology. How is this achieved? There are 40 full-time terminologists working on researching and updating terminology for Termium® at the Canadian Translation Bureau, and there are 800 active translators also creating records. This alone provides a glimpse of the scope and structure of the project. In terms of movement and change, this translated into 224,000 newly archived terms between the 1996 and 1999 Termium® versions, and 83,000 modified records (canceled records for dated terms, modifications for updated terms, and added information). For the monthly Termium Plus® sweeps, the breakdown is as follows: on average, 3,280 records are uploaded each month, 5,380 are modified, and 1,320 are deleted. Compared to the 95-year turnaround time between the monolingual Petit Larousse editions, and the 10-year turnaround between the bilingual Robert and Collins editions, this is quite spectacular.

There is an interesting twist in one of the purposes of Termium® development. Termium®’s conservative streak seeks to standardize translations, and at best to

Continued on p. 62

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Joint and Connections (Construction)</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Joints et assemblages (Construction)</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Juntas y Conexiones (Construcción)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metal Fasteners Rough Carpentry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clouterie et visserie Charpenterie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clavos y Tornillos Carpintería</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toenailing</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>CORRECT</td>
<td>clouage en biais $</td>
<td>CORRECT, MASC</td>
<td>Clavazón inclinada $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toe nailing</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>CORRECT</td>
<td>clouage oblique $</td>
<td>MASC</td>
<td>clavazón oblicua $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skew nailing</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>CORRECT</td>
<td>DEF—Clouage par enfoncement de clous en biais pour fixer l’extrémité d’un membre et dissimuler ainsi les clous, notamment dans les planchers et les lambris. $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tusk nailing</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>CORRECT</td>
<td>DEF—Clouage incliné. Clavos utilizados para dar forma a los clavazón en cambio. $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angle nailing</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>DEF—Clavazón inclinada. Término utilizado en carpintería para referirse a la clavazón inclinada. $</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1999-10-19
© Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada
In his own practice, the Translation Inquirer encountered a wonderful sentence that says about as much about modern Europe and the way it is heading, linguistically, as one could ask.

It was from a German assignment, mind you, and it read thus: “Let’s talk together, notfals auch avec les mains et les pieds, doamit wi us verstoat.” Give yourself a pat on the back if you can recognize the language of very limited diffusion that provides the last four words.

[Abbreviations used with entries in this column: E–English; F–French; G–German; I–Italian; L–Latin; Pt–Portuguese; R–Russian; Sp–Spanish.]

New Queries

(F-E 3-2000/1) Zaire becomes the subject of an item in this column at last. Jeanne Zang had a business letter from that sprawling land in which “auprès” confused her, to the extent that she knows who owns what shares and with whom they are secured: “On avait convenu dans l’accord de Joint-Venture que X procédera au prépayement des parts Y auprès de Z. Y s’engage à acquérir progressivement auprès de X, au fur et à mesure de la vente de scories à Z, les 20% d’actions gagnées auprès de X.”

(F-E 3-2000/2) Building specs in French can be pesky. Peter McCavana notes that in this area, C.C.P. means “Cahier des Clauses Particulières” (specific contract conditions or supplementary general conditions). But in an item involving maintenance of a pipeline, he encountered “C.C.P.,” which might be “Cahier des Clauses Particulières Unitaires,” or “-Unifiées,” or “-à l’Unité.” The job made mention of “-le report des différents marquages tels que: No. de coutée, No. de CCPU, etc. sur chaque tronçon, y compris les chutes de tubes.” Any ideas?

(F-E 3-2000/3) Trudy Peters, baffled by the ways of the French fashion industry, wants to know the differences between “modéliste,” “styliste,” “maquetiste,” and “créateur.” Can these four be rendered in English in a way that differentiates between them? She knows that a certain school in Paris has the first three of these words in its title, and after a careful check she was still forced to render it as a school for fashion design.

(F-E 3-2000/4) Isabel Leonard was working on a manual for people selling pharmaceutical products to doctors, and found several paragraphs explaining why this drug is better than the competition. The last is headed, “Bien soulignier, en verrouillage.” Could this be something like to clinch the matter?

(G-E 3-2000/5) A ProZ.com correspondent wanted to know what the abbreviation “gL-Sicherung” means. Contextual sentences were provided: “Bei einer Störung in einer Anlage (Kurzschluss) soll nur der gestörte Stromkreis und nicht die gesamte Verteilung abgeschaltet werden. Bei gL-Sicherungen werden deshalb die Vorsicherungen mindestens zwei Nennstromstufen höher gewählt.”

