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Contemporary German Poetry and English Translation
By Ingo R. Stoehr

The twentieth century has been good for poetry written in German; indeed, contemporary German-language poetry is vibrant. This poetry is accessible to an American audience, both in the original German and in English translation. The translation of poetry, however, is always a challenge because it is not just interpretation but also experimentation.

Notes of a Bilingual Writer
By Grady Miller

Few authors have dared to translate their own works. Even those endowed with a good knowledge of other languages have recoiled from the task. From the vantage of 12 years of experience writing in two languages, the author of these notes talks about the perils and advantages of being one’s own translator.

Translation between Arabic and English: Points of Language and Style
Taysir Nashif

Certain grammatical rules and stylistic practices govern the translation of the verbal noun (al-masdār), prepositions and specification (ta'yīz) between English and Arabic, and of the active participle, the prefix “dis-” and “would” from English into Arabic.

Creole: Made in the Americas
By Alexandra Russell-Bitting

There is more to creole than just cooking.

The Spanish Language Division: Going on Four Years of Growth
By Alicia S. V. Marshall

As the new millennium rolls on, the Spanish Language Division continues to grow in number and to thrive in activities and enthusiasm.

Agreeing to Disagree
By Paul Coltrin

Agreement in number and gender is one of the most fundamental aspects of Spanish grammar. And it seems such a simple matter. Unfortunately, it not always is.

Spanish Spelling Reforms: Accents
By Margarita Friedman

This article describes the two new rules on written accents published in the 1999 edition of the Ortografía de la lengua española, Edición revisada por las Academias de la Lengua Española (Real Academia Española). It will review the old rules in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the changes that have taken place. Examples of words with confusing spellings will be provided to illustrate how the new rules apply.

Professing Our Spirit—Three Common Assumptions When Translating English into Spanish: Research into Meaning versus Form
By Marian B. Labrum

Three frequently asked questions when translating from English into Spanish have to do with meaning versus form. Poor translations from English into Spanish often reveal that the translator seems to follow the form of the source language text (English), rather than the meaning and appropriate form of the target language (Spanish). Consequently, certain translations don’t “sound” right, and the target audience of these translations is frequently confronted with a “third language.”
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Translating Neologisms in Spanish Technical Texts:
New Meanings for Old Words
By Daniel Linder ................................................................. 41

Spanish technical texts are full of neologisms created by assigning new meanings to old words. Unlike English, Spanish allows multiple terms to take on a single new meaning. Spanish>English translators have to sort through this proliferation of terms and translate them as a single exact term in English.

The Departamento de Español Urgente of the Agencia EFE: History and Objectives
By Alberto Gómez Font, Translated by Alicia S. V. Marshall ............... 43

The Departamento de Español Urgente was established in 1980 by the Spanish news bureau Agencia EFE. It is the first organization devoted to monitoring the use of the Spanish language, and the only consulting entity that provides advice about the correct usage of Spanish. It was born with the purpose of: unifying linguistic criteria between Spain and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas, fighting the onslaught of foreign terms bombarding Spanish, adopting guidelines for the Spanish transliteration of proper names originating from other languages with non-Latin alphabets, and solving linguistic problems confronted in the drafting of news articles. A tangible result of the Departamento de Español Urgente has been the Manual de Español Urgente, a publication already in its 12th edition, which compiles recommendations on the correct usage of Spanish so necessary for the media. Its purpose is to help avoid linguistic errors, to clarify doubts, and, in these times of great technical inventions that are inevitably coupled by linguistic innovations, to offer consistent criteria for the use of neologisms.

Localization, Internationalization, Globalization, and Translation
By Tim Altanero ................................................................. 47

Localization, internationalization, and globalization are defined and examined in an article outlining the history and practice of localization in the high tech industry.

Regaining Meaning
By Catarina Edinger .......................................................... 49

By critiquing a translation into Portuguese of a short story by John Steinbeck, the article focuses on the translation of apparently simple constructions which are in fact loaded with thematic or stylistic implications. It also discusses expressions that differ in Continental and Brazilian Portuguese. Should we have two Portuguese translations, one for each set of readers?
About Our Authors...

**Tim Altanero**, Ph.D., was trained as a linguist at the University of Texas at Austin and has been active in the localization field for several years. His languages are Spanish, German, Dutch, and Afrikaans, and he reports a thriving business in freelance Afrikaans translations. An avid collector of ethnic art, he has traveled widely, most recently to Bali, Guam, and Chile, in pursuit of tantalizing artifacts. He has lived in Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey, and Jordan, and can be reached at dr_tim@catholic.org.

**Paul Coltrin** is freelance English/Spanish translator and interpreter living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is accredited by the ATA (English<>Spanish) and is also a certified federal court interpreter. He may be reached at paulcoltrin@cs.com.

**Catarina Edinger** was born in São Paulo, Brazil and obtained her degrees from the University of São Paulo. At present she is chair of the English department at William Paterson University in New Jersey. She translated the nineteenth-century Brazilian novel *Senhora* by José de Alencar and, more recently, *The Other Side of Paradise,* a short story by Luiz Fernando Emediato. She can be reached at edingerc@wpunj.edu.

**Margarita Friedman** is an ATA-accredited (English to Spanish) freelance translator in Great Neck, New York, specializing in legal and medical translation from English into Spanish. Her major clients include Access Language Services, Bowne, AT&T, and TransPerfect Translation. She was educated in professional (law and medicine) translation at the University of Pittsburgh. She can be reached at inspanish@earthlink.net.

**Alberto Font Gomez** has been a philologist at the Departamento de Español Urgente of the Agencia EFE in Madrid, Spain since it was founded in 1980. He has been a frequent presenter, coordinator, and organizer of numerous international seminars and workshops devoted to the Spanish language for the press, neologisms, the Spanish language in sports, language and communication, the Spanish language in the new millennium, copyediting and journalism, Spanish and new technologies, Spanish and the media, and other topics. Since 1990, he has taught several courses to the staff of the Ministry of Public Administration on ways for modernizing the administrative language they use. He has also contributed to the Virtual Center of the Cervantes Institute. He is the author of the *Vademécum de Español Urgente* and co-author of the *Manual de Español Urgente* of the Agencia EFE in Madrid. He has coordinated and compiled several publications for the Agencia EFE on linguistic matters, among them *el idioma español en las agencias de prensa* (1990), *el neologismo necesario* (1992), and *el idioma español en el deporte* (1992). He is the founder and moderator of the discussion forum on the use of Spanish “Apuntes” at apuntes@eunet.es on the Internet. He can be reached at deu@efe.es.

**Marian B. Labrum** is an associate professor of Spanish and translation at Brigham Young University, and the director of the BYU Spanish Translation Program. She is ATA-accredited (English into Spanish), and a practicing freelance translator. She can be reached at marian_labrum@byu.edu.

**Daniel Linder** is a freelance technical translator. He is ATA-accredited (Spanish<>English) and has a Diploma in Translation from the Institute of Linguists (London). He has taught specialized translation at the Universidad de Salamanca in Spain, where he is currently doing doctoral research. He can be reached at dlinder@gugu.usal.es.

**Alicia S.V. Marshall** is an ATA-accredited (English >Spanish) translator and a native of Argentina. She is the supervisor for the Spanish Translation Section at Rotary International in Evanston, Illinois. She is the administrator of ATA’s Spanish Language Division, a U.S. correspondent for the language magazine *Idiomanía,* and served as the editor of *The CHICATA News* (the publication of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association). In 1994, she founded the Translators and Interpreters Practice Lab with her partner Yrma Villarreal for the purpose of providing training programs for translators and interpreters to enhance their professional skills through intensive hands-on practice and lab experience. She can be reached at AliciaMarshall@compuserve.com.

**Grady Miller** is the author of Un Invierno en el Infierno and the screenplay *The Strawberry Butterfly.* He studied at Columbia University and the University of Southern California, where he attended T. Coraghessan Boyle’s writing workshop. He has lived in Mexico for eight years, working as a reporter and translator. He can be reached at gradytrain@hotmail.com.

**Taysir Nashif** currently serves as chief of the Arabic Verbatim Reporting Section at the United Nations. From the Hebrew University of Jerusalem he earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in Arabic and political science. In 1974, he earned a Ph.D. degree in political science from SUNY-Binghamton. His published books and articles, both in Arabic and English, deal with Arabic and Hebrew translation, disarmament and socio-economic and political change, and intellectual freedom. His translation of Yair Evron’s Hebrew book, whose English title is *Israel’s Nuclear Dilemma,* into Arabic was published in 1993 by the Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing, Beirut. He served as professor of sociology at the University of Oran, Algeria. He can be reached at NashifT@UN.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 alexandrab@iadb.org.

**Ingo R. Stoehr** is currently teaching English and German at Kilgore College in Texas. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin and, since 1994, has been the editor of *DIMENSION².* He can be reached at IngoStoehr@aol.com.
Highlights from the March Board Meeting

Last month, I addressed the new member benefits—individual Website development and new insurance programs—that were approved by the ATA Board of Directors at its meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, March 4–5. Here are some other highlights from the meeting.

International Exam Sittings. After much discussion and reflection, the Board voted to lift the ban on international exam sittings. ATA President Ann G. Macfarlane discusses this issue in more detail in her column. Please see page 8 for more information.

New ATA Chapter. The Board unanimously approved the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society’s petition to become an ATA chapter. NOTIS, ATA’s 10th chapter, covers Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska.

Science and Technology Division to be Disestablished. The Board unanimously approved, although with mixed emotions, a motion to disestablish the Science and Technology Division at the end of 2000. In his report to the Board, STD Administrator Nicholas Hartmann wrote “...because the newly-created language-specific divisions of ATA are attracting so much attention and commitment, and because much of the information about translation and telecommunications technology—and indeed a great deal of valuable technical terminology—formerly provided by the (Sci-Tech) Division and its publications is now available through the Internet, ATA members may simply no longer need, or have the time and energy to sustain, an entire division dealing exclusively with scientific and technical subjects.” The Sci-Tech Division, which was founded in 1983, is one of ATA’s oldest divisions.

Science and Technology Information Committee Established. The Board also approved Hartmann’s proposal to create a Science and Technology Information Committee to provide members of the association with information about science, industry, and technology that enhances their capabilities as translators and interpreters, and of facilitating the exchange of such information among members. Plans call for STIC to work closely with the Translation and Computers and Terminology Committees on various projects. Macfarlane appointed Hartmann chair of the committee.

ATA Honorary Membership. The Board approved the selection of Jo Thornton and Don Gorham as honorary members. Both long-time members have done much to promote the ATA and the translating and interpreting professions. (Please see Macfarlane’s April 2000 Chronicle column for more information on Thornton and Gorham.)

The next Board meeting will be June 10–11 in Toronto, Canada. As always, the meetings are open to the membership. If you would like a copy of the minutes of the Alexandria meeting, please contact ATA Headquarters.

Mailing List for Chapters and Groups

The Chapters Committee is pleased to announce its latest initiative, the creation of a mailing list to facilitate communication among the leaders of ATA chapters and regional groups. The ATACHapters@eGroups.com list will serve as a forum for discussing group-related issues in an environment limited to the leadership of the chapters and groups. Its purpose is to enable elected group representatives to exchange experiences, to learn from each other’s successes and mistakes, and to foster the growth and strength of their organizations.

The list will include one (or more) elected representative(s) from each ATA group who wishes to participate. In order to create a community of peers and maintain the conversation within the boundaries of common interests, access will be available only to qualified subscribers.

An invitation to subscribe to this list has been sent to all the groups listed in the Chronicle, and a number of requests for subscription have already been received. The list is a fertile ground for ideas, opinions, suggestions, debate. Those who have subscribed look forward to your group’s participation. If your group did not receive the invitation, or if it did receive the invitation and has not responded, please send the name(s) and e-mail address(es) of your representative(s) to Tony Roder (tony@well.com), the listmaster.
Experience is Treacherous, Judgment Difficult...

In the fifth century before our era, the Greek physician Hippocrates made a comment that could have been directed at the ATA Board. “Experience is treacherous, judgment difficult...” The modern subject for this aphorism? International accreditation examination sittings.

The Board took substantial chunks of the time set aside for its retreat and meeting in March to deliberate whether the suspension that had been temporarily enacted in July of 1999 to study this issue should be lifted. We relied on our experience, our judgment, and information from our members. Our deliberations were made more challenging by the fact that the survey conducted to give member views on the issue had yielded a 50/50 split. Given the fact that a quarter of the membership took part in the Survey—an extraordinarily high percentage—it is a statistically valid statement that our entire membership’s views are divided. In the end, the Board decided to lift the suspension.

Because this issue is so important to our membership, I am devoting this month’s column space to printing the two messages that were sent out by e-mail in March explaining our decision, so that everyone may be fully informed. The report on the Survey may be found on the ATA Website, or members may contact Headquarters to request a copy. For background information on the views held by those concerned about this issue, see also the August 1999 issue of the Chronicle, which printed a number of letters.

As part of these discussions, the Board also confirmed its commitment to helping meet the economic challenges of the present time through enhanced professional training opportunities, and targeted marketing of members’ services and the ATA. We are working on these goals and will advise as progress continues.

Thanks to so many of you who took the time to share your views with the Board through participating in the Survey, and who have subsequently sent us messages of concern. Your messages have been carefully read and taken into account. We appreciate members’ involvement and willingness to keep the Board fully informed.

To: All Members of the American Translators Association
From: The Board of Directors
Date: March 13, 2000
Subject: International Accreditation Survey and Board Decision

The International Accreditation Survey held last month produced an even split of 50/50 on whether to allow examination sittings to be held throughout the world, or within the United States only. The Board has decided to lift the suspension that had been enacted last year for the purpose of studying the issue. Here are the reasons why.

1. SURVEY RESULTS

The Board of Directors is grateful to all ATA members who took the time to submit their responses to the International Accreditation Survey prepared last month by Industry Insights, Inc. Industry Insights received a total of 1,875 completed forms, representing one quarter of the membership. There were three key findings:

1. What kind of organization do you think the ATA should be?
   National (U.S.): 24%
   National with an international orientation: 57%
   International: 19%

2. Among its members, to whom should the ATA give first priority in terms of protecting and defending interests?
   U.S. residents: 26%
   U.S. citizens: 12%
   All members equally: 62%

3. Where do you think accreditation examination sittings should be held?
   Throughout the world: 50%
   Within the U.S. only: 50%

2. BOARD DECISION

The Board of Directors carefully studied all the survey results, and the comments submitted, at its retreat and meeting last weekend. In response to the particular question of accredita-
tion examination sittings, the Board passed the following Resolution:

Whereas the ATA membership responses to the International Accreditation Survey were evenly divided between allowing examination sittings in the United States only and allowing them throughout the world, thus placing the burden of a decision squarely on the Board; and

Whereas all examination sittings other than those offered during the Annual Conference are at the initiative of ATA members and do not represent a significant cost to ATA Headquarters; and

Whereas Section 3 of Article III of the ATA Bylaws states that corresponding and associate members have all the rights and privileges of active members except the right to vote (for associate members) and to hold association office and to serve on the Board of Directors or standing committees, and the Board views the right to organize a local examination for the convenience and reduced travel costs of members to be an important right of ATA membership; and

Whereas a majority of the responses from the ATA membership supported treating all ATA members equally in terms of protecting and defending their interests;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the suspension on scheduling accreditation examinations outside the United States be lifted.

3. RELATED ISSUES.

The Board of Directors would also like to bring the following to the attention of ATA members:

A. The President, with the concurrence of the Accreditation Committee Chair, has arranged for Michael Hamm to conduct a review of the ATA Accreditation Program. Mr. Hamm has years of experience in assisting certification organizations, accrediting bodies, and national associations in improving their programs. He was the executive director of the National Organization for Competency Assurance for eight years, and also managed the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, the primary national accreditation body for certification organizations and their programs. This review will look at various policy issues surrounding the Accreditation Program and will provide suggestions for consideration by the Board of Directors at its June meeting.

B. The President has appointed Dr. Jiri Stejskal, an ATA member, as a volunteer to supervise an International Certification Study. This study will review information already gathered and collect new information from national organizations outside the United States about their certification and licensing programs, and explore the possibilities for reciprocal arrangements.

C. The Report on the International Accreditation Survey, showing the percentage answers to each question in detail, will be available on the ATA Website this coming week. The Board will continue to review the additional comments submitted and to consider further steps which may be warranted on the basis of the Survey results.

D. As always, members who wish to propose changes in the privileges accorded to any given class of members of the association may do so by proposing an amendment to the Bylaws. Article XIV of the Bylaws describes the procedure for amendment, and may be found in the text of the Bylaws printed in the back of the Membership Directory.

The Board thanks all members who participated in this Survey and provided significant input for the Board decision.

Letter to ATA Members
March 24, 2000

Dear ATA member:

The Board of Directors of the American Translators Association has received some communications about the recent Survey on international accreditation examination sittings, and the subsequent Board decision on this subject. The Board has asked me to pass the following comments and clarifications to our ATA members.

Continued on p. 10
From the President Continued

1) A SURVEY, NOT A VOTE. As was explained in the initial e-mail message that was sent out on February 14, this survey was not a referendum or a vote. The ATA Bylaws do not provide for the type of vote known as a referendum. Rather, it was an undertaking by the Board to learn the views of a substantial portion of the membership, in order to make a decision on the question of international examination sittings. For further information on voting, see Item #7 below.

2) TIMING OF THE SURVEY. The Board believed that it was important to have the Survey results in time for the March 4-5 Board meeting. As you may know, this issue was first raised a year ago, in March 1999. In July 1999 the scheduling of all international examination sittings was suspended in order to study the issue. Because the Forum held at the ATA Annual Conference did not produce a decisive opinion one way or the other, the suspension was continued until March. At the March 2000 meeting, this issue had been “on the table” for a year, and the Board felt that a year was sufficient time to reach a final decision.

3) DISTRIBUTION OF THE SURVEY. The ATA conferred with Industry Insights, Inc., a professional polling firm that had conducted the Compensation Survey last year, in order to decide how to do the survey. Industry Insights advised that since 83 percent of our members had an e-mail address, an e-mail poll would have the best chance of success. We also arranged to distribute the poll by fax and postal mail to members who had not provided the ATA with an e-mail address.

4) MISSED MEMBERS. The Board apologizes to any member who did not receive the Survey. However, a very substantial number of members did receive the Survey and did fill it out. The Survey was sent to every member for whom we had an e-mail address (6,299 members). It was faxed to every U.S. resident for whom we had a fax number but no e-mail address (550 members) and it was mailed to every remaining member (584 members). Over 25 percent of ATA members—1,875 people—returned their forms, which is an unusually high rate of response for any such survey. Industry Insights has confirmed that the results are statistically valid. This response rate means that the Survey does give a fair picture of the association’s views.

5) DIVIDED OPINIONS. The Survey results (now posted on the ATA Website) confirm the Board’s anecdotal impression that the membership is divided on this issue. At the Forum in November, equal numbers spoke on both sides of the issue. Messages the Board has received have been passionate on both sides of the issue. The comments submitted with the Survey were very strong on both sides of the issue. Late entries also have been received on both sides of the issue. There is not a clear consensus on one side or the other.

6) RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP. The only ATA examination sittings offered by the association itself are those given at the Annual Conference. Under the Bylaws all members—active, associate, or corresponding—have the right to take accreditation examinations. By prohibiting members from organizing examination sittings in certain geographic locations and not in others, we would be restricting the rights of ATA members. The ATA is an association governed by the laws of the State of New York, and by our own Bylaws. Given this situation, the Board saw no alternative but to lift the temporary suspension on international examination sittings. In the Board’s view, the clear preference expressed by the membership that all members be treated equally was further reinforcement for this decision.

7) PROVISIONS FOR CHANGE. Members of the ATA who do not agree with the provisions of Section III of the Bylaws on the rights and privileges of members have the right, now or at any time, to propose an amendment to

Continued on p. 12
Reviewing the Proposals

The educational sessions are the core of ATA’s Annual Conference. These sessions are planned and presented by volunteers. I am always impressed by the breadth and depth of these presentations. This year will be no different as the sessions begin to take shape for ATA’s 41st Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, September 20-23.

As the conference organizer, I am responsible for scheduling the presentations. The process began at last year’s conference in St. Louis, where the call for papers was announced. The deadline for submitting a conference presentation proposal was March 1. I am happy to announce that we have received over 100 proposals and are now in the final stages of reviewing them.

This year, I enlisted the help of the division administrators and committee chairs to review and schedule the proposals related to their field. I think it is important to get input from these experts/leaders. They have guided me on the tentative order and grouping of presentations. In addition, I will be working with them to fill any gaps where presenters are needed for important or “hot” topics that have not been proposed.

This is probably as good a place as any to emphasize the fact that the conference presentations are given by volunteers. (The pre-conference presenters are paid an honorarium for the extra time and effort required in conducting a three-hour seminar.) We encourage all to share their knowledge and experience with their colleagues. By sharing information, we are all doing our part to better the profession.

In addition, each year I hear comments about repeating some sessions from the previous year. This is done for a very good reason. Usually, 40- to 50-percent of the conference attendees are first timers or did not attend the previous year. ATA is very fortunate to have a dedicated group of members who enjoy giving presentations and do a good job of it.

The tentative schedule will be included in the Preliminary Program, which will be mailed to all members in June. Due to cancellations, additions, and refinements, this schedule will be different from the Final Program. Of course, I will try to limit the changes as much as possible, but people do get sick or have work conflicts and are unfortunately unable to attend. Therefore, we continue to accept presentations, even though we are way past the deadline, because we do get cancellations. (If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please contact ATA Headquarters (703) 683-6100 or visit the ATA Website at http://www.atanet.org.)

Finally, I would like to thank those who have submitted proposals and those who have reviewed them. Your efforts continue to make the ATA Annual Conference the best professional development opportunity available to translators and interpreters.

ATI

Expresión Internacional—the 12th Seminar for Spanish Interpreters

Expresión Internacional will present the 12th Seminar for Spanish Interpreters in Madrid (Spain) on July 10-21, 2000. Following an initial diagnostic session, this intensive seminar uses the latest media and most current content to customize instructional materials. Instructor-led peer discussions will help participants hone their interpretation skills.

