Register Today for this Exciting Opportunity from ATA
ATA Financial Translation Conference

New York University Law School • New York, New York
May 18-20, 2001

Taught by financial translation experts from around the world.
Hosted by NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies Translation Studies Program

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Last                                                    First                            Middle
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Employer/School Affiliation: __________________________________________________________________
(Only list employer or school affiliation if you want it to appear on your badge. Students should give their school.)
Address: _________________________________________________________________________________
City: _________________________________________  State/Province: ______________________________
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Telephone Numbers: Primary: ___________________________  Secondary: ___________________________
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Please indicate the primary and secondary language pairs you are interested in. If there is insufficient reg-
istration or speaker availability in your primary pair, you will be offered a full refund. Please note that the
first day features general sessions in English. The second and third days will be language specific.
Preferred pair: Source language: _________________ Target language: _________________
Alternate pair: Source language: _________________ Target language: _________________

Conference Registration Fees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATAA Member/NYU Student/Faculty*</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Bird (by February 28)</td>
<td>$195</td>
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<tr>
<td>After February 28</td>
<td>$275</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-site (after May 11)</td>
<td>$375</td>
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Form of Payment: [ ] Check/Money Order [ ] Credit Card  Total Payment $ __________

*Individuals who join ATA when registering for this conference qualify for the ATA member registration fee.
(Please contact ATA or visit the ATA Website, www.atanet.org, for a membership application.)

Cancellations received in writing by May 11, 2001 are eligible for a refund. Refunds will not be honored after May
11. A $25 administrative fee will be applied to all refunds except for the cancellation of a given language pair.

Charge my:  □ VISA  □ MasterCard  □ American Express  □ Discover
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Please make your check or money order payable to ATA, in U.S. funds through a U.S. bank, writing in the
memo section Financial Translation Conference, and return it with this form to American Translators Association
• 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 • Alexandria, VA 22314

OR, if paying by credit card, fax your completed registration form to: (703) 683-6122 (Please do not mail this
form if you are faxing it to ATA.)

____ Please check here if you require special accessibility or assistance. (Attach a sheet with your requirements.)

Please visit the ATA Website, www.atanet.org, and click on “Conferences” for more information.

Photocopy registration form and return to ATA.
Message from the Chinese Language Division Administrator
By Frank Y. Mou ......................................................... 16

The newly established Chinese Language Division needs your help and ideas.

The Nordics, Orlando and Beyond
By Edith Matteson ....................................................... 17

The Nordic Division already has a full schedule of events planned for the new year, including the WisCONFERENCE.

German Language Division Report
By Dorothee Racette ..................................................... 19

An overview of our activities during the past year, as well as a preview of what is to come.

The Japanese Language Division Activities at the 41st ATA Annual Conference
By Izumi Suzuki .......................................................... 21

The JLD did well, is doing well, and the future looks good.

The Role of Interpreters in Addressing Hate/Bias Incidents
By P. Diane Schneider .................................................. 22

Hate/bias incidents, when they occur, impact a larger segment of the community than the specific victim(s) targeted. It is crucial that interpreters know how to recognize and respond to such incidents, and how to respond to the unique challenges of interpreting when this subject is involved.

Translating Texts, Interpreting Cultures
By Lynn Visson .......................................................... 28

Throughout history, the role of the simultaneous interpreter has been to translate both words and cultures. Cultural differences between Russian and English, for example, are evident in conference situations, diplomatic negotiations, and in the cross-cultural microcosms of Russian-American marriages, where communication requires a daily crossing of linguistic and cultural boundaries. The interpreter who is equally sensitive to both language and culture will succeed in rendering the speaker’s true intent and meaning.

How Can We Incorporate More of the Real World into Translator Training?
By Daniel Linder ......................................................... 33

In theory, translator trainers prepare students to seek work and to meet the challenges of real-world professional translation. In practice, however, we often prepare our students inadequately. Since these challenges may threaten the quality of our students’ subsequent professional translation, we should harness them as didactic tools for the classroom.