(G-E 3-2000/6) Here’s a winner in the ecological field from ProZ.com: “die Leistungsfähigkeit des Naturhaushalts,” which the correspondent presented two suggestions for, the capacity of the natural environment to perform its essential functions and the functional capacity of the natural environment. Is there a better one?

(G-E 3-2000/7) Phil Fisher wants to know if anyone can help with “Resistmuster,” a term that appeared in the title of a German patent: “Resistmuster und Verfahren zu deren Herstellung.”

(G-E 3-2000/8) “Rübenererde” was the subject of a ProZ.com query, namely, in regard to British beet sugar production. Here’s the context: “Die Energiekosten sind aufgrund des hohen Energieverkaufs von zwei Fabriken an das öffentliche Netz dank der in die Kraft-Wärme-Kopplung vorgenommenen Investitionen stark zurückgegangen. Die Abgabe für die Entsorgung der Rübenerde konnte nach Verhandlungen mit der Regierung vermieden werden.”

(G-E 3-2000/9) What follows may be a new buzz-word among advertising professionals: “Alleinstellung.” The writer of the following paragraph was obviously obsessed with it: “Differenzierung schafft Alleinstellung—auf allen Gebieten. Jetzt werden Alleinstellungsmerkmale sichtbar. Wenn man den Charakter, die Begabungen und Schwächen dieser Marken-Persönlichkeiten ausgemacht hat, kann man sie zur Individualität und Alleinstellung führen.” Courtesy of ProZ.com.

(I-E 3-2000/10) In a text having to do with a hospital bed, Debby Nieberg found the first two words in the following quote to be a problem: “Movimentazione vascolare regolabile su quattro posizioni mediante pistone a cremagliera con regolazione sui due lati del letto.”

(I-E 3-2000/11) Bob Taylor was translating a doctoral diploma in electronic engineering, and found two courses containing a troubling word for him, “complementi.” The names of the courses were “complementi di geometria ed algebra” and “complementi di matematica.” He surmises that the problem word means something like additional course or advanced course.

(L-E 3-2000/12) Lindsey Vaughan had problems with a corporate law phrase, “cum collegium in causa universitatis fingatur una persona.” She needs either an English equivalent or an alternate source to find a translation for it.

(Pt-E 3-2000/13) These queries from President-elect Tom West relate to the building industry. The first is (13.a) “padrão de construção,” which he surmises might be building standard. Is that correct? Then, (13.b) in the phrase “paredes: azulejos 1/2 barra coloridos,”
what does “1/2 barra” mean? And lastly, does (13.c) “massa fina” mean fine mortar, as in “paredes: massa fina/latex?”

(R-E 3-2000/14) For Bill Halstrick, two of the individual components of an ice apron (ледорез) were troublesome. His text speaks of an engineer who: разрабатывает графические способы построения поверхностей ледореза, их развертки и шаблонов. It’s the last two terms, развертки и шаблоны, that pose the problem. Any civil engineers around who have dealt with this?

(Sp-E 3-2000/15) Jana Bundy searched and searched, but the following terms regarding police organizations in El Salvador eluded her. They are: (15.a) “delegación”; (15.b) “subdelegación”; (15.c) “puesto policial”; and (15.d) “resguardo,” possibly a checkpoint for border control or customs. Extra context for this: “Resguardo Fronterizos, Resguardos de Finanzas.” One dictionary has “resguardo aduanal” as customs control, but she is anything but sure that this term always applies to customs.

Replies to Old Queries

(E-Sp 11-99/2) (truancy petition): Carl Schwanbeck suggests “petición de delincuencia escolar.”

(E-Sp 1-2000/5) (inner city): Carlos Recalde claims that “barrios bajos” is the most appropriate equivalent, singular or plural.

(F-E 10-99/5) (“circuit des services”): Miriam Mustain believes this should be translated as service line system, referring to the system which controls the air to trailer brakers in a tractor-trailer system. She should know. She drove just such a rig for several years.

(G-E 8-99/8) (“...brodelte es unüberhöhar in der Gerüchtküche”): Whoo! Many objections to the solutions provided on page 69 of the November-December issue. The word “unüberhöhar” in this case refers not to something inaudible, but to something you can’t help but hear, unmistakable. So say Ulrike Lieder, P. H. Dreyer, Charles Croissant, Dorothy Duncan, Roswitha Enright, and Fred Thomson. The solution of the last-named gentleman was particularly colorful: Rumors were flying so furiously that you couldn’t avoid being hit. Langenscheidt: distinct, loud and clear. (G-E 11-99/5) (“Bereichsleiter”): Hans Fischer found definitions of division manager, (U.S.) vice-president for... (U.K.) divisional director in Wilhelm Schäfer’s Wirtschaftswörterbuch. Walter Bauer states that a “Bereichsleiter” is the manager of a second (also called “rayon”) of an activity within a larger group. He or she would be in charge of a certain type or kind of production or activity. Walter agrees with Trudy Peters’ interpretation of the “Bereichsleiter” position in the hierarchy.