Expresión is the European provider of interpreter training for the United Nations and associated UN agencies. The European Union’s demand for interpreters in various language combinations and specialties is placing a premium on university-trained and field-experienced interpreters. This seminar aims to bridge the gap between formal classroom training and real-life practice.

For additional information and reservations, please contact Teresa Filesi at Expresión Internacional at 34-91-657-0182, E-mail: or Antonio Gavilanez at (770)772-9885, E-mail: gavilant@aol.com
those Bylaws. Article XIV of the Bylaws gives the appropriate procedure. Such an amendment, if proposed according to the proper procedure, would be voted on by the membership at the Annual Meeting in September. This right, like other membership rights, will be supported by the ATA in the usual way (publication of information and opinions in the Chronicle and inclusion on the ballot for the Annual Meeting).

8) FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION. The Board of the ATA is made up of a diverse group of volunteers who serve without pay. Board members are translators, interpreters, freelancers, company owners, and educators—the colleagues and peers you elected to make decisions like this one—who have struggled with this issue for a year now. We have taken this issue seriously and have not made our decision lightly. We recognize that there are several difficult issues clustered around the question of whether to prohibit international accreditation examination sittings. We continue to study the responses that were submitted with the Survey, and to consider the points that were made very seriously. The decision to commission a policy review of the Accreditation Program, and the study on International Certification that is now being conducted, are part of the Board’s response to these concerns.

We ask your understanding that these are not easy issues, and people of good will can have different views. The Board will continue to try to direct the association in ways that best serve all members in their areas of concern, in accord with the purposes of our Bylaws.

I hope that this letter has clarified some of the issues pertaining to the Survey and the Board decision. Thank you to those of you who have taken the time to share your views.

Sincerely yours,

Ann G. Macfarlane
President

Mark Your Calendars!

ATA's 41st Annual Conference is September 20-23, 2000
See page 69 for more information.
Letters to the Editor

Awareness Raising: Unraveling the Coat of Invisibility Around Translators and Interpreters

One thing that is undeniable in the translation and interpreting profession is that our field is changing very quickly. Still, the public’s awareness of this profession is not keeping pace with the times, and translators and interpreters continue to maintain a low profile with little visibility in society. It is up to us to do something in order to raise the public’s awareness of the important role that our profession has always played in society, especially in the globalized world of today.

In fact, over the years translators and interpreters have been content to remain anonymous, unseen, invisible, as though surrounded by a “coat of invisibility.” Books of literature are translated into other languages, resulting in an incredible work of creativity and genius, yet the name of the translator barely gets mentioned or noticed. Simultaneous interpreters do their magic in conferences and courtrooms, however, many people have little knowledge of the creative genius that it takes to accomplish this kind of job.

All this results in an utter “unawareness” on the part of the public as to what translation and interpreting are or entail. The average user of translation products is not a discriminating consumer. Remember when the average user of translation products is not a discriminating consumer. Remember when the average user of translation products is not a discriminating consumer.

What is the Awareness Initiative? This, again, is a grass-roots initiative by members of our profession all over the world. Their goal is to organize a World Translation Awareness Week, toward the end of 2000, in order to promote the translation and interpreting profession in various types of media. The most prominent issues will be to emphasize the creative aspects of translation and interpreting and the importance of quality in what we do.

The community that has been most involved in organizing this initiative is Translat2000, a Web community for educators, trainers, and practitioners in the translation and interpreting profession. The community can be found at http://www.translat2000.com (follow the link to Awareness Week).

World Translation Awareness can be a dream for the new millennium, and with good effort and solid collaborative action, we can take long strides in making that dream come true.

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Ad-Hoc World Committee for Translation Awareness

Open Letter to President Clinton
February 20, 2000

William Jefferson Clinton, President
The United States of America
White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We, the Ad-Hoc World Committee for Translation Awareness, are professional translators, interpreters, researchers, managers, and users of machine translation. In your State of the Union Address on January 27, 2000, you said, “Soon researchers will bring us devices that can translate foreign languages as fast as you can talk.”

We respectfully point out to you, Mr. President, that your assertion is both misleading and harmful. It is possible that people, upon hearing what you have said, will be under the mistaken impression that translators and interpreters will soon become obsolete. If that happens, this will cause harm to the professional standing of countless hard-working people all over the world who earn a living as translators and interpreters.

The potential harm in your statement comes less from what is said than from what is omitted. Omitted here is the fact that, regardless of how “smart” machines may become, there is a creative aspect of language that will always remain beyond the capabilities of machines. Human speech can become accessible to machines only if language is constrained, tamed, and stripped of much of its creative power of expression.

Totally absent, also, is the issue of quality. Machines can provide only a certain level of interpretation and translation, mostly through word and phrase replace-

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Upcoming Conferences and Educational Programs

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.

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, 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, Gouadec (University of Rennes), who is director of the 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, 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/aiti.

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

Open to members of professional associations, students, translator trainers, employers. The event is designed: to provide an overview of the best professional practices; to identify proposals, initiatives, and models for specialist translator training along truly professional 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 the 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.

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/languages/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.rrss06.gouv.qc.ca/english/colloque/index2.html.

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ment with a grammar check. But what translators and interpreters do is much more than that. The human creative capacity for sensitive nuance, intricacy of context, delicacy of mood, and limitless variety of expression is hopelessly beyond the grasp of artificial emulation. It takes the innate ability of translators and interpreters to say whether a particular series of words can render the originally expressed thought with grace, elegance, and accuracy.

Translation problems—such as how to convey just the proper tone when addressing an authority figure in Korea; what strategies to use in Arabic when addressing women so that men will not feel excluded; how to select appropriate terms that best enhance a product’s image in a translation for a marketing campaign; how to find just the right words to translate the precise meaning of speech acts; how to distinguish between inclusive and noninclusive “we” in languages that make such distinctions—such are problems that translators confront on a daily basis. Solutions to those problems will not be found in translation machines. Just as a dictionary can be a useful tool but cannot dictate which words to use in a given context, translation machines can be a useful tool but can never replace the talent, experience, and perceptive insight of a translation professional.

Translators and interpreters develop their skills through years of hard work, and they need talent, ingenuity, creativity, and sheer grit to succeed in this difficult and highly competitive profession. As a comparison, consider the work that it takes to put together a State of the Union Address: I can only imagine that every item is carefully examined, not just for accuracy, but also for appropriate and effective expression. If that Address were to be translated into a foreign language, the same kind of

Continued on p. 54
Contemporary German Poetry...

As I look over the more than 20 entries on German-language poets I prepared for the forthcoming Routledge Who’s Who in Twentieth-Century World Poetry, I again realize that the twentieth century has been good for poetry written in German—especially since the limited space in an encyclopedic work makes us painfully aware of the great number of authors who should also have been included.

Of course, the number of German poets who have been embraced by world literature to the extent that Kafka has been for prose still remains very small. It might even be argued that for the twentieth century, this has been the case only for Rainer Maria Rilke and Paul Celan. Other major poets have primarily been appreciated for other achievements, for example, Ingeborg Bachmann for her prose and Bertolt Brecht for his plays. Still other major writers have been recognized mainly for their importance in the context of the cultural community in the German-speaking countries, including the poets Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Gottfried Benn, and Hans Magnus Enzensberger.

This short list of German-language poets also points to another trend that is characteristic for deciding who is “important” and who is not: the predominance of older or more established authors. In the list above, Enzensberger is the only contemporary German poet. At the opposite extreme, Hofmannsthal wrote most of his lyrical poems before 1900. In spite of this trend, it needs to be acknowledged that contemporary German-language poetry is more than simply alive and well: It is vibrant.

Yet German poetry has not been equally vibrant at all times. While the 1960s and 1970s saw a few important poetic works, poetry took a backseat to prose and theater. The 1960s were a time of political impetus and of a turn toward expressing everyday events in writing, which was evident in poems by Johannes Bobrowski, Günter Kunert, Sarah Kirsch, and Wolf Biermann in East Germany, and by Enzensberger and Erich Fried in the West. In the wake of challenging the political system, there was also a challenge to the literary system. Concrete poetry, though originating in the 1950s, peaked in popularity during the 1960s, and “texts” by writers such as Jürgen Becker and Helmut Heissenbüttel sought to overcome the boundaries between traditional literary genres.

Practitioners of more traditional and personal poetry, such as Rose Ausländer and Karl Krolow, still had a presence during the 1960s (with that decade’s emphasis on political writings) as well as during the 1970s (which were influenced by a new subjectivity). After a general disillusionment with the political agenda of the 1960s, the literature of the 1970s focused on subjective experience without losing sight of the political quality of the subjective. In West German poetry, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann exemplified such a focus by writing on the simplicity and dangers of everyday life. A similar disillusionment with the feasibility of political utopias was evident in East German poetry, ranging from Erich Arendt and Peter Huchel to Kunert and Kirsch.

...While poetry still reflected human vulnerabilities and uncertainties, it also displayed a renewed trust in the power of poetic form...

The lyric achievements of the 1980s laid the foundation for the revival of poetry during the 1990s. In contrast to the two previous decades with their distinct preferences in poetic innovation, the 1980s did not seem to have a strong preference. As a result, poetry ran the entire gamut from being subjective to being political or hermetic. While poetry still reflected human vulnerabilities and uncertainties, it also displayed a renewed trust in the power of poetic form, including traditional devices such as rhyme and traditional patterns such as the sonnet, and in the power of poetic experimentation. In addition to the established poets, a new generation of poets, born between 1950 and the early 1960s, made itself heard, for example, Thomas Kling in West Germany and Uwe Kolbe and Durs Grünbein in East Germany.

In 1989 and 1990, things changed. The Berlin Wall fell, Germany was reunited, and since then politics has been trying to deal with a redefined post-Cold War reality, representing both an ideological upheaval and a continuation of the post-industrial lifestyles of the information age that had defined the Western market economies. With all these changes,
Contemporary German Poetry and English Translation

poetry experienced a tremendous surge in popularity during the 1990s. Major newspapers started to print poems on a regular basis, and poetry reached out to popular culture in the form of poetry slams and Hip-Hop. It is possible to speculate that the success of German poetry in the 1990s was due to three factors. First, the broad practice of poetic forms during the 1980s led to an increased assuredness of how to handle language. Second, the new generation of poets that began emerging during the 1980s was characterized by a large number of outstanding poets. Consequently (and third), when the political landscape changed, many poets had a poetic language at their disposal with which they could do what poetry does best—invite their audience to share with them significant life experiences in their new reality. The audience in the U.S. has also been invited to share these experiences.

On the one hand, the contemporary poetic spectrum includes Hip-Hop poetry, which comes across as a perfectly tuned sound machine that generates alliterating and homophonic strings of words, combined in the staccato rhythm of an easy syntactic flow. The subject matter is everyday life, often presented with an ironic twist. Poetry meets performance art. In the best Hip-Hop tradition, the individual poem is integrated with music into a “number.” An outstanding German Hip-Hop poet is Bastian Böttcher, who was on tour throughout Canada and the U.S. in February and March of this year.

A lighter, more playful and poignant tone has been more widely used in German poetry of the 1990s, even in individual poems by authors such as Kolbe and Enzensberger, whose work is usually defined by a more serious tone. These writers use the suppliance of existing language to approach new realities. For example, continuing his own tone of radical subjectivity, Kolbe combines his interest in poetic traditions with a more prosaic tone, as can be seen in the following haiku: “Civilization / is varied. Only the brute / yearns for the One thing.” In addition to longtime practitioners of epigrammatic poetry, such as Peter Rühmkorf and Robert Gernhardt, young authors participate in the cheerfulness and boldness of such poetry. They often do so with touches of black humor, as can be seen in works by Albert Ostermeier, Dagmar Leupold, and Franz Hodjak (an author of the middle generation).

On the other hand, the contemporary poetic spectrum is largely defined by poetry that is based on a sense of being part of an artificial world from which the poet distances himself or herself. However, there is a wide range of individual styles, and this distance can be expressed in a variety of ways, such as indifference or sorrow. These poems assess new realities while also testing language and, if necessary, developing new language.

For example, elements of life in the fast-paced world of technology have entered poetry to the extent that technological and artificial worlds have replaced nature as a reservoir of imagery. However, nature still plays an important role in German-language poetry, but it no longer functions as an absolute. Nature has evolved into an image of sorrow, uncertainty, and endangerment in poems by Sarah Kirsch, Helga M. Novak, and Ulla Hahn. The following poets exemplify the two extremes that have been taken in approaching nature. Michael Donhauser’s poems in the collection Von den Dingen (About Things, 1993) attempt to put nature back into the center of linguistic examination, but they are the exception in recent German poetry. The other extreme position is held by Franz Josef Czernin’s natur-gedichte (1996), which assumes nature to be a projection of the human mind.

Barbara Köhler’s poems show a displacement of nature in favor of technology or man-made objects. In her programmatic poem Blue Box, language fragments record (in a correspondingly fragmentary process) a relationship—perhaps suggesting that, like actors in front of a blue screen, various contexts can be added to the poem’s fragmented recording (like a black box). Thus, the new language of a technological world is a blue box.

One way of evoking a new language consists of writing experimental poetry along the lines of works by Friederike Mayröcker or Oskar Pastior. Thomas Kling is one of the major poets in this tradition to emerge during the 1990s. At the surface level, his poems are (except for his most recent collection) characterized by the destruction of linguistic forms (for examples of unorthodox spellings and hyphenation, please see below); however, while this suggests our disparate experiences of our own world, intelligible images emerge under the surface. Another way of suggesting the world’s complexity is through the use of marginal notes or an appended annotation that interacts with the “main” text of the poem. This technique has been used by
what constitutes a “good” (or adequate) translation varies with its place in history.

It is my belief that at the core of the literary project lies the creation of imaginary worlds. Simply put, this implies that the reader of the original text and the reader of the translation should “see” the same imaginary world. So what was it that I saw in the context of Voltenschläger? It could be a proper name; however, another version of the poem suggests the understanding of the word as a descriptive term because that poem’s title is Lustiger Veränderer. This view supports the reading of the phrase “eine Volte schlagen” as referring to a sleight of hand. But Piontek went one step further. By using a compound noun, he objectified a category, i.e., a certain kind of man. This man’s presence is felt as a threat to others in power struggles. He knows all the tricks; hence, he is a “Voltenschläger,” or a sleight-of-hand man.

The term “imaginary world” is metaphoric because it need not be understood in a straightforward way.

... and English Translation

While it is still difficult to find American publishers for translations of German books, German-language poetry is also available in print in English translation. Several publications include translations from the German, such as the ATA’s own annual collection, Beacons. The 100-volume German Library, published by Continuum Press in New York, offers several volumes of poems in addition to volumes on individual authors (such as Rilke and Benn) that also include poetry. Most recently, a book of German poetry, edited by Charlotte Ann Melin and published in 1999, and a special issue of the literary magazine Poetry (October-November 1998) have also reflected the current revival of German poetry and the resulting increased interest in this genre. Dimension², the literary magazine that I edit, has always printed poems (in the usual bilingual format), and I am currently looking for funding for an issue devoted in its entirety to German-language poetry.

When it comes to translation, however, the question of which texts are available is not the only one to be asked. Of equal importance is the inquiry into the translation process itself because so much seems to be lost in translation. In fact, Elias Canetti once remarked that the only thing interesting about translation is what is lost. It is my opinion that the process in which things get lost is even more interesting because it tells us something about human imagination and communication. The individual areas that need to be studied include word reference, the poem’s texture, and cultural reference.

I have been keenly aware of the problematic nature of translation ever since I translated my first poems for publication more than 20 years ago. The poems were by Heinz Piontek, and one was titled Voltenschläger. I experienced first-hand what sounds self-evident in theory: Translation is always interpretation. Yet as a translator, I was also in the middle position between author and reader, since a translator’s job can be seen as re-writing and pre-reading. The processes of re-writing and pre-reading are culturally determined because the notion of

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that a literary work must refer to a reality. Even though literature often does refer to a “reality” outside the text, an important imaginary world is the linguistic text itself. The texture and rhythm of a poem create—together with the poem’s sheer physical presence on the page—that poem’s primary world, which needs to be adequately expressed in the translation. I am currently working with some poems by Thomas Kling from his 1996 collection morsch. These experimental poems react to what I have described above as new realities, and use a language that has been reshaped accordingly and that works on two levels. The first level consists of what might be called “eye dialect”: spellings that look unusual, but simply follow a different orthography without changing the pronunciation. Similar to the English spelling of “sez” for “says,” Kling spells “di” for the article “die” and “leism” for “leism” as well as “nachz” for “nachts.”

Another problem lies in translating references to elements that are specific to one culture. Translation is increasingly seen not as a simple movement from one language to another, but rather as a complex interaction between two cultural systems. Multicultural literature, which flourished in Germany during the 1990s, is of specific interest here. Many writers of various national and ethnic backgrounds have been writing in German in an attempt to establish a distinct identity that is multicultural, in the sense that it represents neither the author’s original nationality nor a German identity, as well as in the sense that it transcends both.

Zehra Çirak, a Turkish-born writer who lives in Germany and writes in German, is a good example of the mediation process between two cultures. One option for asserting her identity lies in the use of lexical choices that are highly idiosyncratic. The problems are evident, for instance, in her poems selected for a collection edited by Irmgard Ackermann and published by Inter Nationes in 1999. Since I was involved with the English edition of the book, Foreign ViewPoints—Multicultural Literature in Germany, I spent some time with Çirak’s poem Duden Ichden. A pun at various levels, the title refers to the standard German dictionary, the Duden. Since the first syllable of Duden is identical to “du,” the pronoun for informal “you,” the poet coined a neologism, “Ichden,” referring to her very own vocabulary: “I supply the wrong words / properly pronounced without error.” The title’s pun can only be approximated in English, but serendipitously that option exists because of one of the standard American dictionaries: Webster’s.

The English title Webster’s Youbster’s is problematic for several reasons. There is the change to plural, and the use of first person is aligned with the standard dictionary. On the other hand, it is also a great working solution that allows the translation to capture some of the original poem’s force. After all, translation is not just interpretation but also experimentation to the extent that the original text is experimental. This is the aspect in which prose and poetry translations usually differ. In the tight space a poem occupies on the page, it is difficult to steer around problems and find compromises that are not mistaken for translation errors. But therein also lies the challenge: to keep what is lost in translation as minimal as possible.
Notes of a Bilingual Writer

By Grady Miller

The Scene of the Crime

Most authors are wary about rereading their own published work. Hemingway considered such work a “dead lion” already hunted and done with. On the other hand, Walt Whitman returned to Leaves of Grass year after year, adding poems and sometimes blunting the effects of earlier versions. With nothing else to read on a train in Eastern Europe, García Márquez, who claims never to read his published books, picked up Cien años de soledad. At first he was impressed, but then was overcome with growing dismay at what he read. “I couldn’t believe all the things I saw that could have been done better” (Ref. 1).

Recently, I had the opportunity to reread and revise my first novel, Un invierno en el infierno, for a second edition. I found this to be both a painful pleasure and a pleasing torment, going over the printed pages with a surer footing in Spanish after having lived in Mexico, and with seven years of translation experience under my belt.

First published in 1988, Un invierno en el infierno was a trompe l’œil translation, right down to the footnotes stating “untranslatable pun.” At one point, the character Eric cries out, “The language of Shakespeare and utilitarian philosophers cannot contain my anguish” (Ref. 2). I thought this was a good strategy, since then people could blame any mistakes on a bad translation.

Some things were uncannily, if accidentally, on target: “La cogió en la ducha” (be seized her in the shower). Anyone with a passing knowledge of Mexican street Spanish knows that coger means more that to merely grab. I was ignorant of this at the time, but the obscene convergence gave the text a nice jolt. (More on the topic of bad words later.) On the other hand, naranjales lujuriosos (lusty orange groves) exemplifies English interference (Ref. 3). Luxuriant orange groves were what I had in mind.

When I wrote Un invierno en el infierno in 1987, I was living in a nondescript California suburb, a collection of flimsy houses, shopping centers, and trailer parks called Freedom. It was within driving distance of Big Sur, endowed with awesome natural beauty and snobbish resorts like Carmel and Pebble Beach—all of which figure largely in the novel. In hindsight, it is altogether fitting that Freedom be the cradle for a book that has the quest for freedom at its core. Un invierno en el infierno was meant as a warning from the so-called First World about the perils of having a McDonald’s on every street corner and the dark side of the American dream. Writing the novel in Spanish would help it cross many borders and find many readers.

Since the book was written in its entirety in California, I was at the mercy of dictionaries (musty Spanish-English dictionaries from the local library) to hammer out the expressions. These dictionaries contained the Spanish of Spain, and they led me astray on a number of points: offering the word palique for chit-chat, una pajarota for farse, caramba for wow—aberrations never to be seen or heard again, at least until the advent of a new edition. These Spanishisms had to be weeded out, one by one. The worst offender was a little green Spanish-English pocket dictionary from a Mexican press: the meaning for waive, for instance, appeared as saludar.

...This could be why polyglot writers prefer to leave the drudgery to other hands....Taking the same work, a gifted translator can make it even better...

Translating?

Henry James once remarked to Joseph Conrad when he saw Conrad’s first language creeping into his writing, “That’s not English, that’s Polish.”

Besides knowing Polish, Conrad had a total command of French, the most continental language, yet he never translated a word of his works into French. Indeed, there is an inborn resistance in authors, even when totally fluent in other languages, to translate themselves. Why is this? Here’s an illustration from my own experience. A friend in New York translated a few pages of my first book. Their beauty and penetration I could never hope to match, so adept was his translation. I only wish he’d finished the job. This could be why polyglot writers prefer to leave the drudgery to other hands and witness the miraculous birth from afar rather than be a midwife. Taking the same work, a gifted translator can make it even better.

Indeed, when talking about Borges’ Seven Nights, Eliot Weinberger did not hesitate to tell me, “my translation is better that the original.” When trans-
lating a book of lectures given in the 1970s, Weinberger had to do much factual research and separate deliberate Borgesian bluffs from the lapses of an elderly writer’s memory.