Getting More Out of Dictionaries
By Mordecai Schreiber ................................................ 37

Professional translators have always found dictionaries insufficient sources for answering all questions arising from translation from one language into another. Lexicography in the U.S., as well as worldwide, continues to be a problem area. Today, we face an additional question of whether dictionaries on disk and online will replace the traditional printed ones. Using examples such as the forthcoming Dictionary of Medicine (French/English) and the recent Multicultural Spanish Dictionary, the question of the limitations of dictionaries in general is discussed. The article will also examine the practical aspects of dictionaries designed specifically for translators.
AN EASY REFERENCE TO ATA MEMBER BENEFITS

Your ATA membership has never been more valuable. Take advantage of the discounted programs and services available to you as an ATA member. Be sure to tell these companies you are an ATA member and refer to any codes provided below.

Business Owners Insurance
Seabury & Smith, Inc.
(800) 368-5969 ext. 852
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Dun & Bradstreet
Ask for Sharon LeBoutillier
(800) 333-6497 ext. 7468
(610) 882-6887
Leboutilli@dnb.com

Conference Travel
Conventions in America
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(800) 929-4242 • (619) 453-3686
e-mail: flycia@stellaraccess.com
www.stellaraccess.com

Credit Card Acceptance Program/Professional Services Account
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Reference Code: HCDA
(888) 545-2207 • (770) 649-5700

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(800) 847-7378 • (302) 457-2165

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(212) 692-6600
www.dnbtraining.com

...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.

MOVING? FOUND AN ERROR WITH YOUR ADDRESS?

We’ve done everything possible to ensure that your address is correct. But sometimes errors do occur. If you find that the information on the mailing label is inaccurate or out of date, please let us know. Send updates to:
The ATA Chronicle • 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 • Alexandria, VA 22314
Fax (703) 683-6122 • Chronicle@atanet.org

Chronicle Submission Guidelines

The ATA Chronicle enthusiastically encourages members to submit articles of interest to the fields of translation and interpretation.

1) Articles (see length specifications below) are due the first of the month, two months prior to the month of publication (i.e., June 1 for August issue).
2) Articles should not exceed 3,500 words. Articles containing words or phrases in non-European writing systems (e.g., Japanese, Arabic) should be submitted by mail and fax.
3) Include your fax, phone, and e-mail on the first page.
4) Include a brief abstract (five sentences maximum) emphasizing the most salient points of your article. The abstract will be included in the table of contents.
5) Include a brief biography (five sentences maximum) along with a picture (color or B&W). Please be sure to specify if you would like your photo returned. Do not send irreplaceable photos.
6) In addition to a hard copy version of the article, please submit an electronic version either on disk or via e-mail (Jeff@atanet.org).
7) Texts should be formatted for Word, Wordperfect 8.0, or Wordperfect 5.1 (DOS version).
8) All articles are subject to editing for grammar, style, punctuation, and space limitations.
9) A proof will be sent to you for review prior to publication.

Feature Articles: 750-3,500 words; Column: 400-1,000 words
Letters to the editor: 350 words; Opinion/Editorial: 300-600 words; Feature Articles: 750-3,500 words; Column: 400-1,000 words
Taken together, Spanish-speaking countries may produce and consume more wine than any other linguistic block on earth, but that’s not to say that translating wine literature is big business. This “for the love of the art” article will take readers through the process of making and appreciating wine in both Spanish and English and, while attempting to break down the barriers between wine snobs and the rest of us, will offer a model for acquiring practical terminological knowledge in any field of expertise.

Choosing the Right Tool for the Job—Advice from the Support Manager
By Denise Baldwin ................................. 48
Denise Baldwin, a product support manager at SDL International, provides a no-nonsense guide to the benefits of translation memory and the important criteria and features to look for when choosing a translation memory tool.

Translating Nonfiction Books: The Opportunities and Pitfalls
By Eileen Brockbank ............................... 51
There’s lots of work translating nonfiction books for the translator with solid expertise in both a subject area and graphic design programs. If you are considering developing this line of translation work, you will also need considerable business savvy.