Karin Lovin, in contrast, states that a “Bereichsleiter” is higher than an “Abteilungsleiter,” earning 20-50 percent more than the latter. She does not like Area Manager as a translation, but it might be better than general manager. In any case “Bereichsleiter” is definitely higher than department manager, since a “Bereich” includes several “Abteilungen.”

(G-E 11-99/6) (“Unterdächer”): Hans Fisher quotes Eurodicautoma as defining this as a roof underlay. According to Walter Bauer, after consultation with a Swiss friend, the plural form refers to the second layer of the roof, below the tiles or shingles. The visible part of this by the eaves is called by the Swiss “Dach-Untersicht,” and the Translation Inquirer is so bold as to add that the English word for this might well be underlayment, a tarpaper layer. The German “Unterdach” is horizontal, links the walls with the roof overhang, and Walter suggests visible underside of the roof. Perhaps, says the Translation Inquirer, sofitt might work here, since Webster’s defines it as “the underside of a part or member of a building (as of an overhang or staircase).”

(G-E 11-99/7) (“mit sich selbst”): It’s “Justistendeutsch,” according to Walter Bauer. His surmise is that the managing director is most likely also a controlling shareholder of the enterprise to be registered, hence the authorization to represent the company thus. There may be a conflict of interest, but since this relationship in all likelihood would be known to third parties, there should not be a problem.

(R-E 9-99/10.b) (ГУПС): David Goldman agrees with the first three words of Jim Shipp’s solution, Главное управление по портовой ... but then he wishes to differ, believing that the last word is not служба but связь, as claimed by a Russian abbreviations dictionary from 1993.

(R-E 11-99/11) (китов, птицы, звери): Mike Levin states that the former is a monster in the apocryphal stories about King Solomon. It is derived from the Greek “kentauros.” As for the latter, also called сирин, one definition terms it to be the Bird of Joy with a woman’s face, usually represented with a halo and no arms. Author Vladimir Nabokov, who wrote his Russian books under the nom de plume of Сирин, stated that modern Russian uses the word to denote two species of Owls. But its mythological form as a multicolored bird no doubt derives from siren, the Greek creature who lured sailors.

Shifra Kilov found a century-old dictionary in which such things are still listed: the Полный Церковно-славянский словарь, compiled by Grigory Dyachenko, published in Moscow in 1899.

(R-E 11-99/12) (уч.): It is assumed by Mike Levin that this stands for participant’s code, a two-character numeric or alphanumeric value which, together with a preceding six-, eight-, or nine-digit number which is either an МОО code (interbranch flow) or БИК (bank identification code), uniquely identifies every bank, participating in the clearing process with other financial institutions.

(R-E 1-2000/14) (взяло урал): In an electronic dictionary of chemistry, M. Immerman found oximidomesaxalyl urea; violuric acid. Elliott Urdang found it in Macura’s Russian-English dictionary of chemistry, which defined it as alloxan-5-oxime. The Merck manual calls it an analytical reagent for chromatographic separation of cations which forms chelates.

(Sp-E 4-99/12) (“delito contra la salud pública”): drug-related crime and drug trafficking are more commonly used
Useless Letters

A useless letter just sits there in a word, doing nothing, an artifact of lunatic orthography. Are there any truly useless letters?

It can be argued that the letter “x” in English is useless because it has no sound not duplicated by some other letter or combination of letters. But, in theory at least, “x” is still “useful” in that it sometimes makes a word shorter. For example, the five-letter word “exact,” without “x,” would require six letters: “egzact.” How about “c,” the sounds of which are usually duplicatable by a single other letter: “k” or “s”? Not entirely useless, because “c” is still needed for the digraph “ch,” although some people have proposed that “ch” be replaced by “c” alone, and that all other “c”s be replaced by “k” or “s.”

How about so-called silent letters? I say so-called because many aren’t silent at all. Even if they themselves are not pronounced, they usually change the pronunciation of the word. Silent “e” almost always operates this way: “cub” and “cube,” “hat” and “hate,” “bit” and “bite” don’t sound anything like each other. But “pie” and “pi” are pronounced identically. So have we finally found a useless letter in the “e” in “pie”? Not completely. The “e,” at least in the written language, still serves to distinguish between two words with different meanings. Other “silent” letters which serve to distinguish between words with different meanings are the second “t” in “but/butt” and the second “s” in “bus/buss.”