This brings up an ethical question: Is it ethical to make something better? It’s like the case of the child living with adopted parents who, in the long run, may be better suited for the child than the biological parents. And when the prize at stake is the elusive essence of poetry, the vibration of literature, the reader is grateful at the end of the day.

The author who perhaps most closely resembles my own case is Samuel Beckett, the Irish playwright. He lived in France and wrote many works, first in French and then in English, stubbornly claiming that he never translated any one of his works. Instead, he insisted that it was a labor of literary recreation. As a result, two virtually different writings were created. Rather than stigmatizing translation, I think Beckett’s overstating the case comes from an excess of poetic sensibility. He was not able to see the forest from the word-trees.

One scholar defines a successful translation as “one that, as far as possible, presents the same information as the original, interpreted and addressed to the reader in that same way, while adopting different strategies where necessary to meet the audiences’ needs” (Ref. 4). Under the heading of strategies, many different aspects come into play: cultural, linguistic aspects, as well as register, naturalness of dialogue, formality or informality, tone and tempo, paragraphing, and sentence length. Finally, there is the plastic material of language itself, and between one language and another there will be different choices of phrase and object. The skeleton may remain the same, but the skin, the epidermis, will differ and wear different colors. Add all this up, and you’re in the ballpark of literary recreation.

Going to Havana

When sitting down to recreate my story *The Havana Brotherhood*, written in English, it was a tall order indeed.

The Nicaraguan Rubén Darío said that an essential part of the poet’s task was “to take the advantages of one language and convert them into another.” If this is the case, then writing in one’s own language is to crowd all possible advantages in one place. If *The Havana Brotherhood* was well written, it was well nigh untranslatable. Unique constructions like “all-American” and “on-again off-again girlfriend” become “como un tipo americano,” and “su novia a ratos,” thus losing all its original flavor. The challenge was to recast it in another language without losing too much.

Cultural-specific elements, especially those having to do with American popular culture, had to go, of course. There is really no Spanish equivalent of “Dragnet.” Another phrase which would mystify Spanish readers, described the customs area of the Houston airport: “a cavernous hall like a computer-age Ellis Island.” That, too, was jettisoned.

*The Havana Brotherhood* concerns a fledgling New York stock broker vacationing in Mexico. He belongs to the league of American smokers for whom a Havana cigar isn’t everything, it’s the only thing. These coveted cigars can be acquired in Mexico, which Harry does, going to extraordinary lengths to conceal them on his person and smuggle them into the United States.

Ask yourself what aspects come into play in this passage:

The key to a well-enacted crime was to behave as normally as possible, stick to regular habits, yes sir. He had learned that from a hundred episodes of Dragnet. But what all the televised crimes left out was the sweaty, nauseous, tingling feeling, the awfulness that seized the body and pit of the stomach (Ref. 6).

La clave de un crimen bien realizado era comportarse lo más normal posible. Lo había aprendido de la televisión. Lo que todos los crímenes televisivos omiten, Harry se dio cuenta ahora, es la sudorosa y cosquillosa sensación, la horrible zozobra nauseabunda que agarraba el cuerpo y la boca del estómago (Ref. 7).

In a nutshell the theme is: What happens when an ordinary person, an innocent, gets enmeshed in the talons of crime, and what indescribable trials does the person suffer? Quite the opposite of the workaday indignance of a professional hit man who was once overheard in a lawyer’s office saying: “The law has me down for killing fifteen people, and it’s only been thirteen. Lawyer, set the record straight.”

There’s a scene with a Cuban woman who comes close to catching Harry with the box in his pants, asking “Do you have...
a bomb and are you going to blow up the plane?” Instead of reporting him, she has sympathy for his real dilemma. In doing the Spanish dialogue I unconsciously avoided Cuban accented dialect, because what she was saying was more important than how she said it.

Es riesgoso porque si los cachan vendiendo puros en el mercado negro, podrían pasar quince años en la cárcel.

It’s awful what people do to survive in Cuba. My brother works at one of the cigar factories and pays off the guard so they can carry boxes out in their clothes. Or they have somebody keeping watch, and from an upstairs window they throw the box to someone below. It’s a risky business because if they get caught selling cigars on the black market, they could go to jail for fifteen years (Ref. 1).

Si los cachan eventually became si los descubren. A mexicanismo has to be changed for a more direct term. In fact, it was pointed out at the St. Louis ATA Annual Conference that this is an americanismo deriving from the verb “to catch.” All this linguistic mestizaje suggests an important phenomenon.

The U.S. has witnessed the closest thing to Bolivar’s dream of a united America come true—every country’s borders dissolved into one great pan-American nation. The U.S.’s economic and political magnet has drawn Spanish-speaking people from diverse lands, from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Chile, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Argentina, Mexico (more countries than Theodore Roosevelt could shake his big stick at), all rubbing shoulders in major cities, mixing language, and blending and bending it. You will find South Americans picking up mexicanismos, thanks to the unubiquitousness of Mexican telenovelas.

Yet, I have been warned off Mexican Spanish by many in favor of a more universal Spanish, especially where basic understanding is hindered. This came vividly home when going over a text with a Salvadorian, he didn’t know the word banqueta meant sidewalk. They say acera. These are the effects of linguistic globalization.

Here is a personal peeve of mine. A number of American novelists get translated into Spanish from Spain. When they do, the result is often linguistic oppression from across the seas. For example, the word jilipollas, which sound about as threatening as your grandmother’s aunt, is used for cabrón.

Dirty Words

Dirty words have been the bane of many a translator, demonstrating ignorance and prudery.

You will remember The Treasure of the Sierra Madre even if you don’t remember its author, B. Traven, a mystery man.

Living half a century of exile in Mexico, his seclusion protected by fierce guard dogs, Traven eschewed photographs and claimed to be American born, and yet when his American publishers received his manuscripts, they were riddled by clumsy Teutonic oaths: “hell and demons alive,” “I unleash a thousand devils on you.” All of which had to be remedied (Ref. 5).

In this respect, The Havana Brotherhood gave me some dirty work.

In English:

Harry was the kind of man who wouldn’t jaywalk or park in a handicapped space. Yet, here he was with contraband on his ass.

In Spanish:

Harry era el tipo de persona que no cruzaría la calle donde no hubiera líneas pintadas ni se estacionaría en un lugar para menús válidos ni regresaría tarde sus libros a la biblioteca. Sin embargo, aquí estaba con contrabando en el culo.

Finding a translation equivalent for “ass” was a thorny problem, since I wanted to duplicate the coarse yet off-hand nature of American slang. It turns out that only the people in Spain will know what was intended. I recently learned that for some in Mexico culo refers to a divergent part of the anatomy, and yet another part for Central Americans. The true meaning was lost. Finally, I opted for the milder and less ambiguous trasero, sacrificing the alliteration of culo y contrabando.

In Traven’s case, two out of three sentences betrayed a Germanic structure. When translating The Havana Brotherhood from English to Spanish, there were changes in word order, flip-flops in subject and verb, and the sentence’s length in English. The

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Notes of a Bilingual Writer Continued

most notorious sentence-structure problem arose in translating The Last Words of Einstein, written first in Spanish and then into English. The long opening sentence capitalizes on all the advantages of Spanish, with subordinate clauses seamlessly flowing into the whole.

Apoya en la cabecera de la cama la despeinada cabeza con cabellera blanca de un conductor de orquesta que ha interpretado las notas más ignotas de la partitura del cosmos.

A literal translation: “Resting on the headboard was the head with the long hair of an orchestra conductor who had interpreted the universe’s most arcane notes.” This was a great challenge that required downright re-creation. The sentence acquired the flora of new adjectives to get its message across. It became: “On the pillow lies the wrinkled head wreathed in the flowing white hair of an orchestra conductor who has coaxed the universe’s most unfathomable notes.”

Playtime

When a work gets translated in the presence of its author, it not only gets re-created, but sometimes created. Cabrera Infante joined forces with his translator for Pavana para una infanta difunta, and the boisterous wordplay extended 30 more pages that the original. Considering that English is renowned for running shorter than the Spanish, this speaks of the magnitude of their feat. Also, when Borges and a young American collaborated on translating his later stories in the early 1970s, they created memorable lines that do not exist in the original Spanish version.

En el duro suburbio, un hombre no decía, ni se decía, que una mujer pudiera importarle más allá del deseo y la posesión... (Ref. 6)

It’s a far cry from:

Only a fairy would admit to thinking so much about a woman (Ref. 7).

Conclusion

The author as translator has the freedom to add and subtract, to reshape, amplify, and destroy. Slight, or gaping, variations may be noted in my translations. For example, in The Last Words of Einstein I threw out a clumsy headboard and replaced with an ethereal pillow. With this act of re-creation, the story benefits; it is one more chance to go over it, clean it up, and make improvements. With The Havana Brotherhood, I truly had the experience of English into Spanish and back again. In the process even the title changed, from Operation Castro to La cofradía de La Habana, and finally to The Havana Brotherhood.

I am now engaged in translating the short novel, Los rehenes de Veracruz, a tale of psychological horror that concerns sinister organ trafficking in the Mexican port of Veracruz (psychological being defined as: you imagine the blood, you don’t have to see it). When English readers discover Los rehenes de Veracruz, it will be called Outsourcing, and there will be cuts in some places and new additions sprout in others.

As the effort progresses, I am reminded time and again of Borges’ dictum: “The original was not faithful to the translation.” It is, in fact, the bilingual writer’s right and privilege to glory in unfaithfulness.

References
5. Ibid.
his article seeks to elucidate a number of linguistic and stylistic points encountered when a text is translated between Arabic and English, with a rather expanded treatment of the ways the Arabic verbal noun (al-masdar) is translated into English.

Translation Using the Arabic Verbal Noun (Al-Masdar)

When the Arabic verbal noun, al-masdar, is used to express a general meaning it is, according to the dominant practice, preceded by the definite article “ال”. The corresponding verbal noun in English comes, again according to the dominant practice, without the definite article. Thus, “الحياة” means life; “القوة” means punishment.

When the Arabic verbal noun is meant to express a particular being or thing, it comes without the definite article, and in this case its English equivalent is introduced with the indefinite article “a”: “قتل”. - a fighting; “استشهاد”. - a martyrdom.

English continuous tense, which denotes a state or an action, is usually translated into a verbal noun with the definite article. For instance:

Upon arriving to the train station: “الوصول إلى محطة القطار”.

Upon concluding the conference: “الانتهاء من اجتماع المؤتمير”. (In this case, the verbal noun is not introduced with the definite article because of the idafa construct).

In learning there: “في التعلم هناك”.

After coming to the house: “بعد الدوام إلى البيت”.

These practices and rules, however, are not always observed. There is no consistency in their application.

It is preferable to start with a suitable indefinite verbal noun, “نحو”, when translating English sentences which start with an indefinite verbal noun. For instance, in the following sentence: “A just peace will bring prosperity to the region,” it is preferable to say: “سيجلب إلى المنطقة الرفاهية — حسنات وازنات أو أقارات أو إقارات أو إقادات — السلام عادل، إن سلاما عادلا سيجلب إلى المنطقة الرفاهية”.

Some nouns in English express the meaning of the verbal noun and of the group or totality of members sharing the content of that noun. For example, membership, leadership, and following should be translated, respectively, as “القيادة”. “الإتباع”. “التابعون”. with allowance of inserting the article “ال”. before these nouns in the plural form: “الأعضاء مجموع”. and so on.

Word Redundancy

In some translations, there is word redundancy. For example, the translation of “We have taken ten weeks to get here” should be “استشرفا الوصول إلى هنا” and not, as sometimes erroneously used, “الأمر عشرة أسابيع لوصول إلى هنا” and not “استشرفا الوصول إلى هنا”.

Use of Prepositions

Sometimes prepositions are not properly used in translation. A different preposition or a clause is erroneously used for the preposition which should be used. For example, the sentence: “To generate sufficient resources to ensure construction,” should be translated “للتوليد موارد كافية ككفاية” and not “للتوليد موارد كافية من أجل البناء”.

A frequent error is the translation of “for” by the preposition “ل” in cases such as the following: “For many years”. This letter does not express the meaning of “for.” It is not a time adverb. The correct translation should be “طوال سنوات كثيرة” or “سنوات كثيرة طيلة سنوات” or “سنوات كثيرة”.

Some languages, like English, permit consecutive verbs and nouns to be followed by different prepositions. For instance: “He expressed his approval of and support for the resolution.”

In Arabic, it is erroneous to place in a consecutive manner two different nouns or verbs, where one is followed by a preposition and the other, being a transitive verb or a noun derived from

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Translation Between Arabic and English Continued

a transitive verb, does not need to be followed by a preposition. For example, the following structure is erroneous: رحب واستقبال الضيف: He welcomed and received the guest, as must be followed by the preposition ب. For the same reason, it is erroneous to say: ولقب بالضيف استقبال: He received and welcomed the guest.

The way out of this difficulty would be to mention the first verb/noun and then to mention the second verb/noun with the introduction of the needed changes. Thus, we can say: رحب بالضيف واستقباله: He welcomed and received the guest, والترحاب بالضيف واستقباله: Welcoming and reception of the guest. 

One more example. We should say: حماية الجمهورية وصياحيتها والدفاع عنها في: In the protection, keeping and defence of the republic, and not: عن الجمهورية في حماية وصياحيتها والدفاع.

However, there is another way to deal with this matter. In cases where nouns or verbs are followed, being regarded as transitive, by the same prepositions, or which, being regarded as transitive verbs, are not followed by a preposition, one can choose either the option of regarding both verbs or their derivatives as transitive or as intransitive. Thus, we can say: أكره وافقه: He acknowledged and accepted it, وافقه، أكره وافقه: His acknowledgement and acceptance of it.

One more example of verbs and their derivatives, which is both transitive and intransitive, is اكره (emphasized).

Active Participle and Placing of Words

Related to the indirect object of an active participle is the placing of words in a sentence. For the sake of clarity, it is advisable to place words in texts where, because of the fact that active participles derived from transitive verbs receive indirect objects, such placing makes a difference in terms of meaning. For example, in the phrase “The previous sessions of the working group,” it is preferable to use the following mode of translation: الدورات السابقة لل الفريق الحالة، as the latter translation means “The sessions which preceded the working group,” which is not what this phrase is intended to express.

One more example is انتخاب راغب للرئاسة. As is a transitive verb, then its active participle, راغب , received an indirect object of the الرئاسة. In this case, the phrase would mean an election which frightens the presidency, though conventionally it is translated as meaning “a startling election to the presidency.”

By the same token, the sentence يحكمي هذا، بالنسبة إلى ما precedes the working group, should be translated as “a method which disturbs work,” though the intended meaning is “a disturbing method of work.”

As the active participle of a transitive verb receives an indirect object, it would be erroneous to insert به بالنسبة إلى ما before the indirect object. In the following sentence, the phrase would mean an election which frightens the presidency, though conventionally it is translated as meaning “a startling election to the presidency.”

Translation of “Dis-”

In many cases, the prefix “dis-” conveys the opposite. It is, therefore, erroneous to translate words which start with “dis-” with this meaning into إعدام or عدم, as both these words have a neutral meaning. Thus, distrust should be translated as اضطراب or عدم الاحترام, and not as أكره or عدم الرأي. The phrase should be translated as اكره , and not إعدام.

Use of ان

It is an error which occurs in a considerable portion of Arabic writings to translate “to” as ان in sentences such as: ان اعدم المتكلم. The correct translation is: اعدم المتكلم.

Translation of “Would”

There are several ways to translate “would,” depending on its meaning. When “would” expresses conditionality, it is...
As visitors to this year’s annual meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in New Orleans strolled through the historic French quarter of the city, they may have marveled at the creole architecture, savored some creole cuisine, and noticed the distinctive Louisiana creole speech. What is this exotic “creole” we’re talking about? The term has a number of different meanings, which all ultimately refer to the colonization of the Americas and the various ethnic groups that took part in it.

The English term “creole” was borrowed from the French créole, itself derived from the Spanish criollo. The Spanish, in turn, was based on the Portuguese crioulo, which originally meant a slave born in his master’s house. English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish dictionaries all agree that “creole” can mean a black person born in the colonies (as opposed to Africa), a white person born in the colonies (as opposed to Europe), or any person or thing native to the Americas.

Local Flavor

In the southern U.S., especially in the Gulf states, a Creole (note the capital “C” when referring to a person) could be a white person descended from early French or sometimes Spanish settlers. This group, a crowd with ties to money and the Old Country, was focused mainly in New Orleans and preserved a characteristic form of French speech called Louisiana Creole.

Creole cuisine originally referred to more traditional French cooking, but is now associated with highly seasoned food, such as “shrimp creole,” typically prepared with rice, okra (an African vegetable known for its thickening properties, which is definitely not used in France), tomatoes, and peppers (I would recommend a nice, dry Chardonnay with that…).

Louisiana Creole should not be confused with “Cajun.” The Cajuns are the descendents of a different set of French speakers, originally from the Acadia region of Nova Scotia. After the English victory in Canada in the late 18th century, the Acadians came down the Mississippi and settled in rural Louisiana. In a linguistic mutation, their name evolved from acadien to “Cajun.” The Cajuns have their own dialect of French and a distinctively spicy cuisine.

Lingua Franca

“Creole” can also refer to a number of so-called “creolized” languages. Creoles developed in places like ports where, in order for speakers of many languages to communicate with each other, hybrid languages evolved from non-standard contributions by the different language groups.

“Haitian Creole,” for instance, is the creolized French spoken by the great majority of the inhabitants of Haiti. The creolized English spoken in Melasia is known as “pidgin,” which—believe it or not—means “business.” Papiamento, derived from Spanish and Portuguese, is the lingua franca in the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao.

The Creole State

Louisiana boasts particularly rich cultural roots. France and Spain took turns colonizing it before it became part of the United States. Native American, Anglo-American, and African American cultures have mingled to produce such distinctly American cultural treasures as jazz, zydeco, and Cajun music, to name a few. This would certainly be a fitting venue for a meeting of the American Translators Association.

For more information on Louisiana, surf to:
http://www.artsci.lsu.edu/poli/newla.html
http://www.crt.state.la.us/crt/cse/cse.htm

Haitian Creole:
http://babel.uoregon.edu/romance/rl407/creole/haitian.html

Note: This article was originally published in the March 2000 issue of Chasqui, the newsletter of the Inter-American Development Bank.
The Spanish Language Division: Going on Four Years of Growth

By Alicia S. V. Marshall

As the new millennium rolls on, the Spanish Language Division continues to grow in number and to thrive in activities and enthusiasm. The SPD, the largest division in the ATA family, celebrates with pride as it enters its fourth year of existence, with over 1,459 members in its ranks. However, numbers alone do not count. It is our activities and the enthusiasm shown by all our members that make our division such a great one.

...The SPD has taken some unprecedented steps and grown in leaps and bounds in recent times...

The SPD has taken some unprecedented steps and grown in leaps and bounds in recent times. We continue the momentum that was started after the division’s inconspicuous birth in November of 1996 at the close of the ATA’s 37th Annual Conference in Colorado Springs, when six intrepid and enthusiastic Spanish translators dared all challenges and secured authorization from the ATA Board to launch the SPD. The May issue of the Chronicle, in which the Spanish language is featured, gives me the opportunity to report on some of our great achievements during our short three and a half years of life in the ATA.

Intercambios, our most excellent newsletter, was first published in the summer of 1997, and was the first service provided to the SPD membership in its early days of existence. It was in May of that year when, as acting administrator, I called for volunteers to take on the editorial responsibility of the newsletter that was being planned. Only one person responded to the call: Pilar Saslow, who rose to the occasion and accepted the challenge. And what a great job she has done since those early days, and how thankful we must all be to her. By the end of 1997, the first two issues of the newsletter had been published. At the SPD Annual Meeting during the ATA’s 38th Annual Conference in San Francisco in 1997, participants selected Intercambios from among a slate of names suggested by SPD members as the name for the division newsletter. Since then, Intercambios has continued to provide its timely service, growing in quality and editorial excellence, as well as in membership participation. And as time and the new millennium require changes, we are ready for the next step. To face this challenge, we will begin to distribute Intercambios electronically (unless members do not have e-mail or have requested to receive it by snail mail in the “old-fashioned” paper form). Our deepest gratitude to Pilar Saslow and to the great team of contributors, proofreaders, correspondents, and volunteers she has gathered to produce our showcase publication. And to those who have not yet begun to participate, don’t wait any longer. Start to contribute so that you may also enjoy the pleasures of being part of our great newsletter.

And then came Espalista! It was over a year later, during the fall of 1998 that, as administrator of the SPD, I proposed the idea of a division listserve to the ATA leadership. It would take many months of discussions and lengthy negotiations to make it a reality. Once more, the division was lucky to be able to secure the best volunteers for the job of list moderators. As Pilar Saslow had done over a year before when she stepped up to secure the best volunteers for the job of list moderators. As Pilar Saslow had done over a year before when she stepped up to take on Intercambios, first Xose Castro and, soon after, Cristina Márquez accepted the challenge and rose to the occasion to become the co-moderators of the yet-to-be-born Spanish Language Division listserve. Lengthy negotiations continued, the guidelines came into being, and the listserve acquired a name: Espalista. But even if Espalista had been conceived and had a name and guidelines of its own, it still needed time to be born. During the SPD Annual Meeting in Hilton Head, plans for Espalista were disclosed to members, with the expectation that it would soon be operational. Little did we know that it would take exactly nine months for it to be born. It was on July 18, 1999 that it came into being. Even if its birth was not an easy one, it certainly caught on. Just ask any one of those 250 fanatic and die-hard Espalisteros and they will tell you. It was certainly an idea whose time had come, and another one of the great services offered by the SPD. So, if you have not tried it yet, join Espalista and begin to savor the pleasures of a true cyberspace community of professional translators who profusely enjoy their vocation and their fellowship every hour of the day (and night), every day of the week, every month of the year, through long threads and never-ending electronic discussions.

Then comes the ATA Annual Conference, which affords SPD members an opportunity to enjoy good fellowship during
its annual social event, as well as an excellent program for professional growth and development with first-rate presentations and workshops. So, make plans for Orlando and don’t miss our social event and the many educational sessions that will be offered. This year, the SPD is planning a special surprise for all attendees. Be sure to be there so you can be a winner.