The Dictionary: My Friend, My Enemy
By Boris Silversteyn ............................... 52
Dictionaries always have been, and still are, indispensable tools of a translator (and interpreter). The advent of online dictionaries has not eliminated the need for, and the use of, hard copy (paper) ones.

New Concepts for Telephone Interpreting
By Irena Stone ................................. 58
Rapid development of information technology has expanded the world market for telephone interpreting to meet the growing needs of various industries requiring instantaneous communication. Telephone interpreting is a complex and dynamic process where common meanings harmoniously integrate social and cultural contexts, challenging an interpreter with its lack of nonverbal information. Telephone interpreting requires many refined skills for the most effective communication. The following article discusses the elements of consecutive interpreting aimed at finding the right language which will allow ideas to be exchanged accurately and with ease in the constantly evolving and merging multilingual world.

El Timing De Los Benchmarks
By S. Alexandra Russell-Bitting ................................. 67
The grating on the eardrums—and how to fix it.
About Our Authors...

Kirk Anderson is an ATA-accredited translator (Spanish and French into English and English into Spanish) who also translates from Chinese. He specializes in legal, commercial, and marketing texts, and occasionally gets to translate one of his favorite subjects: wine. He is also a sommelier certified by the United States Sommelier Association. He can be reached at paellero@aol.com.

Denise Baldwin is a product support manager at SDL International. With extensive knowledge of the end user’s requirements, she has played a key role in the design and development of SDLX, the computer-aided translation tool from SDL. She can be reached at dbaldwin@sdlintl.com.

Eileen Brockbank is an ATA-accredited freelance Spanish-English translator. Her professional and educational background includes insurance and reinsurance (Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters Society designation), banking, law, finance (MBA), economics, and the arts. From 1997 to 1998, she was the secretary of the New York Circle of Translators. She writes a grammar column for the NYCT SpanSIG publication, Apuntes, and is a contributing writer for etranslate.com. She can be reached at ebrockbank@smith.alumnae.net.

Daniel Linder is a freelance technical translator. He is ATA-accredited (Spanish>English) and has the Diploma in Translation from the Institute of Linguists. 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.

Edith Matteson, the administrator of ATA’s Nordic Division, has 10 years of experience as a Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish-English translator. She has taught Swedish and Danish, and has a master’s in Scandinavian studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a second master’s (in history) from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her publications include Blossoms of the Prairie: The History of the Danish Lutheran Churches in Nebraska (co-author Jean M. Matteson) and translations of Survival in the Organization (Aarhus University Press, 1966) and The Red Dyes: Cochineal, Madder, and Murex Purple (Lark Books: Asheville, North Carolina). A native of the Midwest, she resides in Ballwin, Missouri. She can be reached at EMMatteson@earthlink.net.

Frank Y. Mou is the administrator of ATA’s Chinese Language Division. He has been in the translation/interpreting business for over 20 years. He received his M.A. degree in linguistics from the University of Pittsburgh, and worked for a translation agency in Pittsburgh for two years as an in-house translator before becoming a full-time freelance translator in 1996. He can be reached at Frank_Mou@yahoo.com.

Dorothee Racette is the newly elected administrator of ATA’s German Language Division. She is ATA-accredited for German<>English translation and lives in Saranac, New York. She can be reached at dracette@owlang.com.

S. Alexandra Russell-Bitting has been a senior translator/reviser at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC, for the past 12 years. From French, Spanish, and Portuguese into English. She has done freelance translations for other international organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Organization of American States, as well as for the U.S. Department of State. She has taught translation at Georgetown University and the Université de Paris VIII, and is a regular contributor to the Chronicle. She can be reached at alexandrarb@iadb.org.

P. Diane Schneider is the senior concilia- tion specialist for the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice in Seattle, Washington. She holds a master’s degree in public administration from Seattle University. She is certified as a court interpreter for the State of Washington and has passed the written portion of the Federal Court interpreter examination. She is also fluent in the Greek language. Articles published include three papers in the Proceedings of the American Translators Association: 1995, “Addressing Bias in the Interpretation Setting”; 1993, “Interpreter/Conciliator, A Practical Application”; and 1992, “Inter- preter/Conciliator, an Emerging Function”; and a short article in 1996 on “Addressing Bias in the Interpretation Setting” for the Chronicle. She can be reached at p.diane.schneider@usdoj.gov.