How about the “b” in “debt”? Though approaching total uselessness, we are not quite there yet. The “b” is useful in that it lets the writer know, assuming that he/she cares, that “debt” is etymologically related to “debit.”

So, are there totally useless letters? Yes. Consider the word “jazz.” The second “z” is totally useless. It tells the user of the word nothing and does not change the pronunciation of the word at all. Only one “z” is required for the rhyming first syllable of “hazard” and the rhyming proper nickname “Chaz” (short for Charles, and sometimes also spelled “Chas,” but never “Chazz”).

Readers who have time on their hands are invited to submit examples of words in any language in which at least one letter is totally useless, for inclusion in a future column.

A REMINDER: Despite my re-emphasis a few months ago of the need for at least copyright information (and preferably actual copyright permission) when a whole written piece is submitted, readers are still submitting worthy (i.e., funny) pieces accompanied only by statements such as “Where it comes from, and where it’s been — who knows!”. Illegal use of copyrighted material, on the Internet or anywhere else, does not put it into the public domain, and neither I nor the ATA will reprint material which may be under copyright unless it is known for sure that the material is not copyrighted, or explicit permission to reprint is received from the copyright holder.

Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@earthlink.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 5748 W Brooks Rd, Shepherd MI 48883-9202. Examples of translations of humor are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant. Unless submitters request otherwise, material submitted may be shared with Robert Wechsler of Catbird Press (catbird@pipeline.com), who is planning an international collection of humor in English translation.
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**TRANSLATION PROJECT MANAGER**
Translation Project Manager (137.137-010) sought by company in Boulder, CO specializing in localization. Direct & coordinate activities of translators engaged in translating & localizing technical documents from English into Japanese for Japanese clients. Study material, using knowledge of Japanese language and Japanese cultural norms to determine best qualified translators for specific projects. Assign projects to translators & review work for quality. Communicate with Japanese clients to ascertain or confirm specific project needs. Set timetables & schedules & prepare status reports. Provide technical assistance to technical translation staff. Perform technical translations as needed. Requires Bachelor’s in translation or related field (including English); 2 years exp. in a technical translation field; must be fluent in English & Japanese, & must be able to pass appropriate company-administered test. 8am-5pm, M-F; $50,000/year. Respond by resume to James Shimada, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Employment & Training Division, Tower II, #400, 1515 Arapahoe, Denver, CO 80202, & refer to Job Order #CO4645388.

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**ATA’s Document on Request Line**
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Need a membership form for a colleague? Want the latest list of exam sites? Call ATA’s Document on Request line, available 24-hours a day.

For a menu of available documents, please press 1 at the prompt, or visit ATA’s Website at http://www.atanet.org.
ATA’s Accreditation Program: Getting Ready for the New Millennium

by Shuckran Kamal, Accreditation Committee Chair

Significant efforts have been underway to place ATA’s accreditation program in a position that would enable it to continue improving its services to the membership. To this end, this short article, which includes the text of a proposed, revised Mission Statement for the Accreditation Committee, hopes to launch a constructive and purposeful exchange of information and ideas about the program. Members of the Accreditation Committee will be using this forum in the coming months to express their ideas, concerns, aspirations, and other opinions. It is my hope, as current chair of the Accreditation Committee, that ATA members who are interested in and concerned about the accreditation program will do the same.

It seems appropriate, therefore, for the purpose of launching this column to print here a proposed, revised Mission Statement for the Accreditation Committee.

Proposed revisions appear below in bold, italic letters. The text of this Mission Statement, which is currently being considered by Committee members, is based on a mission statement that was revised in November 1996. The proposed text, which was submitted a few weeks ago to the president of ATA, reflects to a certain extent some of the changes that have taken place in the Accreditation Committee during the past two years. It is also the product of limited e-mail discussions on the subject among Committee members, who plan to discuss the proposed revisions at their next meeting late in the spring. At that time we hope to adopt a version of that statement.

If you wish to comment on the Mission Statement, we invite you to do so in writing. Please mail your comments to the Chronicle editor, and mark the lower front of the envelope with the phrase, “ATTN: Accreditation MS.” We thank you in advance for your input, and we look forward to receiving your comments, which we hope will enrich our discussion.