Since the Annual Conference in San Francisco, the SPD has sponsored an official guest who has shared with the members his knowledge and expertise in the field of translation and the Spanish language. First, it was Ricardo Naidich, the then-president of the Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, who spoke to us on the defense of the Spanish language during the San Francisco ATA Annual Conference. In Hilton Head, our guest was Miguel Wald, editor of Idiomanía and movie translator. Last year, we had the honor of welcoming Alberto Gómez Font, philologist from the Agencia EFE in Spain, who is now contributing a column to Inter cambios. This year Raúl Ávila, from the Colegio de Mexico, has accepted our invitation to come to Orlando. Let us all show our appreciation by participating in his workshop and attending his session.

And to those who cannot attend the ATA Annual Conference, the SPD offers them an opportunity to enjoy some of the good sessions presented in the course of this yearly professional event. Last year, the SPD compiled and published a selection of papers related to Spanish from the Hilton Head conference. In view of its success, this year the division has again compiled and published a selection of papers related to Spanish from the St. Louis conference. Both books are available from ATA Headquarters. Place your order right away. At $15, this year’s compilation, a 200-page book with 20 presentations, is an excellent buy. And if you wish, you can still purchase the selection from the Hilton Head presentations for only $10.

There is still more the Spanish Language Division is trying to offer its members. Our Technology Committee is still working hard to create our Web page. The Electronic Glossary Committee continues to work to develop the proposal for a SPD electronic glossary. And then there is the survey to measure the interest of the membership in holding a future division mini conference in 2001, to which I urge you to respond. So if you have not yet become an enthusiastic SPD member, I hope that, as you read this article, you will decide to join your other fellow translators. Contribute to Inter cambios, become a Espalistero, celebrate with your colleagues at the SPD social event and attend the SPD Annual Meeting during the ATA Annual Conference, respond to the survey regarding our possible mini conference, and be a part of this great division of the ATA. See you all in the Spanish Language Division!
Agreeing to Disagree

By Paul Coltrin

For those of us who translate into Spanish, certain grammatical rules can seem so basic, so obvious, that they hardly merit attention. Such is the case with agreement—whether between subject and verb, noun and adjective, or pronoun and antecedent. After all, everyone knows that we say el pato bonito, but las patas bonitas. Everyone agrees; everyone is happy.

But in practice we frequently run into cases where the issue of agreement is less than obvious. This article offers a smattering of these cases and surveys the opinions of various authorities on the language, especially when (gasp!) they don’t agree among themselves.

...This article offers a smattering of these cases and surveys the opinions of various authorities on the language, especially when (gasp!) they don’t agree among themselves...

The Case of the Traveling Band: Collective Nouns

One of the most frequently encountered issues of difficulty in agreement involves collective nouns. Consider the following examples:

El 37 por ciento de las empresas consultadas no… ¿ha o han?… tomado las medidas necesarias.

La mayoría de los militares enviados a Timor Oriental… ¿es australiana o son australianos?

Both of these sentences feature a singular collective noun as the subject (37 por ciento, mayoría) followed by a prepositional phrase with a plural object (empresas, militares). Do we stick to our guns and insist on using a singular verb that agrees with the subject? Or may we let the verb be plural, as is widely done in both spoken and written language? Let’s refer this question to the “experts.”

The highly respected Libro de Estilo of the Spanish newspaper El País orders the verb to agree in the singular, except “in certain cases.” Thus, we would use a singular verb to say Un grupo de personas se reunieron ayer… or El 60 por ciento de los encuestados opinan… However, if we blindly follow this rule to the letter, we might end up with such absurdities as the following:

El 5 por ciento de las mujeres quedó embarazada. (Huh?)

Un millón de personas desfiló por las calles. (Yuck)

In cases such as these, according to El País, it is permissible to break the otherwise unbreakable agreement between subject and verb. The proper choices here would be quedaron embarazadas and desfilaron. Similarly, I would consider the second of the first two examples above to call for agreement in the plural, although this is perhaps debatable: La mayoría de los militares son australianos. (Or, we could just rephrase the sentence: Los militares son en su mayoría australianos.)

What does the Manual de Español Urgente (MEU) have to say about this? While recognizing that even the most illustrious writers use a plural verb, it recommends using the singular, siempre y cuando no se produzca un resultado que repugne el sentido lingüístico (heaven forbid). In essence, this is the same opinion as that of El País.

But before we smugly pack away our books, let’s see what preeminent linguist Manuel Seco has to say: Es más fácil la concordancia en plural cuando el colectivo lleva un complemento específico en plural: Infinitud de personas ignoran esto; La mitad de los habitantes han emigrado, Leave it to Seco to defy the wisdom of El País and the MEU. (Or was it the other way around?)

Mexican author Sandro Cohen offers us the most user-friendly option: En esta clase de construcciones el redactor es libre de elegir el número en que habrá de conjugarse el verbo, según dicte la lógica. Therefore, says Cohen, we may use either the singular or the plural:

Un gran número de personas salieron a aplaudir al candidato.
Or: Un gran número de personas salió a aplaudir al candidato.

Un sinnúmero de alimañas devoraron lo que el tigre dejó.
Or: Un sinnúmero de alimañas devoró lo que el tigre dejó.

In summary, the authorities don’t agree on agreement. How appropriate.

Perhaps the most frustrating moment in our quest for
answers to questions of grammar and usage comes with the realization that even the most vaunted authorities contradict one another. This can be especially disconcerting to those who thought they had long ago learned the one and only rule, etched in stone from here till kingdom come. Similarly disappointed are those of us who crave the comfort of knowing that ours is the only correct way to say it, and that others are wrong when they say it differently.

But as desirable as it may be to rely on a single immutable rule, and as much as we may favor one reference work’s opinion over another’s, we would be remiss—even arrogant—to discount the diversity of opinions. In cases such as these, we have little choice but to accept that there is more than one “correct” solution.

The Case of the Missing Perpetrator: Passive and Impersonal se

It is common to hesitate when writing sentences such as the following:

Aquí… ¿se vende or se venden?… dulces.

Con esa maravillosa dieta… ¿se pierde o se pierden?… los kilos sin esfuerzo alguno.

Para mañana se… ¿espera o esperan?… chubascos.

Seco offers an excellent explanation. In some cases, he says, the word se is used with no reflexive effect, and indicates the passive nature of the verb. This passive construction only occurs in the third person (singular or plural), and refers only to things (as opposed to people). The verb agrees with the noun receiving the action of the verb. This noun actually serves as the subject of the sentence, even though it does not perform the action expressed in the verb:

Aquí se reparan televisores.

Aquí se venden dulces.

Se esperan chubascos.

On the other hand, as Seco explains, se can also be used to give the sentence an impersonal quality. This construction only occurs in the third person singular, has no grammatical subject, and may take a person as its direct object. Here are some examples of impersonal se:

Se respeta (not se respetan) a los ancianos.

Aquí se vive feliz.

Se debe castigar a quienes no cumplan con sus obligaciones.

The Case of the Multi-Headed Monster: Compound Subjects

Should the verb be singular or plural in the following sentence?

¿Provocó o provocaron?… hilaridad el payaso, el gato y la malabarista.

Here, we have a verb preceding a compound subject, which consists of a series of singular nouns joined by the conjunction y. Cohen says that either the singular or plural verb would be acceptable in this case. Seco also recognizes that the verb frequently agrees only with the subject noun closest to it, especially in spoken language. As an example he cites an author no less weighty than Cervantes:

A todo esto se opone mi honestidad y los consejos continuos que mis padres me daban.

But, continues Seco, those paying careful attention to style strive to establish “normal” agreement. Also, note that if the same sentence were written with the verb following the compound subject, the verb would have to be plural:

El payaso, el gato y la malabarista provocaron hilaridad.

Nevertheless, there are cases in which the items joined by y should be considered a single unit, and the verb should be singular:

Es constante su ir y venir.

El flujo y reflujo de ideas estimula el debate.

A los políticos les fascina el estira y afloja de las negociaciones.

But what happens if the elements of

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Agreeing to Disagree Continued

the compound subject are joined by the conjunction o rather than y? If all of these elements are singular, then we may use either a singular or plural verb. A singular verb is usually the more logical choice: El médico o un enfermero atenderá al paciente. But usage does allow for use of the plural: Le llamaron la atención su belleza o su simpatía.

And as if this weren’t complicated enough, there’s a twist if one of the elements joined by o is plural. Not only should we use a plural verb, but we should arrange the sentence so that the plural noun is as close as possible to the verb:

El piloto o los tripulantes pedirá ayuda.
Or: Pedirán ayuda los tripulantes o el piloto.

The Case of the Promiscuous Adjective

Confusion often results when an adjective modifies more than one noun. Should the adjective be singular or plural? Masculine or feminine? Let’s look at the following phrases, in which the adjective follows the nouns it modifies:

coherencia y claridad extraordinaria

talento y habilidad extremad

ciudades y pueblos destruidos

According to Seco, we may use a singular adjective to modify two singular nouns if the nouns can be considered a single unit. Thus, it would be possible to say coherencia y claridad extraordinaria. If the nouns are not of the same gender, continues Seco, the adjective would agree in gender with the noun closest to it: talento y habilidad extremada. Or, for clarity’s sake, we may resort to the plural masculine adjective: talento y habilidad extremados.

In the case of plural nouns of different gender, Seco says that the adjective may be either masculine or—if the last noun is feminine—feminine. Thus, the following three phrases would be equivalent:

ciudades y pueblos destruidos
pueblos y ciudades destruidas
pueblos y ciudades destruidos

However, the third option is clearly superior, as it leaves no doubt as to the writer’s intent. If the adjective precedes the nouns it modifies, then it should agree with the noun closest to it:

su extremada hermosura y talento
su amable sonrisa y consejos
su enorme sabiduría y suerte

If, as writers, we wish to have the adjective modify only the first noun in the above cases, then we must place an article or possessive adjective before successive nouns. This makes it clear that we are “segregating” the other nouns from the descriptive adjective:

su amable sonrisa y sus consejos (Here, the advice is not necessarily friendly.)
su enorme sabiduría y la suerte (His/her/their luck might not be so huge.)

The Case of the Matchmaking Verb

Let’s look at the following sentences:

Los violadores… ¿es o son?… gente enferma.
Todo lo que él dice… ¿es o son?… puras mentiras.

Both of these sentences are looking to use a conjugated form of the verb ser as a linking verb (verbo copulativo), which forms an equal sign between the subject and the predicate noun. Once again, “normal” agreement calls for the subject and verb to agree:

Los violadores son gente enferma.
Sus ojos son la belleza misma.

But, as Cohen explains, there are cases where the predicate noun exerts so much influence on the verb, that it forces the verb to agree with it instead of the subject:

Cuando bajó del vagón, se dio cuenta de que lo que había visto eran pequeños animales de color gris oscuro. Mi vida creció tú.
El pato feo de la familia soy yo.

In fact, it could be argued in such cases that normal sentence structure is reversed, i.e., the verb is preceded by the predicate noun and followed by the subject.
Once again, there are times when the verb may be either singular or plural:

Lo que él necesita es (o son) ganas de triunfar.
Todo aquello fueron (o fue) cuestiones de simple criterio.

As always, our good linguistic sense must prevail in deciding whether to use the singular or the plural. It’s worthwhile to observe that English does not allow for this option. I am reminded here of the hook line of a popular song: You are everything, and everything is you. By merely switching the subject and predicate noun, the verb was forced to change accordingly. Could this subtle wordplay be emulated in Spanish?

**The Case of the Cross-Dressing King**

This last example is rarely encountered in the real world. But, entertainment value aside (could he be called a drag king?), it speaks eloquently of the need to place common sense before strict grammatical rules. Assume that in the following sentence Su Alteza refers to male royalty:

Su Alteza está sumamente… ¿disgustada o disgustado?… ante la sublevación de los plebeyos.

In this case, there is a discrepancy between the king’s actual gender and the grammatical gender of his honorific. The authorities agree that titles such as merced, señoría, excelencia, and majestad should agree with the gender of the person referred to. Therefore, we should say:

Su Alteza está sumamente disgustado…
Su Excelencia será recibido por el Presidente (if su Excelencia is a male).

**Summary**

To summarize this study of agreement, it could be said that there are more exceptions than rules. Even worse, at times there seem to be as many different opinions as there are linguistic authorities. But one thing is certain: At times it is possible, preferable, or even necessary to break the normal rules of grammatical agreement. In the end, we should rely on our own well-informed sense of linguistic logic, rather than mechanically obeying rigid norms or, at the other extreme, mimicking the way we’ve always heard it said.

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Spanish Spelling Reforms: Accents

By Margarita Friedman

In July of 1999, the Ortografía de la lengua española, Edición revisada por las Academias de la Lengua Española was published by the Real Academia Española (RAE). Although it reached bookstore shelves in Mexico in September, I could not get a copy in the U.S. until October, which was just in time for my ATA conference presentation on the modifications to accent rules that appear in this edition. These changes were made to satisfy the requests of several American academies. The new rules for accents will standardize the use of the tilde in verbal forms when it appears with a non-accented pronoun in the same word, for example, darme, verlo, mirame. The rules will also standardize the placement of the graphic accent in hiatuses and diphthongs, including au, eu, ou, in the final position. From now on, the writer has the freedom to follow the general rules and disregard the logical differences in pronunciation which occur in the Spanish language...

Capital Letters
Capital letters always have a written accent. The Academias de la Lengua Española has never ruled to the contrary on this rule. In the past, it was sometimes technically impossible to accentuate the capital vowels, because neither typesetters nor typewriters had the necessary typefaces. However, today everything is done with computers, so capital letters must be accentuated. If they are not, the reader may not understand the correct prosody of the words.

Oxitones (oxitonas o agudas)
These are words with more than one syllable that have the stress or acute accent on the last syllable. (Monosyllables will be discussed later.)

Oxitones have a written accent when:
A) The last letter is an -n, -s, or a vowel. For example, cafíé, recibíó, Tomás, afián.
B) The stress is in a weak or closed vowel (i-u) that comes after a strong or open vowel (a-e-o). They may or may not end in any consonant. For example, maiz, laúd, país, baúl, and Ramúl.

Oxitones do not have a written accent when:
A) The last letter is a consonant, with the exception of -n or -s. For example, comer, relaj, farol, and alfíl.
B) The last letter is an -s that comes after another consonant. For example, Loréns, Orleáns, tictacés, and robots.
C) The last letter is a y. In this case the y is considered a consonant. For example, carey, Uruguay, convoy, virrey, and maguey.

Paroxytones (graves o llanas)
These are words that have the stress on the next to the last syllable.

Paroxytones have a written accent when:
A) The last letter is a consonant, with the exception of -n or -s. For example, difícil, lápiz, carácter, álbum, and Héctor.
B) The last letter is a y. In this case the y is considered a consonant. For example, poney and yöquey.
C) They end in any consonant followed by -n, o, or -s. For example, fórceps, bíceps, and tríceps.

Proparoxytones (esdrújulas)
Proparoxytones are words that have the stress on the antepenultimate syllable. All proparoxytones have a written accent. For example, teléfono, indígena, súbito, and recórcholis.

Superproparoxytones (sobresdrújulas)
Superproparoxytones are words that have more than four
syllables and the stress is in the fourth syllable from the end. All superproparoxytontes have a written accent. For example, digamelo, címetelo, and lléveselo.

So far, all the rules have been clear and easy. However, things get a little more complicated when we have words with two or more vowels next to each other. To understand the rules, let’s review diphthongs, triphthongs, and hiatuses.

Diphthongs

Diphthongs are complex vowel sounds that begin with one vowel and end with another within the same syllable. Since the “h” is a mute consonant, when it is between two vowels, it does not stop the diphthong from forming. For example, ahu-mar, ahi-jado, and prohi-bimos. There are two types of diphthongs. Those formed by:

A) A stressed open vowel (a, e, o) next to a non-stressed closed vowel (i, u) in any order. The possible combinations are: ai/ia, au/ua, ei/ie, eu/ue, ci/le, ou/uo, such as in aire, biaxial, causa, agua, peine, ciego, Eudosia, huevo, and cuota.

B) Two different closed vowels (iu/ui). For example, ruido, diurético, ciudadela, jutimos, and Luís.

Sometimes these vowel sounds are pronounced as hiatuses (gaps in the pronunciation between two successive vowels in adjacent words or syllables), either due to a speaker’s carelessness or because of their social or geographic origin. Nevertheless, for the purpose of graphic accents, they are always considered diphthongs and should follow the general rules.

When sounds are formed by a stressed open vowel (a, é, ó) followed or preceded by a closed vowel (i, u), the written accent will be placed on the stressed vowel (ai/ia, au/ua, ei/ie, eu/ue, ci/le, ou/uo). If the diphthong is formed by two closed vowels (i, u), then the accent is placed on the second vowel (ui, ûi).

Oxytones: With a written accent: bonsái, recién, despúes, fragüé
Without a written accent: aguamiel, fraguar, Uruguay, maguey

Paroxytontes: With a written accent: huésped
Without a written accent: ahuehuete, lingüista, cuerdas, vienen

Proparoxytontes: All have written accents: murciélago, casuística, muérgano

The previous examples demonstrate how the general rules are applied. Aguamiel has no written accent because it ends in a consonant that is not n or s. Uruguay does not have a written accent because, as we said before, the y here is considered a consonant. Therefore, there is no diphthong in the word maguey.

Triphthong

A triphthong is the compound vowel sound resulting from three vowels pronounced in one syllable. They are formed when a stressed or non-stressed open vowel (a, o, o) is located between two closed vowels (i, u). The written accent in a triphthong is placed according to the general rules, and always on the stressed open vowel. For example, despreciáis, averigüáis, and amortiguáis.

Hiatus

In Latin, hiatus means “to open” or “a crack.” In linguistics, a hiatus is the slight pause that occurs when two immediately adjacent vowels belonging to different syllables are pronounced. There is a tendency in Spanish to change hiatuses into false diphthongs (diptongos impropios), such as in the words Joaquín, Leandro, roedor, and ahorcacar, which are mispronounced as Joa-quín, ro-e-dor, and ahor-car instead of Jo-a-quín, ro-e-dor, and a-hor-car. Sometimes two consecutive words are joined, creating a synaloepha such as pediempleo, laimagen, lagua, lehice for pedi empleo, la imagen, la agua, and le hice. There are three types of hiatuses. Those formed by:

A) Two identical vowels, either open or closed (aa, ee, ii, oo, uu). For example, chúito and oogonio.

B) Two different open vowels (oa, oe, eo, ae). For example, teatro, coartada, enmohécedo, Coahuila, and rubéola.

C) A non-stressed open vowel (a, e, o) followed or preceded by a stressed

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closed vowel (i, ú). For example, calmos, día, reínen, roído, río, prohibo grita, and prohibía.

The first two types of hiatuses will have a written accent according to the general rules. Oóspora and zoólogo have a written accent because they are proparoxytones, but oolito, oosfera, aldila, and Coatzacoalcos do not have a written accent because they are paroxytones that end in a vowel or an -n or -s.

The monosyllables and polysyllables that have the third type of hiatus—the one formed by a non-stressed open vowel and a stressed closed vowel—will always have a written accent on the stressed vowel no matter what the other rules say. The h in between these vowels does not stop the hiatus from being formed, nor does having a written accent. Thus, we have: país, vahído, reír, vehículo, oír, prohibo, baúl, ahúman, tahúr, reí, sonré, búnco, rehúso, and comprendíais. The last word is an interesting example of a hiatus (ai) and a diphthong (ai): comprendíais.

Monosyllables

Monosyllables are words with only one syllable. They can have a diphthong or triphthong, but cannot have a hiatus, for example, ruin, vio, ion, Luis, and buey. As regards to diphthongs, the RAE is still condescending, to the happiness of some and distress of others. On page 46 we read: “Es admisible el acento gráfico…si quien escribe percibe nítidamente el hiato y, en consecuencia considera bisilabas palabras como…fié, hué, guión, Sión, etc.”

This means that anyone can argue that he/she distinctly hears a hiatus, so that word should have a written accent! Fortunately, one can argue that, according to this new edition, the general rules can also be followed. The only exceptions to this flexible rule are the monosyllables with diacritic accents.

Diacritic Accent

A Diacritic accent is used to distinguish words which are homographs (have the same spelling), but belong to different grammatical categories. The following list is well-known and requires no further explanation:

verb/preposition: dé/de
pronoun/name: mí/mi, te/té
pronoun/possessive: tú/tu
pronoun/verb: se/sé
conjunction/number: ó/0 1 ó 2, 102

The pairs aún/aun and sólo/solo are more difficult. Aún has a diacritic accent when it can be substituted by todavía. It does not have an accent when its meaning in the sentence is aunque, hasta, siquiera, or inclusive. Sólo has an accent when it can be replaced by únicamente or solamente. It does not have an accent when it means that it is unique, alone, not accompanied by something or someone else, or simple or not mixed (like a café solo without sugar and milk).

The next grouping of words that may have diacritic accents are the demostrativos: este, ese, aquel, and their feminine and plural forms. They do not have accents when they mean temporal or spatial distance, or refer to the proximity of the name they modify in relation to the person who talks or listens. For example, Aquella libreta describes a notebook that is as far from the speaker as it is from the listener. Esta libreta means it is close to the speaker. Note that the RAE clearly says that it is not necessary to write these words with accents when they substitute a name that has been previously mentioned in the text or is known to the listener. For example, Necesito este y esta. Amontona estos junto con los otros.

The RAE says that they need a written accent only when there is a risk of confusion, such as in the following sentences:

Quiero que esta mañana sea notificada.
Quiero que ésta mañana sea notificada.