Mordecai Schreiber is the founder and president of Schreiber Translations in Rockville, Maryland, and, more recently, of Schreiber Publishing, a book publishing company dedicated to professional literature for translators. He is the author of two novels, one memoir, and over 20 books, including book translations from Spanish and Hebrew into English. He lived in Israel and Uruguay before coming to the U.S., where he has lived continually since 1959, except for a three-year assignment in Guatemala. His best known book for translators is The Translator’s Handbook, now in its third revised edition. He can be reached at translation@schreibernet.com.

Boris Silversteyn is an ATA-accredited (English<>Russian) freelance translator and interpreter. After having worked as a

Continued on p. 14
The New Year brings new opportunities. For 2001, ATA membership offers you a host of opportunities to better yourself professionally and financially.

Some of the special opportunities include participation in:
- The recently announced ATA Financial Translation Conference in New York City, May 18-20;
- The ATA 42nd Annual Conference in Los Angeles, October 31-November 3;
- The wildly successfully online Translation Services Directories, which had 97,000 hits for the month of October. (Remember, you need to complete the online or hard copy of the questionnaire to be included in the directories. Inclusion is not automatically done upon joining the ATA, since participation is optional. Visit the online TSDs to add or edit your listing: www.atanet.org then click on “Find a Translator or Interpreter Online.”);
- The new Chinese Language Division; and
- The recently introduced ATA retirement programs.

Looking back on 2000, I would like to thank all of you for joining ATA, supporting it, and making it the thriving association that it is today. We finished 2000 with a record 7,757 members. This is a 6.2-percent increase over 1999.

Another important statistic in measuring the well being of an association is the membership renewal rate. This figure reflects how many members from the previous year renewed for the current year. ATA’s retention rate has increased to 83.6 percent. When we first started tracking this statistic in 1994, ATA’s retention rate was around 74 percent. In my close to 20 years of association experience, there has been much debate, with no definitive answer, over what number signifies a good membership retention rate. However, two items are clear: retention is usually lower for individual-based members (individuals change professions and pay their own dues), and, based on a nearly 10-percent increase, our retention rate is excellent. (Related: trade associations, which rely on corporate members, are having a more difficult time with their membership because of all the mergers and acquisitions that have been cannibalizing their membership over the past few years. ATA corporate membership has been slightly affected by this as well.)

Membership renewal notices have been mailed. Please renew your ATA membership for 2001. New this year, you may renew your membership online. (Please go to the “Members Only Section” on the ATA Website.) I want to emphasize that the online transactions are private and secure. We have instituted safeguards and are working with an experienced, nationally recognized online transactions company.

Currently, we are only processing membership renewals online, but we will soon be able to process other purchases, including conference registrations. If you have not received your notice and do not want to renew online, please contact ATA Headquarters at (703)683-6100 or ata@atanet.org.

Thank you again for renewing your membership in the American Translators Association.

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ATA to Offer Financial Translation Conference
May 18-20, 2001

ATA will conduct a financial translation conference in New York City, May 18-20, 2001. The seminar, which will be hosted by the New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies’ Translation Studies Program, will feature some general financial translation sessions in English and some specialized language-specific sessions. The sessions will be given by some of the highest caliber translators working in the financial industry worldwide.

More information will be published in the Chronicle and on the ATA Website as it becomes available. If you are interested in serving on the organizing committee, please contact ATA Director and Professional Development Committee Chair Marian Greenfield at (212) 235-2752 or msgreenfield@compuserve.com. See page 2 for the conference registration form.
Some personal notes

Seattle is undergoing some rare 20-degree weather tonight, and our furnace is on the blink. So, my stiff fingers may produce only a short column before tomorrow’s deadline. You Chronicle readers know that brevity is not usually one of your president’s failings! But today, I’ll be brief.