The Mission Statement

In order to achieve the American Translators Association’s stated purpose of formulating and maintaining standards for professional competence, it is the mission of the Accreditation Program, which is administered by the Accreditation Committee, to administer training and testing services to members of the American Translators Association and to issue Accreditation Certificates to individuals who meet the standards for professional competence set by the American Translators Association. To accomplish that mission, the ATA Accreditation Committee shall undertake the following tasks:

To establish working groups that perform the following functions:
1. Prepare and evaluate practice tests so that interested candidates may receive marked copies of these tests and better determine their chances for success in the accreditation examination.
2. Prepare and evaluate examinations for translator accreditation from certain foreign languages into English, and from English into certain foreign languages. Each examination shall contain one passage in each of the following five categories: general, scientific/medical, semi-technical, business/legal, and literary. New examination passages shall be prepared at least once a year in all language pairs.

To standardize test selection criteria for exams and grading practices among graders in all the language combinations.
To offer graders workshops to help them maintain and sharpen their skills.
To develop relations with sister associations in other countries with a view to cooperate with them on accreditation matters and/or streamline accreditation policies and practices.
To review the Accreditation policy periodically to make sure that it remains effective and relevant and to recommend changes as necessary.

To issue a certificate of accreditation to each candidate who successfully completes the examination.
To take all necessary measures to ensure that reviews of examinations for unsuccessful candidates who request a review during the specified time and pay the appropriate fee are conducted as expeditiously as possible in a manner that is thorough, careful, and objective.

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2000 ATA Editorial Calendar

Here is the Chronicle editorial calendar for the coming year. Letters and articles are encouraged. You can find submission information on page 4.

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<th>April</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>October</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Terminology</td>
<td>Focus on the Client</td>
<td>Focus on Freelancers</td>
<td>Focus on the Law and</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Languages: Nordic</td>
<td>Language: Portuguese</td>
<td>Translating/Interpreting</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>November/December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Literary</td>
<td>Focus on Science and</td>
<td>Focus on Agencies,</td>
<td>Focus on Training and</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
<td>Bureaus, and</td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Languages: Slavic</td>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>Languages: Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language: Japanese</td>
<td>Diffusion</td>
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Upcoming Accreditation Exam Information

California
May 20, 2000, San Francisco
Registration Deadline: May 5, 2000

Florida
September 23, 2000, Orlando
Registration Deadline: September 8, 2000

New Mexico
May 20, 2000, Albuquerque
Registration Deadline: May 5, 2000

Oregon
August 12, 2000, Portland
Registration Deadline: July 28, 2000

Colorado
May 20, 2000, Boulder
Registration Deadline: April 28, 2000

Massachusetts
April 30, 2000, Boston
Registration Deadline: April 14, 2000

New York
May 6, 2000, New York City
Registration Deadline: April 21, 2000

Puerto Rico
April 1, 2000, San Juan
Registration Deadline: March 17, 2000

District of Columbia
May 13, 2000, Washington, DC
Registration Deadline: April 28, 2000

Michigan
April 8, 2000, Kalamazoo
Registration Deadline: March 25, 2000

North Carolina
June 4, 2000, Pinehurst
Registration Deadline: May 19, 2000

Texas
May 6, 2000, El Paso
Registration Deadline: April 21, 2000

Florida
September 23, 2000, Orlando
Registration Deadline: September 8, 2000

Ohio
May 6, 2000, Brecksville
Registration Deadline: April 21, 2000

Washington
April 29, 2000, Seattle
Registration Deadline: April 14, 2000

Registration for all accreditation exams should be made through ATA Headquarters. All sittings have a maximum capacity and admission is based on the order in which registrations are received. Forms are available from the ATA Website or from Headquarters.

Please direct all inquiries regarding general accreditation information to ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following people who have successfully completed accreditation exams:

English into German
Mirjam E. Benneker-Mion
Villa Grande, CA
Rosemarie S. Greenman
Knoxville, TN

English into Spanish
Rosalba Ordoñez Palacino
Bogota, Colombia

Gudrun E. Huckett
Albuquerque, NM
Ulrike Wiesner
Alexandria, VA

Jeffrey A. McCabe
Pfaffenhofen, Tirol, Austria

The Active Member Review Committee is pleased to grant active or corresponding status to:

Giovanni Maragno
Edith Matteson
Egemen Bagis

ATA BOOK ON TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Translating and Interpreting Programs in America, A Survey is now available from ATA. Compiled and edited by Bill Park, this 68-page publication gives the contact names and course offerings for degree and certificate programs given by schools throughout North America. This is the updated and expanded version of Park’s Translator and Interpreter Training Programs in the U.S. The cost is $20 to members and $25 to nonmembers. For more information or to order, contact ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100; fax: (703) 683-6122; or e-mail: ata@atanet.org.
Plan now to attend ATA’s Annual Conference. Join your colleagues for an exciting educational experience in Orlando, Florida.