In the first sentence, esta, without an accent, refers to the period of time when the notification will take place: today, before noon. In the second sentence, ésta, with an accent, refers to the person who will be notified tomorrow. In other words, unless there is a true risk of misinterpreting the sentence, the accent is not required. This confusion can also be avoided by rewording the sentence: Quiero que esta sea notificada mañana. In this case, esta does not need an accent. The neutral forms esto, eso, and aquello will never have a written accent.
Direct and Indirect Interrogatory and Exclamatory Sentences

The words adónde, cómo, cuándo, cuánto, dónde, qué, and quién have a written accent when they introduce a direct or indirect question or exclamation. Let us examine the following sentences:

Me dijo que le preguntaron qué estaba haciendo.
¿Te dijo que no sabe qué tipo de sangre tiene?
¿Qué quiere saber cuándo llegaste?
Ya te dije cuáles son las cartas que hay que mandar.
¡Mira hasta dónde vino a dejar sus calzoncillos!

When these words are within an exclamation, they have a written accent. In the indirect questions, one must first decide if the subordinate sentence is the original question. If so, then they have a diaritical accent. In these examples, the true or original questions are: ¿qué estaba haciendo?; ¿qué tipo de sangre?; ¿cuándo llegaste?; and ¿cuáles son las cartas que hay que mandar? These are questions that make sense.

In ¿Te dijo que no sabe qué tipo de sangre tiene? the first que does not have an accent because ¿que no sabe? is not a question. The same thing happens with ¿Qué quiere? in the following sentence.

Compound Words

Compound words are considered a single word and follow the normal rules. For example, musculoesquelético, clinicopatológico, hipofisoadrenales, asimismo, tiovivo, and buscapiés.

Compound Words with a Hyphen

Each word follows the normal rules independently. For example, médico-enfermos, concentración-tiempo, equilibrio ácido-base, and histórico-crítico-bibliográfico.

Adverbs that End with mente

Adverbs only have a written accent when the adjective, which is the basis for the adverb, has an accent according to the normal rules. Rápidamente and plácidamente have an accent because plácida and rápida have a written accent. Fielmente and buenamente do not have accent because neither fiel nor buena have a written accent.

Verbal Forms with Enclitic Pronouns

The rule concerning enclitic accents has been changed. Now words with enclitic accents will follow the normal rules. The words dimelo, habiéndolos, and gánatelo have an accent because they are proparoxytones or superproparoxytones. Words such as deme and estate will not have a written accent because they are paroxytones that end in a vowel.

The rule concerning compound words made with a verb that does not function as such has also changed; from now on they will follow the general rules. For example, metomentodo, acabose, sabelotodo, picaflor.

Words from Latin and Other Languages

When a word has been adapted or incorporated into the language, it will follow the normal rules, for example, búnker, escáner, item, memorándum, alma máter, currículum vitæ, and chucrá. The proper names, and those words that have not yet been adopted, will be written in italics or within quotes. Such words will not have an accent if one did not exist in the original spelling. For example, Washington, Weiβzucker, soirée, software, kitsch, college, and prêt-à-porter. The Libro de estilo de El País adds the following rules:

The names that have been transcribed from the Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek alphabets will follow the general rules, for example: Pésaj, ayatolá, Januká, Rosh Hashaná, muharram, safar, ramadán, Rossiyskie Vesti, Kazajstán.

The toponyms that have been incorporated will also follow the general rules, for example: Aviñón, Afganistán, Acmán, Bután, Camerún, Honolulu, Indianápolis, Jerusalén, Mississippi, Munich, Oregón, Suráfrica, Taiwán, Ulán-Bator, Zürich.

The next group of words are difficult because, depending on their meaning, they may or may not have a written accent, and can be written as one or two words.

Dónde, Donde, Adónde, Adonde, Adonde
dónde or donde refers to the place

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Spanish Spelling Reforms: Accents Continued

where someone or something is. It has a written accent only when it is a question or exclamation. For example, ¿Hasta dónde habrá que aguantar? ¿Dónde estás? Estoy donde quiero.

adónde or adonde is one word when the place where someone or something is has already been mentioned, or when it refers to a point of arrival, either as a question, exclamation, or doubt. It will not have a written accent when it refers to the place itself which has been previously mentioned in the text. For example, La casa adonde asustan. Vamos al banco adonde tengo la cuenta, el cementerio adonde enterraron a Frost.

a donde are two words that do not have a written accent when they refer to a place that has not been mentioned before, or refer to being in a certain place. For example, A donde nadie me encuentre. Pasamos por a donde enterraron a Frost. In these sentences, the places are not mentioned; they could be a cave, a cemetery, or a garden.

Porqué, Porque Por Qué, Por Que
poraqué is one word that has a written accent when it refers to a motif or cause, for example, El porqué de su malestar.

porque is one word and has no written accent when it can be substituted by ya que or puesto que without changing the meaning. For example, Porque comió demasiado, ya que comió demasiado.

por qué are two words and have a written accent when they refer to the cause or motif, or when they refer to a question. For example, ¿Por qué vino? No sé por qué (cause) no has llamado.

por que are two words without a written accent when they can be substituted by el cual, la cual, los cuales, and las cuales. For example, Las fotos por que fue chantajeado. Las fotos por las cuales fue chantajeado.

And to conclude, here is a list of words that have a double prosody. The RAE prefers the first word of each pair:

acné/acne
afrodísico/afrodisíaco
alcohólisis/alcoholisis
alergeno/alérgeno
aloé/áloe
alveolo/álveolo
ambrosía/ambrosia
amoníaco/amoníaco
ánemona/anemona
atmósfera/atmosfera
auréola/auréola
austricaco/austricaco
balaustrad/balaustre
beréber/bereber
bimano/bímano
bronquio/bronquio
cardiac:o/cardíaco
celtibero/celtibero
centimano/centímano
chófer/chofer
cíclope/cíclope
cónclave/conclave
demoníaco/demoníaco
dinamo/dinamo
égida/égida
Electrolisis/electrolisis
elixir/elixir
etiópe/etiópe
fútbol/futbol
glitro/glitro
hemiplejía/hemiplejia
iber/ibero
Have you ever read a text that “sounded” weird because, although it was written in your native language, it just didn’t read correctly? I am not talking about some literary text in which the author was trying to be experimental with the language. I am talking about a plain informative text that just does not “sound” right. You probably had the following reaction: Who wrote this?!!! You probably became quite frustrated and gave up reading, or you were somewhat offended that someone had dared to corrupt your language to this extent and still had their work published. However, if you suspected that the text you were reading was a translation from another language, your reaction may have been quite different. You might have shrugged your shoulders and muddled through it because you are accustomed to reading weird texts that are the result of poor translations.

Does it need to be that way? Do translations need to necessarily “sound” weird because the original text was written in another language? What is translation, and what is the purpose of a source text that requires translation into another target language? Why are we tolerant of texts that “sound” weird in our own language just because we recognize it to be a translation? Are we really tolerant?

How do you feel about reading this text? This is a real example of a translation that was actually published by the manufacturer of the pasta product. It was later reprinted in the ATA Chronicle many years ago for the benefit of translators. I use it in my classes to illustrate what garbage sometimes passes as “translation”:

IMPORTANT: Albadoro Canneloni do not ought to boil.
1. Bring in Canneloni as they are, a stuffing maked with beef, eggs, cheese, parmigiano, pepper and spices, as you like.

2. Besmear a backing-pan, previously buttered with a good tomato sauce and after, dispose Canneloni, lightly distanced between them, in only couch.

3. At last, for the safe success of cooking, shed the remnant sauce, possibly diluted with broth, as far as to cover the surface of Canneloni.

4. Add puffs of butter and grated cheese, cover the backing-pan, and put her into the oven, previously warmed to 180/200 centigrade degrees above zero.

5. Cook for about an half of hour at the same temperature without to uncover the backing pan and after, to help at table.

Although these translated instructions may be categorized as extreme, it does illustrate the point. One can easily formulate several observational rules from this example:

1. Translators should not attempt to translate into a language other than their native language.

2. Bilingual dictionaries do not, and cannot, solve all translation problems.

...Why are we tolerant of texts that “sound” weird in our own language just because we recognize it to be a translation?...

3. People must understand that having attended a few classes in a foreign language does not qualify them as translators.

4. Translation is not substituting words in one language for words in another language. That is why modern machine language (computer) translations are very often poor translations, if they work at all.

Having said that, let’s get to some real issues in translation.

Definition on Terminology
In this article, I am going to use several terms that need to be defined here:

*Hybrid language:* A mixture of two or more languages, the result of allowing the characteristics and words of one language embed themselves in another language.

*Third language:* A term used to refer to a language created by the mixture of language characteristics and words from two or more languages (Ref.1).
Form: A term used to refer to the structural part of language which is actually seen in print or heard in speech (Ref. 2).

Three Common Issues When Translating English into Spanish

Let’s assume that the translator is aware that translation is the transfer of the meaning of the source language into the target language using the appropriate form of that target language.

Let us further assume that the translator knows that he or she should only translate from the foreign language into their native language. Let us also assume that the translator is well educated in both languages, and that he or she clearly understands that a good translation requires expertise in the subject matter of the text. With these preliminary translation prerequisites established, I am going to zero in on three issues that need further discussion. The three issues are:

I. The English gerund form in a heading translated into Spanish using an appropriate form in Spanish.

II. Words that, in English, look like words that should be used in the same manner in Spanish.

III. Target language text forms that are grammatically correct, but do not convey the same meaning as the original source language text form.

See Table 1 for an example of each one of these three translation issues in English, and how they are often incorrectly rendered in Spanish translations. Example A involves the use of an English gerund in a heading. A gerund is a grammatical form that also exists in the Spanish language. However, English construction form and Spanish construction form are not usually parallel or equivalent. The correct way to translate an English gerund form is not by using a Spanish gerund form at all, but by using a different construction form that conveys the same meaning. Spanish conveys the meaning by using Cómo + the infinitive of the verb form, rather than by using a gerund.

Learning to Do the Swing at Home becomes Cómo aprender en casa a bailar el swing. Both meaning and form have been rendered correctly. Aprendiendo en casa a bailar el swing, on the other hand, creates a hybrid form of Spanish that has become commonplace by some translators working from English into Spanish. The more a translator indulges one’s self in the use of hybrid forms, the more insensitive he or she becomes to identifying the root of the problem and correcting it.

Example B, Abortion—A Very Controversial Subject, illustrates what Marina Orellana calls “contaminación lingüística.” She states in her book La traducción del inglés al castellano that:

“Varias palabras del idioma inglés han entrado en el castellano por la puerta trasera. Se las encuentra en diversos niveles y en relación con toda clase de temas (Ref.3).”

Controversial, in English, is frequently translated as controversial in Spanish. Controversial seems to have become the preferred translation for the English word controversial. Yet, Spanish uses controvertido, which is the correct choice to render the English controversial into Spanish. Therefore,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Text</th>
<th>Spanish Incorrect Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Learning to Do the Swing at Home</td>
<td>Aprendiendo en casa a bailar el swing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Abortion—A Very Controversial Subject</td>
<td>El aborto—un tema muy controversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) “I’ve made up my mind; I am going to ask Julie on a date.”</td>
<td>—Me he decidido; voy a invitar a Julie a una cita.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abortions—a Very Controversial Subject in English becomes El aborto—un tema muy controvertido. It is not a case of using “false cognates.” Surely, good translators know that “embarrassed” in English doesn’t always become “embarrassado” in Spanish, or that “to attend a university” in English, does not become “atender a la universidad” in Spanish, according to the meaning of the form of the source language text. I am speaking about words like “sophisticated,” “efficiency,” or “comfortable,” which are often rendered as “sofisticado,” “eficiencia,” and “comfortable” in Spanish instead of “complejo,” “eficacia,” and “cómodo.”

Example C involves cases in which the translator is very capable of avoiding the problems discussed in examples A and B. In fact, there are translators that are very aware that the form of the target language generally does not mimic the form of the source language. Their translations read as if they were written originally in Spanish because the form is flawless.

The writer Jorge Luis Borges was one such translator. His translation of Faulkner’s The Wild Palms into Spanish (still published by Editorial Sudamericana) reads beautifully. In fact, some literary critics call it a masterpiece (Ref. 4). However, a careful study of the source language text (whether it is the British version of the text from which Borges translated, or the original American English text written by Faulkner) reveals that using the correct form alone does not make a translation make. Borges’ translation of The Wild Palms reads flawlessly. However, it frequently has little or nothing to do with the original source text (Ref. 5).

Mildred Larson states in her book Meaning-based Translation:

“...translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of the second language by way of semantic structure. It is meaning which is being transferred and must be held constant. Only the form changes (Ref. 6).”

Example C illustrates an issue in translation that is very often neglected. Translators must be experts not only on the semantic form and meaning of both source and target languages, but also on the cultural connotations that may be explicit or implicit in the source text as a result of when and where the source text was written. I made up my mind; I’m going to ask Julie on a date means, in English, that someone wants to go out socially with Julie. Me he decidido, voy a invitar a Julie a una cita, on the other hand, means quite a different thing to many Spanish readers. The Spanish form, Me he decidido; voy a invitar a Julie..., is appropriate. It avoids a form that may imitate English, and it avoids an idiomatic expression mistake. However, it does not convey the English meaning of I am going to ask Julie on a date. Voy a invitar a Julie a una cita implies that the reader will understand that invitar a una cita in Spanish carries the same connotation that it had in the English text. Yet, for many Spanish readers, invitar a una cita carries the connotation of an illicit encounter with a sexual purpose conducted in a red-light district atmosphere. Is that what I’m going to ask Julie on a date means in English? It may be argued that it could, but it may also be argued that it probably does not. However, the Spanish form in the incorrect translation example does clearly assert a meaning that is not clearly indicated or implied in the original English text. A date, in this case, refers to a cultural custom among English speakers that is regarded, in the context of the example, as a male and a female going out on some activity that is conducive to socially getting to know each other. In Spanish, however, una cita carries the connotation of appointment to see a professional, or, as stated before, a sexual meeting conducted in a red-light district atmosphere in which the participants know clearly what the purpose of the meeting is. The translation may be different if the time period, location, and circumstances under which the source text was written were different (for example, London, 1876, the red-light district).

Conclusion

The answer to the question of whether a translation needs to necessarily “sound” weird because the original text was written in another language is, therefore, a resounding NO. English and Spanish are separate languages. A dictionary does not automatically resolve the issues placed before a translator, and knowledge of two or more languages does not make a translator. Many translations from English into Spanish “sound” weird because of...
Professing Our Spirit Continued

linguistic and cultural contaminations that are perpetuated by careless and/or untrained, uneducated translators. Translators working from English into Spanish sometimes create “hybrid” language forms that affect the Spanish-language translation. It happens when translators become oblivious to the influence that the source language text is exerting in the target language. This target language contamination may come from either the form in the original text, or from hidden cultural nuances implied by when/where the text was written.

Translators are, per nature, constantly bombarded with the dilemma of how to preserve the correctness of form and meaning of the languages they work with. What is needed is constant vigilance and effort to avoid contamination. Awareness of this problem and an awareness of how easy it is to become insensitive to these contaminations should be one of the priorities of every translator.

References

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médula/medula
microscopía/microscopia
olímpiada/olimpiada
omóplato/omoplato
ósmosis/osmosis
pábilo/pábilo
pentagrama/pentágrama
periódico/periodo
polígolo/poligloto
pulmoniaco/pulmoniaco
rail/rail
reuma/reúma
róbalo/robalo
sánscrito/sanscrito
torticola/torticola
torticolis/torticoli
varice/varice
variz/varíz
zodiaco/zodiaco

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English is increasingly thought of as the single language of technical communication throughout the world. Although English is the native language of about eight percent of the world’s population and a second or foreign language for at least 15 percent, it has been estimated that 70 percent of the world’s scientists read English, about 80 percent of the content on the World Wide Web is in English, and 90 percent of the data in electronic retrieval systems is written in English (Crystal, 1987 and 1995). Also, the two major professional associations for computer scientists are the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and the Association for Computing Machinery, both of which use English as their official language. Furthermore, the majority of high prestige international scientific magazines, such as Nature and Science, are published in English. Although the statistics about English can never claim to be exact, the fact that English is the language of science and technology is now conventional wisdom. In addition, language myths about the worldliness of English further support the idea that English is the only language dynamic and efficient enough to assume the role of international vehicle for technological communication.

It is true that other languages are struggling for a voice in this English-dominated environment. However, it is not true that other languages, for example Spanish, lack the dynamic aspects to be efficient vehicles for technical communication. In this article, I will consider neologism formation by giving old words new meanings, which is a process that is extraordinarily frequent in Spanish technical texts. I will take examples primarily from within the field of network computing to show how Spanish makes this process especially dynamic by giving more than one word the same new meaning, and not by limiting this process to a single word, as English does. I will show examples of cases of this proliferation of synonyms in Spanish where several neologisms will be translated into English as a single term.

New Words for New Meanings

Spanish technical texts abound with neologisms. Neologisms may be created through three basic processes: 1) by coining entirely new words, 2) by combining a word and an affix, or combining two words, or 3) by assigning new meanings to old words (Newmark, 1988). Coining new words is rare, but in technical texts it is not uncommon, especially when translating from English. The English language, since it dominates the language used in technological fields, also dominates the coining of new words for new technological devices, manufacturing processes, and patents. The process of word creation takes place almost exclusively in English first, and then trickles down to other languages.

These newly-coined neologisms may follow three different paths when they trickle down into other languages. They may be borrowed, naturalized, or there may be a tendency to use both the borrowed and naturalized term concurrently. Technologists tend to wait and see what endurance the technology behind these newly-coined terms represent before they address the long-term language needs of their technological fields. Therefore, in order to increase communicative efficiency, technologists will first adopt the English terms as they are, and only later look for a long-standing naturalized term.

Sometimes by the time this happens, ...in order to increase communicative efficiency, technologists will first adopt the English terms as they are, and only later look for a long-standing naturalized term...

translating Neologisms in Spanish Technical Texts: New Meanings for Old Words

By Daniel Linder

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New Meanings for Old Words

Languages work dynamically in many ways. They create new grammatical, syntactical, and morphological structures over time and allow others to sink away into obscurity. Consider the word *load*. When computers were stand-alone devices, a new meaning was assigned to the word *load* indicating the installation of new computer software or the insertion of a computer floppy disk into the disk drive. When computers were connected in intranets and through the Internet, new words were needed to express new meanings. For example, terms were needed to describe the two possible directions of computer software or data transmission in a computer’s architecture, and so *download* and *upload* were created.

Spanish also assigns new meanings to words in a similar way, but it tends to favor assigning new meanings to old words, even in cases where, in English, the word is a neologism by combination. For example, *descargar* and *bajar*, both of which are pre-existing words to which new meanings have been assigned, are the Spanish translations of download. Furthermore, Spanish takes a different approach than English, as can be seen in the example above, by allowing a single new meaning to be assigned to several different pre-existing words. This is even clearer with *cargar*, *colgar*, *montar*, or *subir* for upload. Consider also the most basic of all Windows operations and the proliferation of words for *click* and *double-click*: *pinchar* (*dos veces*)/ *picar* (*dos veces*)/ *hacer* (*doble*) *clic*, *oprimir* (*dos veces*).

I consider this process of neologism creation by assigning new meanings to a multitude of old words as evidence that the Spanish language is alive and well as a vehicle for technical communication. There are linguists who would say that these terms are at some intermediate stage of acquisition and that eventually one form will prevail. There are also terminologists who would promote the standardization of a single term in order to facilitate specialized communication. But this is denying the horizontal and vertical diversity of geography and usage that this language already has. Spanish is spoken in more than 20 countries in Latin America and is widely learned as a foreign language (Crystal, 1987). Spanish is the unofficial second language of the U.S., where enormous areas of the country are practically bilingual. Spanish is an official language of the European Union, and widely used in European policy-making, European cooperative projects, and European terminological undertakings. At the heart of the issue lies the Atlantic, which divides the American varieties of Spanish from the European varieties. Perhaps the most significant example of this division is the term “computer” in the field of of network computing, being called *computadora* on the American side of the Atlantic and *ordenador* on this side. Reconciliation seems impossible, but comprehension is mutual, and the translation into English is the same in both cases, *computer*.

Given this profound barrier between its major varieties, Spanish is a language which prefers to harmonize rather than standardize. English tends to favor the process of standardization, where one universal term is used for one particular meaning. Spanish allows for more than one term to indicate one particular meaning, and all terms acquire a wide recognition while not jeopardizing intelligibility and efficiency of communication, thus indicating a process of harmonization. The implications for translation into English are clear. Specialized terms in English have a certain ring to them, like buzzwords, whereas specialized terms in Spanish do not have a similar ring to them. Translators have to grasp the idea exactly and hit the nail on the head with the exact term in English.

What follows are various examples from the field of network computing. There is an extraordinary proliferation of terms for *newsgroups*. Even in English you can find other terms such as *Usenet* (*User’s Network*) *groups* and *Usenet news*, but nothing like the array of terms you can find in Spanish. For example:

*newsgroups* (also, simply *los news*)
*grupos de noticias*
*grupos de debate*
*grupos de discusión*
*grupos de interés*
*foros de debate* (also, simply *foros*)

Notice also how the meanings of these terms start out as a calque and end up in an almost naturalized term. Also the terms

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The Departamento de Español Urgente of the Agencia EFE: History and Objectives

By Alberto Gómez Font, Translated by Alicia S. V. Marshall

(Note: This article is a translation of excerpts from the paper published in the Proceedings of the ATA Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri on November 3-6, 1999.)

The Agencia EFE is a Spanish international news agency similar to the French France Presse (AFP) or the American Associated Press (AP). Its primary function is to obtain and distribute national and international news in Spain and to the rest of the world. The information received is sent on a daily basis to subscribers, primarily the media, including newspapers, magazines, television channels, and radio stations.

The Agencia EFE was created in 1939 on the foundation of the Fabra news agency, which had been part of the Spanish press since 1870. Currently, with over 2,000 media members in 140 cities in 76 countries, the Agencia EFE is one of the four largest agencies in the world, and ranks first for Spanish-language agencies, for the volume of information handled and the number of its subscribers.

In 1980, under the leadership of President Luis María Ansón, the Agencia EFE established the Departamento de Español Urgente (DEU), the first watchdog institution to monitor the use of Spanish, and the only public consulting service on the proper usage of our language. The purpose of the DEU was: to standardize the linguistic criteria between Spain and Latin America; to fight against the onslaught of foreign terms; to adopt criteria to transcribe names from languages with non-Latin alphabets into Spanish; and to resolve any type of language problem encountered by the Agency in news writing. Ansón wanted the journalists from the Agencia EFE to write with "elegance, using a dynamic and concise style." It was his goal to turn the Agency’s news services, distributed to all of the Spanish-speaking countries, into a catalyst that would help standardize the Spanish used in the press. That was precisely the message he conveyed in the foreword of one of the first editions of the Agencia EFE’s Manual de Estilo:

“To achieve a neutralized style—not to be confused with a ‘neutral’ style that is always insipid—is an obligation of the Agencia EFE, considering the important role it plays in the use of our language in Spain and in the Americas. The unity of our language is an asset that the Spanish-speaking community must preserve. Today, the press, the radio, and television have more influence over the language than any educational system. It is not an exaggeration to state that the future of Spanish—or any other language, for that matter—is in their hands. The Agency has a much greater responsibility than any single news media entity on its own. This is one more reason, and a very compelling one, to ensure the use, in our dispatches, of a style that is acceptable by all, a style which does not violate common usage and which does not favor any local or regional characteristics, and which does not promote unnecessary neologisms or features responding to passing vogues.”

A team of two philologists (Pilar Vicho Toledo and Alberto Gómez Font) is responsible for the daily review of the news. The team prepares a weekly report in which all the errors have been detected. This report is sent to the directors, supervisors, and editors of the different sections in the Agency. It includes a commentary regarding a specific term or questionable use of a syntactical structure, clarifications of the names of certain countries, and warnings to avert possible errors. It is also the responsibility of the DEU philologists to respond to inquiries and questions received by mail, telex, fax, telephone, or e-mail.

In August of 1996, The DEU created an Internet forum on the Spanish language called Apuntes. Subscription to this forum is free. Currently, there are 250 subscribers who exchange between 1,500 and 2,000 messages a month.

The DEU is in constant contact with the Real Academia Española and the Academias de la Lengua in the Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas through its Consejo Asesor de Estilo (Style Advisory Board). The members of this body are: Gregorio Salvador and Valentín García Yebra, from the Real Academia Española; Humberto López...
Morales, from the Academia Puertorriqueña and permanent secretary of the Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española; Leonardo Gómez Torrego, a researcher with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; José Luis Martínez Albertos, a professor of journalism at the School of Information Science of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid; and José Luque Calderón, a journalist at the Agencia EFE. They meet periodically with the philologists from the DEU to review their work, and to express their opinions on issues addressed to them by the philologists. In this way, thanks to the work of the DEU and its Consejo Asesor, many of the terms or idioms appearing for the first time in the news or in the language of the press reach the Real Academia Española and its dictionary almost immediately.

The DEU has also organized six conferences on different aspects of Spanish usage. In October 1989, an international seminar entitled “El Idioma Español en las Agencias de Prensa” was held in Madrid. The event was attended by representatives from key international news agencies providing service in Spanish, representatives from major national news agencies from Spain and the Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas, editors from prestigious international papers, as well as university professors, journalists, and philologists.

Two years later, in April of 1991, the Agencia EFE organized another seminar entitled “El Neologismo Necesario,” and invited individuals responsible for the style books from the largest Spanish newspapers, in addition to university professors, journalists, philologists, and technical language specialists.

In 1992, another conference was organized entitled “El Idioma Español en el Deporte.” University professors, journalists, and sports writers attended this event. The most important issue discussed in the sessions was the need to standardize Spanish sports terminology without neglecting the particular characteristics of the Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas. The main focus was on specialized language used by the press in the area of sports.

The fourth seminar, held in May 1996 at the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla in La Rioja, was entitled “El Español ante el Nuevo Milenio.” The basis for future seminars on specific aspects of the language was established during this meeting, including Spanish and education, Spanish and the establishment of a norm, Spanish and the new technology, and Spanish and the news media.

The fifth seminar took place in May of 1997, again at the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla. Its title was “El español y las nuevas tecnologías,” which can be summarized in one phrase: “the computer and everything to do with it.” There were round-table discussions and presentations on the translation of computer-related texts, science in the press, Spanish on the Internet, computational linguistics, and language industries.

The sixth, and currently the most recent seminar, was held in November of 1998, at the same venue as the previous ones, and was entitled “El español y los medios de comunicación.”

The proceedings from the first three seminars have already been published, and have become part of our beginning collection of linguistic works. The first one, entitled El idioma español en las agencias de prensa, was published by the Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez (Madrid, 1990). The other two books, El neologismo necesario and El idioma español en el deporte, have been published by the Fundación EFE (Madrid, 1992 and 1994).

A handbook entitled El Idioma Español en el Deporte—Guía práctica, was also published. It was presented at the Olympic Media Headquarters in Barcelona a few days before the opening of the Olympic Games, and was distributed among all the Spanish-speaking reporters who had been sent to cover the games for the sports news media (press, radio, and television). This booklet includes terms and idioms that present difficulties in Spanish and foreign terms commonly used in all the Olympic sports to refer to general sports.

The publication of the Manual de Español Urgente is the most important achievement of the DEU and its Consejo Asesor de Estilo. This book, already in its 12th edition (Catedra, Madrid, 1995), includes all the essential information for the correct usage of Spanish by the press. Its purpose is to prevent potential linguistic errors, to help clarify doubts, and, in these times of major technical inventions accompanied by their corresponding linguistic innovations, to try to establish consistent criteria for the use of neologisms. The first edition, published in 1976, was entitled Manual de Estilo de la Agencia.
EFE. We are almost positive that it is the oldest stylebook published in the Spanish-speaking community, in addition to being the most well-known.

The final book in our collection is the Vademécum de Español Urgente. Volumes I and II have already been published. It includes notes and comments on the improper use of words and structures, problems with spelling, incorrect translations (copies), names of countries, proper names, etc., and it completes the Manual de Español Urgente.

Also related to the subject of style manuals is a project Alex Grijelmo, a reporter from the newspaper El País and the one responsible for its stylebook, and I presented during the First International Congress on Spanish Language, entitled “La Lengua y los Medios de Comunicación,” which was held in Mexico City in April of 1997. The project, sponsored by the Instituto Cervantes, proposed the creation of a single style manual to be used by all the Spanish news media. Its history follows below.

In 1990, an international meeting was organized in Madrid by the Agencia EFE, entitled “El español en las agencias de prensa.” Among the conclusions of the proceedings, published in 1991, there is a recommendation to prepare a book on writing guidelines or norms to be used by all press agencies drafting news items in Spanish. The same proceedings include a short discussion, held during the meeting, regarding a “style-book” and the final agreement that, when referring only to guidelines or norms for correct Spanish usage by the press, we must speak not of style, but rather of writing guidelines or norms, since spelling, syntax, a dictionary of grammatical and lexical doubts, acronyms and country names, which would make up the contents of such a book, are not related to style.

Two years later, the Congreso de la Lengua Española was held in Seville. Milagros Sánchez Arnosi submitted a report on stylebooks in the session devoted to the Spanish language and the press. She stated that “it would be very desirable if all newspapers that had created a stylebook would arrive at a common understanding in order to standardize criteria, improve the quality of the written language in the press, and jointly contribute to the propriety of the language and, thus, to improved linguistic competence.” In the same session of the congress, Clara Eugenia Lázaro Mora, style reviewer for the ABC newspaper, solicited the “help and collaboration of the Real Academia Española” and asked that this institution put into practice “as soon as possible its idea of meeting with the media to develop jointly, and under its coordination, a set of specific guidelines for journalistic language, that is, a Manual de Estilo for all the Spanish media and, if possible, also for the Latin American media.” I myself garnered the courage to propose developing a “cocktail” in which the ingredients would consist of all of the manuals and criteria currently in use by the media.

Once the ingredients were all well mixed in the cocktail shaker, the result would be a homogenous mix that would help standardize criteria and avoid the fragmentation of the Spanish language used by the press.

And on these two occasions it so happened, as is often the case in similar situations, that the conclusions, commitments, and projects on which the congress closed, never became a reality. So that this would not occur again, and before going to Zacatecas to propose the project sponsored by the Cervantes Institute, we took the first two steps of what we know to be a long journey.

First, we have tried to prepare as exhaustive a bibliography as possible of all the books that must be reviewed. These books will serve as working references. From them, common points on usage will be extrapolated and documented. From this, disagreements and various solutions to identical problems that we must all study will come out, making it possible to arrive at necessary agreements. We have already registered 163 works on this list, which includes general dictionaries, reference dictionaries, specialized lexicons, stylebooks and manuals, proceedings from language conferences, working notes from some groups, compilations of articles on the use of the language in the press, among other material.

Of the 163 works already on our list, one-third comprise stylebooks and manuals (also called style guidelines, writing guidelines, or norms). And of those, almost half, or about 26, are from the Americas. They are the stylebooks and manuals from some of the most important media groups in the region: the Notimex News Agency (México); Colprensa (Colombia); Venpress (Venezuela); Telam (Argentina); Associated Press (U.S.); Prensa Latina

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The Departamento de Español Urgente of the Agency EFE Continued

(Cuba); the newspapers Clarín (Argentina); El Nuevo Herald (U.S.); El Panamá América (Panamá); El Peruano (Perú); La Voz del Interior (Argentina); and radio stations, such as Caracol from Colombia.

In reviewing these books, we have found that many of them, mainly those published in Spain, have been copied from others, especially from the two pioneer works: the Libro de Estilo from El País and the Manual de Español Urgente from the Agencia EFE. The phenomenon of “cloned” books is already occurring, where even the same mistakes are duplicated. We have reached a point where we are all copying from each other and cannot escape this vicious circle.

The second step we took before going to México was to search out supporters for our venture. We wrote a letter to all the directors of the major media outlets in the Spanish-speaking world and the United States. We told them about our project, requested their commitment, urged them to tell us about their problems regarding the use of Spanish in their media, and, lastly, asked them to send us anything they might have that resembled a stylebook (even if it was only a few photocopied pages), in order to be included on the above-mentioned list. In less than a month, we received word from over 30 media directors.

Included among the media groups willing to participate in the project are: the news agency Notimex and the newspaper El Universal (México); the news agency Prensa Latina (Cuba); the newspaper El Tiempo (Bogotá); El Nuevo Herald (Miami); Radio Nacional (Spain); Radio Caracol (Colombia); and Channel 11 TV (México).

We do not know how long the journey will take, perhaps three or four years, but we are already beginning to feel the pleasant sensation that comes from knowing that one day the phone will ring and it will be a call from the publisher to let us know that we can pick up the first copy of the new book. And that day will mark the first time that Alex Grijelmo and I, upon receiving word of the publication of a new stylebook, will no longer think about the “cloned sheep.”

The most recent news is that the project, thanks to the sponsorship received from the Cervantes Institute, is progressing well. All the stylebooks are being entered, and we hope that the first results, the first listings of acronyms, abbreviations, names of countries and peoples, and others will be available soon, and that we can publish them on the Cervantes Institute and Agencia EFE Web pages.

The media can reach a larger public, something no average citizen can do. Therefore, the media has a much greater responsibility towards society. An ordinary citizen, as such, can do little, but a journalist may reach a considerable number of people with a newspaper column. It is precisely because of this wide reach that an error in language usage made by a journalist, be it due to carelessness or lack of knowledge, will be spread out among many, who, by mimesis, following a model they believe to be correct, may repeat the error. Thus, the journalist may be contributing to an increase in the number of mistakes in language use. The mistakes, often casual and merely individual, make those who lack confidence in their use of the language feel very insecure; the authority of a newspaper or a radio is seldom questioned by its readers or listeners. Let us consider a clear example of those mistakes, taken from one of the announcements in the Vademécum de Español Urgente:

The following headline was published in one of the largest newspapers in Madrid: “Detenidos siete chinos ilegales en cinco restaurantes de Barcelona.” At first glance, it may appear as if those detained were not legally Chinese, that is, that they did not fulfill all the legal requirements established in order to be Chinese and, therefore, it is debatable whether they are Chinese citizens. If we consult the Diccionario de la Lengua Española de la Real Academia, we will find that illegal means “against the law,” meaning that the Chinese were against the law. However, that was not the case. Rather, those detained had illegally entered Spain without having fulfilled all the requirements to legalize their stay in the country.

Headlines must be drafted with extreme care, since it is possible to say very absurd and funny things when trying to minimize the use of space by saying a lot with as few words as possible. Such is this example of the illegal Chinese, who most likely were legal Chinese citizens that had entered Spain illegally because they did not have the required documents.

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By now, you’ve probably run across the terms localization (L10n), internationalization (I18n), and globalization (G11n), and may have wondered what they mean or how to become part of this explosive, lucrative market. All of these terms are generally thought of as belonging exclusively to the high tech industry, particularly software. They are viewed as a relatively recent complication to the global marketing of products and services.

The majority of localization is from English to another language, because the majority of the world’s software is produced in the United States. Since taking off in the 1980s and 1990s, localization-related businesses have tended to congregate in Ireland. That country was chosen for its proximity to Europe, favorable tax structure, European Union membership, and English-speaking population. Today, nearly every major high tech firm from Microsoft to Cisco has at least a small office in Ireland, and the country has responded to industry needs by building an educational infrastructure that is yet to be rivaled by the United States.

Definitions

It is usually easiest to think of localization, internationalization, and globalization in that order, although a truly visionary business would think in reverse. Let’s examine why.

Localization is the process of getting a product and its accompanying documentation adapted to a local market. It includes considerations such as translation, adapting currency, measurement, time, and date conventions appropriate to the local market, adjusting software code to function properly, resizing dialog boxes, defining shortcut key conventions, and even deciding the size of the box in which the product will be shipped. In sum, the process consists of all the activities necessary to make the product look and act as if it were native to the locale in which it is intended to be sold.

The localization process can be vastly simplified by internationalizing the initial engineering phase of a project. Software can contain millions of lines of code, making it difficult to find text that requires translation. By isolating translatable text from code in resource files, the integrity of code can be protected, resulting in reduced testing costs. Dialog boxes that resize automatically to accommodate text expansion save countless hours. Preparing glossaries of industry-specific terms prevents multiple translations of the same concept, leading to a tighter, more consistent interface. All of this preplanning for localization is at the core of the internationalization process.

Finally, there is globalization, which can be easily defined as the condition in which all procedures and processes company-wide are structured in a way that facilitates localization. However, creating this condition is the most difficult of the three terms we have discussed so far. Especially in our burgeoning “dot.com” economy, the resources often do not exist to hire and maintain a staff of internationally-savvy employees, which is why we continue to see companies following the localization-internationalization-globalization path. While the greatest efficiency may be achieved by adopting a globalization vision at the outset, a country as large as the U.S. tends to lean toward an insular vision, leading to a distinctly monolingual pool of locally available talent.

How Do High Tech Companies Handle Localization?

The nature of high tech industry is profoundly variable to the extent that required resources vary over a product release cycle. As such, linguistic and engineering needs ebb and peak, creating a need for flexible temporary workers. It may be called freelance, temp, or consulting, but in all but the largest companies, resources do not permit the retention of expensive specialist staff during the period between product releases.

In general, translation is looked upon as a necessary, yet ancillary, component of the larger localization project. Depending on the company, translation is either outsourced, or consultants are hired. The job of the consultant is to render the source language into the target language while maintaining source code integrity. A consultant’s...
work is normally overseen by an in-house localization manager, or similarly titled individual, who has expertise in two or more languages, in addition to extensive project management experience and some knowledge of computer programming. Often, the localization manager is among only a small handful of permanent staff that deals with international issues related to software production.

If a company decides to hire consultants, these will, ideally, work in-house. Such an arrangement allows for inter-lingual consultation among translators of different languages, and permits the impromptu exchange of ideas and work procedures with engineers and others that will assist in making the project run smoothly. This method of translation, though efficient for the company, is also expensive and requires that additional time be spent recruiting and screening translators, in addition to purchasing publishing or development software tools in each of the target languages. Furthermore, there is the added cost of storing, maintaining, developing, and managing legacy documentation and software from previous releases.

Because of the difficulty of managing projects in-house, many companies opt for a localization vendor. Over the past 10 years, localization vendors have emerged from consolidations, start-ups, and mergers within the industry in response to the torrent of demand for such services from high tech companies. Among the largest of such firms are Lionbridge, Lernout & Hauspie, ILE, Bowne, and SDL. These companies have large in-house staffs specializing in many different areas such as engineering, project management, linguistics, terminology, and translation, just to name a few areas. Some of the services offered by such firms include engineering, testing, quality assurance, translation, project management, translation memory database development, website translation, terminology management, and glossary creation, among others.

Localization vendors provide efficiency for a market that requires labor only at limited intervals. By combining projects from many companies at one location, the temporary nature of the work is eliminated, providing stable employment for those with specialized skills.

**Basic Skills and Tools for Localization**

In order to enter the localization field as a translator, a broad-based education is the key. In addition to the linguistic qualifications required of any translator, some engineering skills are necessary. The ability to understand computer code is vital. While it may not be necessary to write your own code, it will be essential to be able to work within code that is already written. For example, the ability to distinguish between code, notes, links, and translatable text is necessary to successfully translate a piece of software. A primer course in hyper text mark-up language (html) would be a good start.

Educational opportunities in localization are on the increase, though still rare. The University of Washington in Seattle offers a Certificate in Localization, and Kent State in Ohio and the Monterey Institute in California offer coursework as well. Austin Community College in Texas has a localization curriculum in the works. Overseas institutions, particularly the University of Limerick in Ireland, offer graduate degrees in localization and localization engineering.

In addition to code of various sorts, there are also a number of tools that have become industry standards when working with localization. For publishing, MS Word and Adobe FrameMaker are common tools. For online help development, RoboHelp is common, and if PDFs (portable document format—a common, cross-platform electronic document format) are required, Adobe Acrobat will be necessary as well. These software tools are not difficult to learn, but they are pricey, ranging from $200 to more than $1,000. That is a considerable investment for a freelancer, but may be worth it if the pay rate for a given project justifies the expense.

Finally, there are tools specifically for translators that may be worth considering if you have a large volume of translations that tend to be repetitive. This is often the case with localization, where writing is highly structured and contained so as to be clear, concise, and easily readable. Translation memory tools such as Trados, Star’s Transit, SDLX, and Déjà Vu, among others, assist with terminology management, glossary creation, and translation memory database development. They can greatly increase translation speed by matching similar
Here I go again critiquing (criticizing?! ) a translator’s job. Truthfully, by discussing mistranslations I don’t mean to be judgmental (although there is no way out, and I always feel guilty about the finger-pointing attitude I start with) but to discuss and reconstruct lost meanings. Translated texts, especially canonical ones, migrate to other countries and represent the culture in which they were originally steeped. Invisible translations may read well but can convey false ideas about the original text to the unsuspecting reader. It is precisely where the target text falls short in the “spaces between” the two linguistic or cultural systems that the educated reader finds the richness of the original and begins to ponder other possibilities for the transference of meaning across cultural borders.

The purpose of a conversation about these discrepancies is to make us more sensitive and more aware of our skills and responsibilities. Also, I believe that it falls upon those of us who teach literature through texts in translation to expose these flawed transpositions to our students. They should become aware of the richness of the original text, of the spaces in-between, and the difficulties that translators run into when trying to accommodate a text into a different culture and linguistic system.

To elaborate on these issues, I chose some examples taken from the Portuguese translation of John Steinbeck’s *Chrysanthemums*. This is the story of a woman, Elisa Allen, who cultivated chrysanthemums in a garden of her own in a corner of her husband’s farm. The point of the story rests precisely on the fact that this is “her” garden and these flowers are “her creation,” meant for enjoyment and beauty, not for profit. Her flowers are “strong,” “big,” almost oversized, drawing comments like, ‘‘You’re a gift with things,’ her husband observed. ‘Some of those yellow chrysanthemums you had this year were ten inches across. I wish you’d work out in the orchard and raise some apples that big.’” Steinbeck describes Elisa as “handsome,” “over-powerful,” and “strong.” These qualifiers add thematic nuances to the story, and therefore their translation should have been carefully considered.

Here is the first reference to Elisa: “Elisa Allen, working in her flower garden, looked down across the yard…” The translation reads: “Elisa Allen, que trabalhava no jardim, baixou a vista sobre o pátio…” First, “looked down across the yard” is certainly not “baixou a vista sobre o pátio.” But it’s the omission of the possessive “her” in “trabalhava no jardim” which claims more attention, especially in light of the feminist angle of the story. “Her flower garden” clearly determines that the garden is hers; it’s fenced in, set apart from the rest of the farm. As a result of using “no jardim,” instead of “no seu jardim,” plus leaving out the specification “flower garden,” the translator interfered with references essential to the meaning of the story.

A few lines below, Elisa’s husband approaches her garden quietly, and, says Steinbeck, “leaned over the wire fence that protected her flower garden from cattle and dogs and chickens.” The translation reads: “se debruçara sobre a cerca de arame farpado, que protegia o jardim e o defendia do gado, dos cães e das galinhas.” To use “seu” here would have made the statement ambiguous (it could refer to “his” or “her”), and

...[Students] should become aware of...the difficulties that translators run into when trying to accommodate a text into a different culture and linguistic system...

“o jardim de flores dela” involves too many apparently unnecessary and cacophonous alliterations. Had the possessive been clear in the first instance, it might have been omitted here with no great loss of meaning or suggestion. Still, to include the qualifying “flowers” would have been easy and helpful. Both the possessive and the idea that it is a “flower garden” (in a corner of a cattle farm) come charged with feminist and thematic implications, and should have been the object of careful consideration in the process of translating. The translation, however, is invisible, and reads well in Portuguese. We don’t miss the possessive or the specification, and thus don’t suspect their presence in the original.

The use of the possessive in this construction is complicated by the fact that in Portuguese we normally don’t use possessives in instances in which it is common usage in English. For

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Regaining Meaning Continued

example, we say lavo as mãos when the common expression in English is I wash my hands; I will wash my face, my hair translates as vou lavar o rosto, a cabeça, with the article instead of the possessive. However, in the case of Steinbeck’s story, the feminine possessive sets Elisa’s property aside from the rest of her husband’s farm. She excels in taking care of her flowers in her garden. Hence the importance of reading the whole story or at least learning about it prior to engaging in the task of translating. The translator should be aware of the way words in the text bear meanings in order to recreate the emphasis as found in the source passage.