ATA’s 41st Annual Conference in Orlando will feature:
- Over 120 educational sessions offering something for everyone;
- A Job Exchange area for individuals to promote their services and for companies to find the translators and interpreters they need;
- Exhibits featuring the latest publications, software, and services available;
- Opportunities to network with over 1,200 translators and interpreters from throughout the U.S. and around the world; and
- Much more!

The Registration Form and Preliminary Program will be mailed in May to all ATA members. The conference rates are listed below—with no increase for 2000. As always, ATA members receive significant discounts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference Registration Fees</th>
<th>ATA member</th>
<th>Nonmember</th>
<th>Student Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early-Bird (by 8/15/2000)</td>
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<td>$275</td>
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<td>$95</td>
<td>$140</td>
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<tr>
<td>After 8/15/2000</td>
<td>$230</td>
<td>$345</td>
<td>$80</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$115</td>
<td>$170</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-Site (after 9/15/2000)</td>
<td>$290</td>
<td>$430</td>
<td>$90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$145</td>
<td>$215</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Students and one-day participants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings.
All speakers must register for the conference.

Hotel Accommodations
The Wyndham Palace Resort, the host hotel, is conveniently located in the Walt Disney World Village Resort. The hotel, which is 20 minutes from Orlando International Airport, is within walking distance of many Disney attractions.
Conference attendees can register at the discounted rate of $138 single/double per night. This rate is good until August 27.
To make your hotel reservations, contact the Wyndham Palace Resort at 1-800-327-2990. Be sure to specify that you are attending the ATA Annual Conference.

Mark Your Calendar Today!
September 20–23, 2000

Once Again, ATA Offers the Services of Conventions In America To Help You with Your Travel Arrangements.
Conference Attendees Are Eligible for the Following:
- On American Airlines and Delta, save 5% - 10% off the lowest applicable fares; take an additional 5% off with minimum 60-day advance purchase. Travel between September 15-28, 2000 on America or September 18-25, 2000 on Delta.
- Call Conventions in America, ATA’s official travel agency, for the lowest available fares on any airline and discounts on the official carriers. Plus, receive free flight insurance of $100,000.
- As for car rentals, conference attendees are eligible for discounts through Alamo Rent A Car. Rates start as low as $28/day for economy models or $120/week, with unlimited free mileage. Check with Conventions in America personnel for more information.

Call Conventions in America at 1-800-929-4242, ask for ATA group #505. Outside the U.S. and Canada, call (619)232-4298; fax: (619)232-6497; Website: http://www.stellaraccess.com; E-mail: flycia@stellaraccess.com. Reservation hours: Monday-Friday 6:30am - 5:00pm Pacific Time.

If you call direct or use your own agency:
American: 1-800-433-1790, ask for Starfile #8690UE
Delta: 1-800-241-6760, ask for File #159252A
Alamo: 1-800-732-3232, ask for ID #252553GR

Plan now to attend the largest gathering of translators and interpreters in the U.S.
in English, says Filemón Sosa, than the literal crime against public health.

(Sp-E 10-99/13) (“tercerista”: Filemón Sosa looked in Pina & Pina Vara Diccionario de Derecho and discovered that this is a person who files an intervention lawsuit, “tercería” being intervention. That means that the subject of this query is an intervenor. Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, defines the latter as a person who voluntarily interposes in an action or other proceeding with the permission of the court.

(Sp-E 11-99/13) (roof replacement query cluster): Carl Schwanbeck tackled all three components of the query from page 68 of the November-December 1999 Inquirer. For (13.a), he points out that “la escuadria” is derived from “escuadra,” meaning right angle. The noun means the condition of being at a right angle. The whole phrase of (a) could be translated by him as Authorization is given for the replacement of roofs in disrepair, while retaining the placement and spacing of the beams, as well as their right angle to the roof.

In (13.b), “impermeabilización integral” is built-in or permanent waterproofing. A possible overall translation of this phrase: The shingles and a layer of reinforced concrete will be treated with permanent waterproofing and finished with a layer of clay.

The Translation Inquirer brings the name of Roy Wells front and center in just about every column as a valuable helper, but tribute should also be paid to a much more hidden partner, Per Dohler. The latter, of Barendorf, Germany, has been a wonderful proofreader of this column for quite a few years. Per, Prosit Neujahr! 