On a couple of occasions Steinbeck makes use of the repetition of words and phrases to enhance certain traits in a character. Toward the end of the story, he lingers over the meaning of the word “nice.” As Elisa gets dressed to go out, her husband makes a comment: “‘You look so nice!’” and she responds, “‘Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by ‘nice’?’” Here is the translation:

Bravo, Elisa! Estás formosa!

Formosa? Achas que estou formosa?
Que entendas tu por ‘formosa’?

First, if we wish to quibble with degrees of niceness and beauty, I believe that the equivalent of nice here is “bonita” and not “formosa,” as chosen by the translator. The use of tu betrays the fact that the translator is probably a speaker of Continental Portuguese. In Brazil, tu is used in the south, by the Catarinenses and Gauchos, and in some areas of the State of São Paulo. Yet, the construction sounds too formal for the general register of Steinbeck’s story. I would probably say, “O que é que você quer dizer com ‘bonita’?”.

The husband answers, “‘I don’t know. I mean you look different, strong and happy,’” leading to the next sequence of exchanges:

“I am strong? Yes, strong. What do you mean ‘strong’?” He looked bewildered. ‘You’re playing some kind of a game,’ he said helplessly. ‘It’s a kind of play. You look strong enough to break a calf over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon.’”

The husband’s verbal ineptitude prevails, especially since this awkward expression is used to describe a woman who keeps a neat house and does not want to see a fight that evening. She responds, “‘Henry! Don’t talk like that. You didn’t know what you said...’” and shortly thereafter, “‘I’m strong,’ she boasted. ‘I never knew before how strong.’” This is precisely the strength that will be shattered the moment she sees her dear chrysanthemums hurled by the side of the road.

Just like “nice” above, “strong” now becomes the word emphasized and repeated. The repetition of the adjective carries thematic importance in the story. Here is the translation of the whole passage:

Henry atrapalhou-se:

Não sei. Acho-te diferente: vigorosa, feliz
Achas-me vigorosa? Sim, vigorosa. Que queres tu dizer por vigorosa?

Henry fitou-a estupefeito.

Estás a brincar comigo? – perguntou, sentindo-se desamparado. Que brincadeira é essa? Pareces tão forte que até te julgo capaz de dominar um touro com o joelho, e tão feliz que não me admiraria se o comesse com se fosse uma melancia.

... Sinto-me forte – alardeou. – Nunca me senti tão forte.
(emphases mine)

The change from vigorosa to forte when the original text repeats the same simple word “strong” misrepresents the sequence as Steinbeck expressed it, as well as his concern for words and style. This exchange relates directly to other references to Elisa as being “over-eager” or “over-powerful” and to the fact that she grows unusually big flowers. At this point in the story, her “strength” derives also from the fact that a stranger (to whom she feels attracted) admired her flowers and asked for a sample; an indication that her talent has been finally recognized outside her fenced-in world. The emphatic
use of “strong” in this passage contrasts with the situation at the end of the story in which Elisa turns her face away from her husband “crying weakly.” The translation, “chorando perdamente,” fails to establish this contrast as well, although I admit and confirm by repeating, reflecting the man but did not on the “’...’ It is hard to believe that the translator failed to notice the man answers or Bragging about this team, comprised of an “old bay horse and a little grey-and-white burro,” the man answers “It might surprise you what them beasts can pull through:’” And Elisa ironically echoes his addendum of moments before: “’When they get started...’” getting the man to “smile for a second,” and confirm by repeating, “’Yes, when they get started.’” It is hard to believe that the translator failed to notice the ironic repetition, but the Portuguese text misses the point:

Quando dá para morder, é uma fera.
Elisa riu.

Estou vendo. Quando é que dá para morder?
O riso de Elisa contagiou o homem, que riu também de boa vontade.

Às vezes demora semanas e semanas.

And some lines below:
...Não creio que seu carro possa atravessar a areia.
...
Não se preocupe, os animais puxam bem.
Quando lhes dá na veneta, não é? – perguntou Elisa.
O homem esboçou um leve sorriso.

Sim, quando lhes dá na veneta.

Without the echo of the interjection, the target text misses the irony and the emotional response of the characters. Besides, Elisa’s use of irony enhances her strong character and adds a dimension to this woman, her quick way with thoughts and words, which the translation fails to convey.

The rural setting brings forth the complexities of how to translate regionalist speeches and/or ungrammatical language as used by uneducated characters. At one point the peddler asks Elisa for some work and explains that he “ain’t had a thing to do today.” The Portuguese reads, “ainda não estrei.” “Não estrei,” which sounds strange to me as the equivalent of the expression in the source text, belongs to a higher register and does not reflect the colloquial, rural, grammatically flawed language which characterizes the man who uttered it. My Brazilian inner ear would translate this as a caipira, or nordestino would probably say it: “Num consegui nada inda hoje,” or “Num tive trabalho [trabai] inda hoje,” reflecting the man’s social position and illiteracy. The traveling repairman has his job spelled out in “clumsy, crooked letters” on the canvas of his wagon: “Pots, pans, knives, scissors, lawn mores, Fixed.” The translator found an extremely good solution to keep the alliteration in “letras toscas e tortas,” but did not reproduce the misspellings. The Portuguese, “Amola tesouras e navalhas. Consertam-se panelas, canecas, etc.” is impeccably grammatical, with even the passive construction in the plural. We almost expect the wrong “Conserta-se....,” at least in Brazil.

Part of the problem may derive from the fact that the translator spoke Continental Portuguese. When I read translations of dialogues pertaining to
rural characters into Continental Portuguese, the language never seems adjusted to the character. It often seems to belong to a higher register due to a vocabulary that I consider more sophisticated and admirably correct, somewhat unrealistic for the setting. Of course, these concepts date from my school days when some teacher mentioned that people in Portugal, unlike most Brazilians, always use objective pronouns properly, and use objective pronouns and not the subjective ones if that is what the construction requires. For example, they really say “eu o vi” and not “eu vi ele” as many Brazilians, even educated ones, often do. We usually don’t write this way, but we certainly speak quite a grammatically imperfect Portuguese. Here is one more example. The peddler feigns disappointment when Elisa explains that chrysanthemums do better transplanted than seeded, and says, “Oh, I s’pose I can’t take none to her, then...” with the incorrect double negative. The translation reads, “Ah...Visto isso, não posso levar-lhe nenhuma,” in a perfect, grammatical construction. Likewise, when Elisa explains how to transplant the flowers, her Portuguese is flawless: “Se quiser, coloco-as em areia úmida e poderá levá-las imediatamente. Tenha o cuidado de conservar o vaso em água, para não deixá-las morrer. Depois é só transportá-las.” (“I can put some in damp sand, and you can carry them right along with you. They will take root in a pot if you keep them damp. And then she can transplant them.”). In Brazil, the objective pronouns are seldom used in such a perfect way, especially orally. A Brazilian farm woman would most likely have said something like, “Posso por as flores em areia molhada e aí você pode levar sem problema. Elas vão criar raízes no vaso se voce deixar sempre molhado. E depois ela pode transplantar as flores.” It seems almost natural to avoid using the objective pronoun because we know we don’t use it properly.

On the other hand, I wonder how Continental Portuguese readers respond to a translation that uses typically Brazilian syntax and expressions. Here is an example from Dorothy Parker’s “Arrangement in Black and White.” Paulo Rôni and Aurélio Buarque de Hollanda use language that echoes my own colloquial speech forms:

“Well, thank goodness,” she said, ‘because I wouldn’t have embarrassed him for anything. Why, he’s awfully nice. Just as nice as he can be. Nice manners, and everything. You know, so many colored people, you give them an inch, and they walk all over you.’

Puxa, graças a Deus! Porque eu não gostaria de chatear ele, por nada neste mundo. Nossa, como é ele é encantador! Fino que só éle! Maneiras refinadas e tudo! O senhor sabe, há tantos negros que quando o senhor dá o pé logo querem a mão! ...

Here, the common “chatear éle” and the “Puxa” and “Nossa” create a very familiar colloquial dialogue, both in lexical and syntactical choices. How do these colloquialisms fare across the ocean? Some “Lusos” who attended my presentation in St. Louis confirmed that these passages sound strange to them.

And here is one more example of differences between the language spoken in Europe and the one in Brazil. In this case, the translation of a term into Continental Portuguese misleads the Brazilian reader and affects the meaning of the passage in unexpected ways. When Elisa tells the peddler she has nothing in need of repair, he smartly manipulates her feelings by admiring her flowers. He refers to them as “kind of long-stemmed flower? Looks like a quick puff of colored smoke?” And she responds, “What a nice way to describe them.” The translator, revealing the fact that he/she uses Continental Portuguese, writes: “Que maneira engraçada de descrevê-los.” “Engraçada,” as the translation of “nice,” leaves the unsuspecting Brazilian reader thinking that Elisa found the comment funny and not “nice.” Only in Portugal does “engraçada” suggest “graceful” or “nice”; in Brazil, “engraçado” means only funny or laughable. Again, notice the use of the objective pronoun “descrevê-los” in the example above; in Brazil, it would most probably become “de descrever os crisântemos;” or simply “de descrever.” Should we begin to entertain the need for both a Brazilian and a Continental version of foreign texts?

At the risk of being redundant, the discrepancies between source and target texts provide me with a means to point out the richness of the original and how meanings and linguistic
accomplishments get “added” or “subtracted” in the target text. As teachers of literature, we should make our students aware of the translation processes and enhance the linguistic possibilities of both source and target language. As academic diplomats, we owe this to the cultures we straddle and bridge as we introduce new readers to them.

References


Translation Between Arabic and English Continued from p. 24

translated as إذا: He would write if you would answer: إذا كتب وإذا.

In indirect speech, “would” expresses futurity: He said he would bring the book: سيحضر الكتاب وصيانتها إذا. It expresses a regular action: Fridays he would sleep late: متأخر أيام الجماعة يوم في وقت.

“Would” may mitigate the strength of a statement or a request: Would you please leave: من فضلك أن تصرف هل لك أن تصرف.

Avoidance of Successive Placement of Verbs

In certain structures successive placement of verbs should be avoided. Translation of the following sentence: “Much remains to be done” should be: لا يزال القيام بعمل جم يتعين: بتعين القيام بعمل جم لا يزال القيام, the noun in the nominative case, should follow the first verb, with the second verb, coming after the nominative noun.

By the same token, one should say: عليه يستعصى علينا ما دام النساء, as long as its elimination is impossible for us, and not: ما دام على النساء. Also, ما دام يستعصى علينا القضاء عليه: شح حرب نووية يخيم على. as long as a specter of a nuclear war reigns over the world, and not: على العالم شح حرب نووية ما دام يخيم.

Specification (التمييز)

In English sentences where specification (tamyiz) is used, such as, “He did this in disregard/contempt of that,” the correct translation would be to use the لذلك فعل هذا تجاهلا: التمييز لذلك, and not: فعل ذلك في تجاهل أو في احترار.
care and consideration should be given to every item, choosing appropriate words, imparting the correct tone, selecting effective phrases. I am sure you will agree, Mr. President, that such tasks are totally beyond the reach of machines.

As you travel around the world and have people from around the world assist you in your endeavors, stop and think: The professional that you are depending on so heavily to interpret the meaning of your words and thoughts in a precise and accurate manner, is the very partner that you cannot work without in your negotiations and dealings. With many more dialects and languages than there are countries, translators and interpreters are becoming increasingly essential in our global world.

Mr. President, translators and interpreters all over the world are saddened by a statement that can so easily be misinterpreted, making people even less aware of the importance of the translation profession in facilitating communication between different communities and between different countries. We take this opportunity to request that you use your powerful voice, not to make translators and interpreters more invisible, but rather to enhance the crucial role that they play in our society.

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Marian Schwartz on Translating Nina Berberova

Literary reviewers, so versatile in panning or praising authors, develop hardening of the thesaurus when they have to judge translators; “competent” and “yeomanlike” appear to be their total inventory of adjectives. When translations are so good that even New York Times reviewers find words to note their excellence, it’s an occasion for rejoicing. Marian Schwartz’s translations of three books by Russian émigré novelist Nina Berberova have warranted such attention. They are The Ladies from St. Petersburg, The Book of Happiness, and Cape of Storms, all published within the past two years by New Directions. Presently serving as president-elect of the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), Marian, who lives and works in Austin, Texas, has an astonishing resume that includes 23 book-length translations and dozens of stories and articles. We asked Marian to share some of her insights on translation and publishing with Chronicle readers.

JE: Marian, congratulations. By any standards, these books are a significant contribution to contemporary culture. And they are great examples of the art of translation. One reviewer says the work was “translated with care and suitable transparency.” Another says you have rendered “Berberova’s distinctive Russian into fine and elegant English.” Phrases like this in a review are so rare. Tell me, do you feel a special affinity for the writing of Nina Berberova? How important is it for the translator to be able to identify with the author’s way of thinking?

MS: I think it’s usually a mistake for a literary translator to take on a project she can’t believe in. Not only do you have to be confident of your own skills, but you have to admire the original text.

JE: Did you seek Berberova out, then, because you admired her work?

MS: I met her in conjunction with a nonliterary project, and when I realized what a marvelous stylist she was and how gratifyingly intelligent her writing was, I inquired whether she had ever written any fiction (my personal interest). She gave me something off her shelf, I read it, I asked for permission to translate it, and within a year it had won first prize in the Literary Review’s Novella-in-Translation Contest. This was Sentence Commuted, later published as Astashev in Paris, much to my dismay.

JE: It’s hard to imagine someone thought that title change was an improvement! So, in other words, you not only liked her writing, but you could identify with the way her mind worked. That’s got to be very important.

MS: I think so. Before Berberova, I ignored my gut and translated what I was advised to translate. With her, I trusted my gut, which turned out to be the right thing to do. She was the first author I chose on the basis of my own taste and judgment.

JE: Interesting. It’s like choosing a mate, or a dentist. Or a psychiatrist. Maybe harder. I think the question of what, or rather whom, to translate is tremendously important.

MS: I agree. My work with Berberova was an important part of my own self-education as a translator. When I first began to translate her literary work, she was only known within the academic community. And she wasn’t particularly well liked or even respected there.

JE: You had good instincts and the confidence to act on them. Tell me, did you work together on the translations? Did you become friends?

MS: Yes, we worked together on the books, and she was very helpful. And over time we became friends.

JE: Nina Berberova was at Princeton, wasn’t she?

MS: Yes, when she died in 1993 she was professor emerita. She fled Russia in 1922.

JE: I’ve read that a lot of Berberova’s work describes the experience of White Russians at the time of the revolution and afterward.

MS: That’s right. What was so special about working with Berberova was that, for the most part, she was recreating a very specific milieu—the working-class White Russian émigré world of Billancourt, where the Renault factory was, and where so many of those émigrés worked. She helped me to visualize this world so that I could get it right in English.

JE: Can you give us an example of the kind of thing she could help you with?

MS: My famous example concerns a dog in one of the stories: apparently a blue sheepdog (golubaia ovcharka), but actually a fashionable deerhound that was a gray color with a bluish cast. The dog was important because it was a status symbol.

JE: It’s an incredible advantage to be able to work with someone who can supply those details. So many translations get published with all the blue sheepdogs, and God knows what else, still running around loose. No wonder reviewers don’t know what to say about translations. How else did Berberova help you?

MS: Well, I think I was fortunate to have read The Big City while she was still alive, because I was able to ask her whether she had a specific place in mind. She was surprised at my confusion and insisted that this was simply Manhattan. In the story, she refers to Manhattan as a “cape,” which is probably not inaccurate technically, given that the northern end

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Hungarian Treasury of Words
A Dictionary of Synonyms, Idioms, and Antonyms
Magyar Szókincstár
Rokon értelmű szavak, szólások és ellentétek szótára

Editor:
Gábor Kiss
Publisher:
TINTA Publisher, Budapest
Publication Date:
1999
ISBN:
963-85622-2-6

Available from:
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Reviewed by:
Helen M. and John F. Szablya

The Hungarian Treasury of Words was published with support from the National Scientific Research Foundation of Hungary. It contains 25,500 vocabulary entries with 42,300 synonyms, for a total of 80,600 words.

Every vocabulary entry is printed in bold letters, with the part of speech (e.g., noun, verb) given in parenthesis right after the word. If there are two possibilities for the part of speech, then both either appear in the same parentheses or there are two entries. For example: red (noun, adjective); jackass I. (noun), jackass II. (adjective).

There are several meanings for the same vocabulary entry, then the synonym-groups are separated by an empty diamond sign (◊). If the antonym is available, it comes after the synonyms and continues with the synonyms of the antonym. Following the antonyms, the idiom for the original vocabulary entry is given.

We are both Hungarian translators. We use this book extensively in our work and are very satisfied with the number and variety of words, synonyms, antonyms, and idioms it provides.

Gábor Kiss, the dictionary’s editor, has a rather unusual background (not to mention the fact that he owns hundreds of dictionaries). His first degree was in computer mathematics. For his second degree, he pursued his true dream, linguistics. While still in school, he was already employed by the Hungarian Academy of Science Linguistic Institute. The Institute had just purchased its first computer at that time, so a linguistic student with a degree in computer programming was exactly what was needed. He was on the team that developed the Russian and the Hungarian-speaking computers. He then moved on to work on the big Hungarian literary dictionaries.

To provide some perspective on the evolution of reference works for the Hungarian language, here is a bit of history. The first dictionary that contained the Hungarian language was published in Vienna in 1538. It was a six-language (Latin-Italian-French-Czech-Hungarian-German) dictionary that printed the words according to concepts, and not in alphabetical order. Most Hungarian dictionaries, from the earliest days on, have a beehive on their cover pages to show that the words were collected as bees collect honey.

New dictionaries were assembled from those that came before, adding new words/concepts and giving new meanings to old words as the language developed. Even today, Hungarian continues to change, which sometimes leads to disagreement over meaning. Take the reviewers of this dictionary for example. Helen is 10 years younger than John, but even in those short 10 years there have been changes to the meanings of several words. This leads to occasional differences of opinion between them. For instance, the other day the Hungarian word esszencia (essence) came up. For Helen, it meant a concentrate from which housewives made liquor, rum, or druggists made perfume. However, for John, the word meant concentrated vinegar. According to the dictionary, Helen’s interpretation was listed first and John’s second.

Many new words continue to be added to the Hungarian language as a result of Hungary’s status as one of the newly liberated countries. For example, Web page, Website, software, environmentalist, shopping mall, and many more.

Slang dictionaries, student talk, soldier talk, and idioms all have their rightful places in the Hungarian Treasury of Words. Kiss used 19 single-language dictionaries, seven two-language ones, as well as two idiom and proverb collections in his research while compiling this dictionary.

A unique feature of this single-language dictionary in Hungarian is that it provides antonyms for about half the words. The other half is missing, as the concept of antonyms is not very widespread and can be controversial. For instance, many would name “window” as an antonym for “door,” though that is not really an antonym, but only a word in the same circle of concepts. For “sky,” some would name “earth,” others “water.”

The idioms given make the dictionary colorful, but in a thesaurus-sense, most of the time one would not be able to use a sentence instead of a word to express a concept.

The Hungarian Treasury of Words is also available on CD-ROM. Two companies have produced a CD-ROM for the Budapest Book Festival: the Scriptum Rt. in Szeged, and the MorphoLogic Kft. in Budapest. Both programs contain the same material, only their user-interface is different.

For example, let’s look at the word “horse.” How many idioms can we find with this word? The CD-ROM brings up 84 different versions. Of course on paper, we would have to go through a lot of pages to find them because they all come under different vocabulary entries. For example, “he eats as much as a horse” would come up in connection with “big eater,” while “it’s worth as much as a horseshoe on a dead horse,” would come up under “superfluous,” and so on. Using the CD-ROM
version, we can bring up all 84 varieties at the click of the mouse.

The most important use of this dictionary is to monitor the precise, colorful, and correct use of the Hungarian language. This is going to be increasingly important, especially since Hungary is going to become a member of the European Union. Language is the carrier of culture and it is important to keep the identity of the language alive.

Both of us wholeheartedly recommend this dictionary. It is available in Hungary and at all Hungarian bookstores in the U.S. and Canada, and can be ordered using the information above from any bookstore or individual.

**Random House Webster's Dictionary of the English Language (CD-ROM)**

**Publisher:** Random House  
**Price:** \$28  
**Reviewed by:** Robert France

The *Random House Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* on CD-ROM is not a hot-off-the-press, just released product; it has been around for a time, and some of you are already using it. For me, however, it came onto the scene only in February of this year, and in the brief time since then, I have found it to be astonishingly useful. Much more so than I ever would have imagined.

Having come to this realization, the first thing I looked for was an off-the-shelf monolingual English-language CD-ROM dictionary. At a local general market bookstore, I found the *Random House*, priced at \$28. *Random House* having long been my favorite English-language dictionary of the printed persuasion, I bought the CD-ROM with no further ado. Several weeks later, my old faithful printed *Random House* is still permanently open on a table next to my desk, but more as décor than as an active duty reference book. Virtually overnight, it became extinct, turning into a dinosaur because it simply cannot compete with the CD-ROM version. The latter is so useful that I automatically open it every time I turn on my computer. Thus, it is always available, just a toggle away, and I consult it far more often than I used to consult the print version. At first, I was concerned that the CD-ROM version might not be as complete in either the number of entries or depth of detail, but to date I have found it just as complete in every respect. As a result, I click on it at the slightest need or whim: to explore a meaning, double-check a doubt, look for a synonym in a context other than the MS-Word thesaurus, or just out of simple curiosity about some word or another.

In sum, it is a treasure to have and use, and one which I recommend to every *Chronicle* reader. As translators, we ATA members are, ipso facto, dictionary-oriented people, but beyond the value it can have in your daily work, I recommend it to you for your families and friends, and for your children or grandchildren still in school. I think this particular technological wonder is one of the most effective ways that has ever come along to steer the computer-but-not dictionary-oriented student into frequent contact with the dictionary, and thence on to an ever richer command of the language.

Since the above review was prepared, the reviewer has obtained the *Clave Diccionario de Uso del Español Actual* on CD-ROM. Without going into detail, it seems both comprehensive and easy to use. Besides the basic dictionary, it contains a number of other highly useful sections.

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**The Departamento de Español Urgente of the Agency EFE**

Continued from p. 46

I do not wish to end here without first mentioning an issue that is best to clarify when speaking of situations that deal with the language of the press and its variations from the norm. What needs to be clarified is that journalists do not write as poorly as it might seem based on what has been said previously, and the language of the press is not as faulty as it would seem because of the errors that we may find.

Most journalists have a good command of the language, which is their working tool, and they use it better than the average speaker. However, as was previously stated, they enjoy the good, or perhaps unfortunate, fortune that their message reaches thousands of people, and so what they say or write, along with any possible errors, may be imitated by many listeners or readers who look to them as models. The responsibility is great. Therefore, media professionals must care for and defend the language they use, and be aware that they can trigger undesirable changes.
In a way that shows imagination with language that only the very young normally achieve, my nephew referred to one of his toys as a “helpful dump truck.” That is what this column is: a means for the Translation Inquirer to be helpful by unceremoniously dumping linguistic problems on more than 7,000 other people and organizations in our profession.

[Abbreviations used with entries in this column: D-Dutch; E-English; F-French; G-German; I-Italian; L-Latin; P-Portuguese; R-Russian; Sp-Spanish; Su-Finnish.]

New Queries

(D-E 5-2000/1) Mieke Lancaster was working in the topic of lathes and found “kogelomloopspil.” What is it?

(E-F 5-2000/2) Tony Roder needs to know whether the new continental currency is called “Euro, euro, euros, or Euros” in French. And whatever it is, are conversion tables handed out or sold for it in France?

(E-I 5-2000/3) An Italian equivalent of equal opportunity employer is needed, preferably the standard formulation if one exists.

(E-L 5-2000/4) Someone who is preparing a family crest asked Tony Roder to translate the inscription Commit thy work to the divine into Latin, presumably to place on the crest itself.

(F-E 5-2000/5) The verb “interpeller” appeared several times in an analysis of a preview of a new radio campaign for a drinks dispenser. Examples: “Pour les employés - ils sont interpellés par l’idée du distributeur.” And: “Pour les décideurs - ça peut être interpellant, mais celle façon de renseigner ne fait pas très ‘sérieux’...” Who knows the meaning of this verb?

(F-E 5-2000/6) ULE was a problem abbreviation for Bruce Sanderson in the field of logistics. Here is what he found: “Nombre de références (en fonction classes de volume ULE prédéfinies),” followed by a table: “% de lignes,” with capacities of 0.1 lit. Could it be “unité livrée entière?” And might delivered unit be a proper English rendering?

(F-E 5-2000/7) Mary Lalevée was reviewing a translation about satellites, and encountered (7.a) “trois positions orbitales.” Are these three orbital positions, and not orbital slots? In a vein more attuned to space commerce, she found (7.b) “vendre du secteur spatial ainsi que les liaisons montantes ou descendantes correspondantes”; it seems particularly strange for her to use space sector, as in “XXX utilise actuellement des secteurs spatiaux fournis par les satellites Y et Z.” Then, (7.e) “remplacement de la tête de réception appelée L’; receiving head? And lastly, “...des services en bande Ku et en bande C” are the “bandes” really bands?

(F-E 5-2000/8) Gene Weissman encountered the numerical term “deize” in a Belgian document (“le deize du mois de Janvier”). Does this stand for “dix” or “dixième”?

(G-E 5-2000/9) The context was a 1935 description of some features that presumably were in northwestern Germany, but for Motuacidorue the geographical appellation of “Bergisch-Märkisch” drew a blank. What region is this—or was this, given the boundary changes since then?

(R-E 5-2000/10) Elliott Urdang had problems finding standard equivalents for two terms in a lease agreement for a property being leased out by Управление ГИОН (Государственной инспекции по охране памятников): (10.a) балансодержатель. The term balance holder was found on the Web, but it was a poor English translation. Oddly enough, балансодержатель exists, raising the question of whether these two are synonyms. The other problem term was (10.b) охранное обязательство, taken from a sentence fragment withhold the requirement охранного обязательства с УГИОН. He could not find the equivalent.

(Sp-E 5-2000/11) On a school certificate from Lima, Peru, Gerard Mryglot found the abbreviations E.P.M., U.S.E., and M.G.P. Any ideas what these are?

(Su-E 5-2000/12) Yngve Roennike wonders whether “suuntautunesius” is best rendered as direct approach in English.

(Su-E 5-2000/13) In connection with pulp-related machinery, Yngve needs to know the meaning of “käppyrä.”

Replies to Old Queries

(E-Sp 1-2000/5) Renato Calderón often says in regard to this column that he likes to keep the pot boiling. He certainly did that with inner city, as replies keep coming in. This interesting one from Mirtha Nebeker, which is used in Argentina and Uruguay, is “barrios marginales,” normally located on the outskirts of a city. But even in North America, adds the Translation Inquirer, inner city never refers to an area in the historic core. Take Philadelphia, for example. If you tell me, “I work in Center City Philadelphia,” I assume you are in business or government work. But if you say, “I work in Philadelphia’s inner city,” I think of the huge area surrounding North Philadelphia Station, quite a different environment altogether.

(E-Sp 4-2000/2) (whereas...): Eric McMillan claims this is best rendered into Spanish as “considerándolo.”
resentative of some other officer of the company.

(G-E 1-2000/9) (“Schiebgliederband”): The term conveys sliding link conveyor to Kriemhilde Livingston, in contrast to “Gleitbandanlage” which is a sliding belt conveyor.

(G-E 1-2000/10) (“Nichtangriffsvereinbarung”): It’s a nonviolation agreement for Kriemhilde Livingston, while Alexis Takvorian likes no-contest clause.

(G-E 2-2000/6) (“Auslagerblock”): From Karin Isbell: delivery block, delivery station, or delivery shelf.

(G-E 2-2000/7) (“Bevollmächtiger”): Karin Isbell goes with ounce of power of attorney or attorney in fact for this. It’s an authorized representative or agent, deputy, or attorney at law, according to Kriemhilde Livingston. Selma Benjamin likes plenipotentiary. David Wilmsen notes the similarity between “Bevollmächtiger” and the Arabic “wakili,” a proxy, or a person or entity that holds a patent or franchise to sell products, or to act on behalf of a larger entity.

(G-E 2-2000/8) (“erfindungsgemäß”): In over three decades of translating patents, Phil Fisher has used based on the invention or of the invention. Depending on context, Karin Isbell likes in compliance with, according to, in keeping with, subject to, or under the provisions of the invention. No client has ever challenged the Translation Inquirer for his use of invention-specific for this.

(G-E 2-2000/9) (“als-ob-Betrachtung”): Context, says Karin Isbell might dictate any of the following: quasi view, tentative view, or projection, ...as it were.

(G-E 3-2000/6) (“die Leistungsfähigkeit des Naturhaushalts”): Kriemhilde Livingston suggests the productivity of natural ecology.

(G-E 3-2000/9) (“Alleinstellung”): Randall Condra reports that “Alleinstellung,” “Alleinstellungsmerkmal,” and “Differenzierungsmerkmal” are all synonyms for unique selling proposition, some feature that sets your product apart from the competition. This is increasingly difficult to achieve and maintain in business, therefore companies must concentrate on a “Differenzierungsmerkmal” (unique advertising proposition), a means of advertising that gives the product a unique appeal.

(G-E 4-2000/6) (“Mädchenaugae”): From a Finnish Website, Eric McMillan learned that the Latin name for this is Coreopsis tinctoria, and in English, calliopsis, plains coreopsis, and annual coreopsis. Australians call it tickseed.

(G-E 4-2000/7) (BGR): Very plausibly for a technical document, this expands to “Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe,” as found by Eric McMillan.

(Pt-E 2-2000/10) (“acometido”): This means that the patient has the condition or the disease, says Thais Simões. He or she might be debilitated, paralyzed, or overwhelmed by the condition, but not necessarily so. The Aurélio dictionary has several definitions of “acometor,” one of which is “manifester-se de repente.

(Sp-E 2-2000/12) (“teoría de improvisión”): In the French civil code, says Philippe Vitu, there exists a notion of “improvisation,” which, more specifically, is “changement de circonstances.” His proposed English version is change of circumstances theory.

According to Susana Greiss, it is improvidence theory. Black’s Law Dictionary states that improvidence, as used in a statute, means excluding one found incompetent to execute the duties of an administrator by reason of improvidence. It means that want of care and foresight in the management of property, which would be likely to render the estate unsafe and liable to loss or diminishment of value, in case the administration should be committed to the improvident person.

(Sp-E 2-2000/13) (“ingresos en tranquera”): Expanding a bit on what Matilde Farren wrote last month, Rudi Theis tells us that a “tranquera” is the gate guarding a farm or any rural establishment in Argentina. He believes this term to refer to any income the producer—in this case a dairy farmer—gets from setting his product at the gate. It is a rural variation on F.O.B.

(Sp-E 2-2000/15) (bottling industry terms): For (15.b) (“contadores de envase”), Susana Greiss offers container (can, bottle) counter, as in the act of counting; (15.e) (“medidores analógicos”): analog meters; (15.d) (“mermas”: ullage, being the amount by which a container falls short of being full; and (15.e) (“acceso controlado por llave secreta”): access by restricted (secret) code.

John Schweisthal believes this whole cluster relates to the embedded control computer system for the bottling industry’s production line. Assuming this, he offers secure data for (15.a) “datos fíjos”; wastage or spillage for (15.d), unless the context is an attempt by the control program to do some electrical current and voltage calculations for the process, in which case it would be electrical losses; and secret key access for (15.e).

(Sp-E 3-2000/15) (El Salvadoran police organizations cluster): Sandra Bravo worked for the Argentine Federal Police (A.F.P.) as a translator and had the same problem. Speaking purely of her experience in Argentina, she states that “delegaciones” (15.a) are police stations in the interior of the country which are in charge of A.F.P. cases at a provincial level. “Subdelegaciones” (15.b) depend, in turn, on these local police stations, mainly in rural areas, and are in charge of matters delegated to them. So, she believes the best equivalents are local police stations and rural police stations, respectively.

In Argentina, a “puesto policial” (15.c) is a group of police forces specially organized for a specific purpose like a sporting event, demonstration, or parade, to patrol a certain location. Police post or patrolling unit might be good equivalents.

As for (15.d) “resguardo,” she quotes María Moliner in stating that the word implies both the surveillance carried out in a place to prevent smuggling and the group of employees in charge of doing so. Although the term checkpoint mainly refers to the traffic being halted by police for inspection, in Sandra’s opinion, it

Continued on p. 62
Follow-up and Follow-on

Lydia Razran Stone suggests a spelling of the English sound “oo” not included in the November/December 1999 column: “ieu,” as in the word “lieu.”

Both Ana María Paredes and Daniel A. Martínez, commenting on the February 2000 column, wrote to say that “Centro para Mujeres Abusadas” does indeed mean “Center for Abused Women,” because “abusada” means “alert” or “clever” only in Guatemala and Mexico, and then only when it is spoken rather than written. Therefore, the sign is a mistranslation only for a limited group of people.

Meanwhile, two more interesting pieces of Spanish have been submitted.

Ramón Torres saw a sign in San Antonio reading: “No se permiten armas, Violadores serán castigados,” to which Mr. Torres adds: “Leaves a lot to the imagination, doesn’t it?”

The problem with the Spanish is the meaning-spread of both “armas” and “castigados.” The sign does have the straightforward meaning:

“Weapons not allowed. Violators will be punished.” However, “armas,” in Spanish, as in English, means both a person’s two “arms” and “weapons.” The verb “castigar” means to “punish,” or to “mortify” the flesh, or to “correct” a typo, or to “cut down” expenses. Therefore, among other things that are imaginable is a reading of the sign as: “Arms not allowed. Those coming in here with arms will have them cut off.”

Paul Sadur writes of a bilingual couple owning a cleaning business—husband Guatemalan and wife American—who used a wax stripper, labeled in English: “Heavy Duty No Rinse Speed Stripper.” Unfortunately, the product was also labeled in Spanish, as: “Debe Pesado Ningún Enjuague a la Mujer Que Hace Strip-Tease de Velocidad.” Oh well. As letters to Ann Landers often attest, there are many people who like to do their cleaning in the nude, though I did not know the practice extended to commercial establishments.

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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Localization, Internationalization, Globalization, and Translation

continued from p. 48

strings from legacy work for the translator to edit. For those with an engineering background, localization development environment tools such as ForeignDesk, among others, are popular because they provide a WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) environment. These tools are costly as well, and purchasing them depends largely on the cost/benefit analysis of your project.

Conclusion

The Internet has provided all computer-literate humanity with easy access to every product sold online. The ease with which foreign markets can be accessed and with which foreign markets can access the U.S. has lead to an enormous boom in the need for quality translations in the context of localization. Localization appears likely to continue its breakneck growth rate, and it is a lucrative field. While the details may seem daunting at first, the industry is undergoing constant and major changes that are likely to bring the costs of tools and training within reach of freelancers. When computers became household appliances, nearly every freelancer learned to use a word processor. It may be only a matter of time before code becomes second nature.
was not originally passable. She also talks about the “upper” and “lower” town. I originally imagined a European town where one part was up on a hill and the other was down by the river. I actually began to find the terms quite poetic.

**JE:** I guess “upper” and “lower” town became “uptown” and “downtown” in your translation.

**MS:** Yes, I simply said “uptown” and “downtown.” The problem is that in Russian, what we call “downtown” is referred to as “tsentr,” and New York’s downtown has never been in the center. But these were merely her normal terms for these concepts, and I saw no reason to over-romanticize what is essentially a mechanical issue.

**JE:** What about “cape”? Was that the same kind of problem?

**MS:** Not really. I kept “cape,” for one reason, and that’s because it’s the kind of image that shakes you out of your ordinary perception. Another reason was because Berberova was writing Cape of Storms at about that time, and I think there is a point to maintaining continuity of vocabulary when possible.

**MS:** It’s been both my experience and my observation that in the field of literary translation, merit is not enough. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, publication contracts are the result of a personal connection, especially since very few translators work with agents. You can’t sit at home producing marvelous translations and expect editors to beat a path to your door. Likewise, you can’t come up with a marvelous project and expect to get a foot in an editor’s door.

**JE:** Merit alone may not be sufficient, but it is still the indispensable ingredient, of course. Any advice for beginning translators about how to establish those personal connections?

**MS:** I don’t think they’re that hard to come by if you make the necessary effort. Attending workshops and conferences and taking active part in literary translator organizations like the ALTA and ATA’s Literary Division can yield useful contacts. And you can educate yourself about publishing, which is, after all, the business end of literary translation.

**JE:** Here again the organizations can be helpful. Every conference offers opportunities to learn about publishing, contracts, and the like. Marian, thank you for sharing your ideas with our readers. ATA is inordinately proud to have you as a member. And best of luck in your work with ALTA.

**MS:** Thank you, Jo Anne.

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**Of Literary Note Continued from p. 55**

This column will appear six times a year to bring highlights from the literary field to all our members. Please send me your suggestions for future articles: engsch@proservice.net or 789 Captain’s Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

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**American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation**

The American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, an independent, 501(c)(3) charitable organization, was established to help the translation and interpretation professions to preserve their past history, to assist in their present work, and to stimulate future research through grants.

Plans are underway for awarding the first national scholarship to students planning to enroll in studies leading to entry into our professions and for underwriting the first and much needed research project on our professions.

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ACCREDITATION FORUM

What it Takes to be a Grader
By Terry Hanlen, Accreditation Program Manager

Three of the most frequently asked questions about the accreditation program are: “Who are the graders?” “What do they do?” and “How are they chosen?”

All of our graders, except in new language combinations, are ATA members accredited in their grading language combination, who are recruited by the accreditation program leadership as needed. Grader candidates must have passed the accreditation exam with superior performance, and must demonstrate the ability to evaluate exams according to accreditation program standards and grading guidelines.

Graders are expected to participate in grader training sessions at the ATA Annual Conference and to have ready access to e-mail for communication with the program manager, the language chair, and other graders. Graders are also expected to participate in the annual selection of exam passages, prepare sample translations of these, and collaborate with other graders in the workgroup to identify acceptable renditions, evaluate anticipated errors, and establish consistent grading practices.

Each exam is graded independently by two graders (and, in some cases, by a third) who do not communicate with each other during this step. The number of exams and practice tests a grader may evaluate varies by language combination, depending on the number of candidates and the number of graders in the workgroup. Some graders may see only one exam in a year, others a hundred or more.

If an exam demonstrates superior performance, the grader may recommend the candidate as a potential grader. Individual workgroups make efforts to enlist graders with background and experience in each of our passage categories and, where needed, with expertise in the various regional specialties in a given language. Every effort is made to be inclusive.

When needed, the manager of the accreditation program contacts potential new graders. Interested candidates are asked to grade an exam from our archives according to grader guidelines and instructions. All grader candidates also sign a confidentiality agreement and submit a current resume. After reviewing the graded exam, the language chair decides whether to invite the candidate to join the grading pool. Based on the recommendation of the language chair, graders are appointed by the chair of the ATA Accreditation Committee. During their tenure as graders, they must perform all of the appropriate grading duties under guidance from, and review by, the language chair. They may resign or be retired at any time.

I have just described the usual path to becoming a grader, but now I will offer one more option. We are looking for a few good translators to join our grading workgroups, and I invite you to submit your resume and a letter of intent to me if you wish to become a grader for ATA. This invitation is open to anyone who is currently accredited by ATA. The job requires a time commitment and dedication to your chosen profession. We pay a stipend, but it does not begin to match your salary as a translator. For more information or to apply, please contact me at terry@atanet.org or fax or mail your resume and a letter of intent to: ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA, 22314 or 703-683-6122.

The Translation Inquirer Continued from p. 59

may be used by extension as an equivalent to “resguardo.” Blanca Onetto, on the other hand, likes the customs control that one dictionary suggested.

“Inquilinos” is a word that gets misused, says Renato Calderón. In reading La Opinión, the Los Angeles Spanish newspaper, he was pleasantly surprised on March 23, 2000 to see a headline that correctly uses this word, COMPENSAN A INQUILINOS (RENTERS ARE COMPENSATED). Unfortunately, the spanglishism “rentar” was used twice further on in the article, so it could not be a mistake. As a noun, “renta” in Spanish is the income derived from a property, not the property offered for rent. The person who takes up such an offer is “inquilino, arrendatario.” To hang out a proper Spanish-language sign equivalent to FOR RENT, one must write SE ALQUILA. “SE RENTA” merely parrots such dreary spanglish as carpet-a, and market-a. YUK!!!
### Upcoming Accreditation Exam Information

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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.

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### CONGRATULATIONS

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

**English into Spanish**
- Ana Carmen Delgado, Mexico City, Mexico
- Margaret Carol Rhine-Medina, Madrid, Spain
- Carmen Rio-Rey, Santiago, Spain
- Rosana Paola Strobietto, Capital Federal, Argentina
- Blandine González Washington, Eureka, MO

**German into English**
- Beate Monral-MacDonald, Joppa, MD
- Scholem A. Slaughter, Brooklyn, NY

**Portuguese into English**
- Alicia B. Edwards, Washington, DC

**Russian into English**
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**The Active Member Review Committee is pleased to grant active or corresponding status to:**

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Contact Dee Warwick-Dias at (703) 683-6100 ext. 3008 or e-mail Dee@atanet.org.
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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.

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- 1999 membership directory, $10; CATI Quarterly subscription, $12.

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The demand for English<>Chinese translation has been growing rapidly in recent years, and the number of translators/interpreters is also increasing. To achieve these objectives, we have voluntarily formed a preparatory committee to carry out the mission of forming a Chinese Language Division (CLD). First, we will need a minimum of 20 active ATA members to sign the petition to the ATA Board of Directors requesting the establishment of the CLD. We also ask that all ATA members show their support for this undertaking. Second, the group is now in the process of drafting the CLD bylaws. As soon as we secure the 20 or more signatures required for the petition, we will submit it, together with the bylaws and the name(s) of the acting administrator(s), to the ATA Board of Directors for its approval.

Anyone wishing to support the establishment of the CLD, please contact Christie Matlock, chapter and division relations manager, at ATA Headquarters. Your signature on the petition and/or your ideas and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Thanks in advance for your kind support from the Preparatory Committee of the Chinese Language Division: Robin Feng, Yuanxi Ma, Frank Mou, and Laura Wang.

Establishing the Chinese Language Division Under the ATA

Translating Neologisms in Spanish Technical Texts Continued from p. 42

with -ware, all of which have various different terms in Spanish, have only one equivalent in English. For example:

soporte físico, soporte material = hardware
programación, programas, soporte lógico = software
programación de grupo/de equipo, programas de grupo/de equipo, soporte lógico de grupo/de equipo = groupware
programación por cuota/de acceso libre, programas por cuota/de acceso libre, soporte lógico por cuota = shareware
programación de dominio público/de acceso libre al público, programas de dominio público/de acceso libre al público, soporte lógico de dominio público/de acceso libre al público = freeware

Here are some additional cases in which this proliferation of synonyms in Spanish will be translated into English as a single term:

autoedición, edición electrónica, edición asistida por ordenador = desktop publishing
red de ordenadores/computadoras, red informática = computer network
conexión en red, conexión en redes, modo compartido = networking
defecto, error = bug
arreglo, cadena, matriz, vector = array
direcccionador, enrutador, encaminador = router
interruptor, conmutador, llave = switch
onditas, ondiculas = wavelets
zona intermedia de memoria, memoria intermedia, almacenamiento intermedio = buffer
por defecto, predeterminado = default

Conclusion
I hope that this discussion has helped those technical translators who work into English from Spanish, particularly those who work with network computing texts, by encouraging them to seek the proper English term for these neologisms in Spanish, in spite of a proliferation of terms which remit to the same new meaning.

References
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