The Translation Inquirer Continued from p. 53
ATA Chapters

Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT)
P. O. Box 12172
Atlanta, GA 30355
Tel: (770) 587-4884

Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI)
604 W. Academy Street
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526
Tel/Fax: (919) 577-0840
CATI@pobox.com • http://www.ncgg.org/CATI
• Local group meetings held in Asheville, Charlotte, and Research Triangle Park, NC; and Columbia and Greenville/Spartanburg, SC.
• 1999 membership directory, $10; CATI Quarterly subscription, $12.

Florida Chapter of ATA (FLATA)
P. O. Box 830632
Miami, FL 33283-0632
Tel/Voice: (305) 274-3434 • Fax: (305) 387-6712
thlopez@netside.net • http://members.aol.com/flata2

Mid-America Chapter of ATA (MICATA)
P. O. Box 144
Shawnee Mission, KS 66201
Attn.: Meeri Yule
Tel: (816) 741-9441 • Fax: (816) 741-9482
http://www.mwis.net/~owls/micata.htm

National Capital Area Chapter of ATA (NCATA)
P. O. Box 65200
Washington, DC 20035-5200
Tel: (703) 255-9290 • E-mail: sbrennan@compuserve.com
• The Professional Services Directory of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association (NCATA) has gone online. It lists NCATA members and the services they offer, together with additional information that enables translation and interpretation users to find just the right language specialist for their projects. Bookmark http://www.ncata.org and check out the NCATA directory. If you maintain language-related Web pages, you may want to include a link to the directory. NCATA is always interested in comments and suggestions.
• April 1, 2000: Accreditation exam workshop, Cleveland Park Public Library. Contact Harvey Fergusson at HFergusson@aol.com for more information.

Map Key
- ATA Headquarters
- ATA Chapter
- Affiliated Group
- Other Group

Note: All announcements must be received by the first of the month prior to the month of publication (September 1 for October issue). For more information on chapters or to start a chapter, please contact ATA Headquarters. Send updates to Christie Matlock, ATA Chronicle, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; e-mail: Christie@atanet.org.
New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)
P.O. Box 4051, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051
Tel: (212) 334-3060 • E-mail: ms48@is.nyu.edu
http://www.nycircle.org

Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA)
1963 E. Sprague Rd.
Seven Hills, OH 44131
Tel: (440) 526-2365 • Fax: (440) 717-3333
E-mail: mondt1@ameritech.net • http://www.ohiotranslators.org

Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)
P.O. Box 14015
Berkeley, CA 94712-5015
Tel: (510) 845-8712 • Fax: (510) 883-1355
E-mail: ncta@ncta.org • http://www.ncta.org
• Telephone/online referral service. See searchable translator database on Website.
• 2000 NCTA Membership Directory available in print version for $25 or on diskette for $10. To purchase, mail remittance to the above address, or fax/telephone MasterCard/Visa number and expiration date.
• A Practical Guide for Translators, 1997 revised edition available for $10. To purchase, mail remittance to the above address, or fax/telephone MasterCard/Visa number and expiration date.
• NCTA General Meetings for 2000:
Place: University of California Extension, 55 Laguna Street, San Francisco
Dates: May 20, September 16, December 9

Southern California Area Translators and Interpreters Association (SCATIA)
P.O. Box 802996
Santa Clarita, CA 91380-2696
Tel: (818) 725-3899 • Fax: (818) 340-9777
104116.20@compuserve.com • http://www.scatia.org

Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MiTiN)
P.O. Box 852
Novi, MI 48376
Tel: (248)344-0909 • Fax: (248)344-0092
E-mail: suzukimyers@mindspring.com

Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)
P.O. Box 433
Salt Lake City, UT 84110
Tel: (801)583-1789 • Fax: (801)583-1794
E-mail: hannancanete@wans.net
http://www.stampscapes.com/utia

American Literary Translators Association (ALTA)
Box 83068
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
Tel: (214) 883-2093 • Fax: (214) 833-6303

Austrian Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA)
P.O. Box 13331
Austin, TX 78711-3331
http://www.aatia.org

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
P.O. Box 804595
Chicago, IL 60680
Tel: (773) 508-0352 • Fax: (773) 508-5479
E-mail: 74737.1661@compuserve.com

Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
P.O. Box 295
Eldorado Springs, CO 80025
Tel: (303)554-0280 • Fax: (303) 543-9359
eldorado@ares.csrd.net
• For more information about the online directory, newsletter, accreditation exams, and professional seminars, please visit http://ctn-web.org.

Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA)
606 John Anthony Dr.
West Chester, PA 19382-7191
devinney@astro.ocis.temple.edu
• 1999-2000 Membership Directory available for $10. Please make check payable to DVTA and mail your request to the above address.

El Paso Interpreters and Translators Association (EPITA)
1003 Alethea Pl.
El Paso, TX 79902
Fax: (915)544-8354
grdelgado@aol.com

Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators (FIT)
2021 Union Avenue, Suite 1108, Montreal, Canada
Tel:+1 (514) 845-0413 • Fax: +1 (514) 845-9903
E-mail: secretariat@fit-ift.org

Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA)
3139 W. Holcombe, Suite 140
Houston, TX 77025
Tel: (713) 661-9553 • Fax: (713) 661-4398
E-mail: 106463.1052@compuserve.com

Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)
7428 Summitview Drive
Irving, TX 75063
Tel: (972) 402-0493
http://www.users.ticnet.com/mita/

Nebraska Association of Translators and Interpreters (NATI)
4542 South 17th Street
Omaha, NE 68107
Tel: (617) 734-8418 • Fax: (617) 232-6865
E-mail: janbonet@neoramp.com

New England Translators Association
217 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02146
Tel: (617) 734-8418 • Fax: (617) 232-6865
E-mail: kkrone@tiac.net

New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association (NMTIA)
P.O. Box 36263
Albuquerque, NM 87176
Tel: (505) 352-9258 • Fax: (505) 352-9372
uwescroeter@prodigy.net • http://www.cybermesa.com/~nmtia
• 2000 Membership Directory available for $5. Please make check payable to NMTIA and mail your request to the address listed here, or contact us by e-mail.

Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS)
P.O. Box 25301
Seattle, WA 98125-2201
Tel: (206) 382-5642
info@notisnet.org • http://www.notisnet.org

Saint Louis Translators and Interpreters Network (SLTIN)
P.O. Box 3722
Ballwin, MO 63022-3722
Tel: (314) 394-5334
217 Washington Street
Ballwin, MO 63022-3722
Tel: (314) 394-5334 • Fax: (314) 527-3981

The Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia (STIBC)
Suite 1322, 808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6Z 2H2
Tel: (604) 684-2940 • Fax: (604) 684-2947
E-mail: stibc@vancouver.bc.ca • http://www.vancouver.bc.ca/stibc

The Translators and Interpreters Guild
Local 32100 of the Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers of America
8611 Second Avenue, Suite 203
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3372
Tel: (301)563-6450/Toll Free: (800)992-0367 • Fax: (301)563-6451
E-mail: transinterpguild@mindspring.com or itig@compuserve.com
http://www.trans-interp-guild.org
Since data rarely travel alone, there is such a strong inclination to associate the term with our friend “information” that many grammarians have resigned themselves to the use of a singular construction with “data”: “this data is important” for “estos datos son importantes.” English-speaking scientists and other experts, however, perhaps because so much of their technical terminology also stems for Latin and Greek, cling to the plural construction. So a medical or technical report will say “these data are important” instead.

Certain English terms of Latin origin may have both English and Latin plural forms: for instance, the plural form of “memorandum” can be either “memoranda” or “memorandums.” This term is one of the few exceptions to the rule in Spanish: according to the Diccionario de Dudas by Manuel Seco, you can say either memorando/memorandos or memorandum/memorandums, although some cases of memoranda as a Spanish plural have been spotted in documents at the Inter-American Development Bank.

It Works for “Cafeteria”

In other cases in English, a plural form is gradually leaning in the direction of a singular construction. For example, “criteria” is technically the plural form of “criterion” (criterio), a term of Greek origin, which, like “datum,” is not usually a loner. But again, the ignorant masses, with their annoying tendency to simplify everything, have taken to using “criteria” in the singular, as in “this criteria” instead of “these criteria.” However, such unorthodox usage is not likely to be appearing in print anytime soon.
### American Translators Association

**Officers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Ms. Ann G. Macfarlane</td>
<td>P.O. Box 60034, Seattle, WA 98160-0034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (206) 542-8422</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:president@atanet.org">president@atanet.org</a></td>
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<td>President-Elect</td>
<td>Mr. Thomas L. West III</td>
<td>Intermark Language Services 1175 Peachtree St., NE, Ste. 880 Atlanta, GA 30361</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: (404) 892-3388</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: (404) 892-1166</td>
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<td>email: <a href="mailto:twest@intermark-languages.com">twest@intermark-languages.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Mr. Eric Norman McMillan</td>
<td>1824 S Street NW, #304 Washington, DC 20009-6137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (202) 332-6093</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:ericnmcmillan@erols.com">ericnmcmillan@erols.com</a></td>
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**Directors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Allan W. Adams</td>
<td>Adams Translation Services 10435 Burnet Road, Suite 125 Austin, TX 78758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: (512) 821-1818</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: (512) 821-1888</td>
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