I write in the midst of the holiday season, a time when many of us enjoy a cultural mandate to sit back and reflect on the deeper meanings of our lives. Unfortunately, our contemporary culture has somewhat changed the message. But I am certainly grateful, as I reflect on the year gone by, for many aspects of our association’s life:

• For members willing, as I wrote last month, to “agree to disagree” and still maintain civility and cordiality among ourselves.

• For a truly splendid conference, and plans for another in Los Angeles, building on our strengths.

• For some small signs that the world outside our professions is beginning, at least, to recognize who and what we are, from President Clinton’s letter, to the U.S. Department of Labor, to the journalists who are being thoroughly educated by our “translator activists.”

• For all the thought and care that is going into our review of the accreditation program.

• For our committees, who reach out in various creative ways to continue the work of the association.

• For chapters, affiliates, regional groups, and other associations, who work so vigorously to educate, socialize, and collaborate with each other.

• For the divisions, an aspect of our work always near to my heart, as they bring people together across geographic and temporal barriers.

• For a Board, that knows how to build on our differences, and to strengthen the association as we work together in comity.

• For a dedicated staff, who are keeping up with the “bleeding edge” of technology and the shifting targets presented by the Internet in truly heroic fashion.

• For so many of you who care about translation, interpretation, and the association, and take the time to share your views with me and our leadership.

I hope that you are also pleased with the evidence, which says to me that our ATA is growing, thriving, and changing with the times. Thanks for sticking with us, and here’s to the New Year!

ATA Publishes A Consumer’s Guide to Professional Translation

The ATA’s current edition of A Consumer’s Guide to Professional Translation is out and available. The guide is meant to facilitate a consumer’s search for professional translation and to increase the public’s awareness of how the translation profession can enhance business and communication.

What exactly is a professional translator? How is it done, and by whom? Is it worth it? These questions and many more are answered in the guide. A Consumer’s Guide to Professional Translation also provides information on where to find translators, translation services companies, regional and local translators’ associations, and much more.

To order, please contact: American Translators Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Phone, (703) 683-6100; Fax, (703) 683-6122; or E-mail, ata@atanet.org. The cost is $5 to ATA members and $7 to nonmembers.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT ATA MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

The ATA has eight membership categories: active, corresponding, associate, student, institutional, corporate, life, and honorary.

**Active:** To become an active member, one must meet three requirements:
- a) Be professionally engaged in translation, interpreting, or closely related work;
- b) Be a citizen or permanent resident of the U.S.; and
- c) Have passed an accreditation examination administered by the ATA or have achieved demonstrable professional status as determined by peer evaluation.

The class of active members includes both members who have passed an accreditation examination, and those who have passed the peer review process as persons with demonstrable professional status. Translators, interpreters, teachers, and terminology researchers all may qualify for active status under peer review. To become an active member does not, however, mean that one is thereby accredited. Only passing the accreditation examination makes one accredited. U.S. citizens residing outside the U.S. may be active members, as may permanent residents who are temporarily not within U.S. borders.

Active members have the right to attend any of the association’s membership meetings, use all of its membership facilities, and receive all of its regular publications free or at special membership rates. They also have the right to take accreditation examinations, to vote, to hold association office, and to serve on the Board of Directors and all committees of the ATA.

**Association office:** There are only four association offices: president, president-elect, treasurer, and secretary. An active member who lives outside the U.S. is eligible, under our bylaws, for one of these offices, or to serve on the Board of Directors. The administrator and assistant administrator of a division are division officers, but not association officers.

**Corresponding:** To become a corresponding member, one must meet all the qualifications for active membership except U.S. citizenship or permanent residence. Corresponding members have all the rights and privileges of active members except the right to hold association office and to serve on the Board of Directors or standing committees.

**Voting members:** These include active and corresponding members, and life and honorary members who are qualified for active or corresponding status. Associate, student, institutional, and corporate members do not have voting rights.

**Reference:**
- Bylaws of the American Translators Association,
  - Article III, Membership; Article V, Officers; Article XII, Chapters and Divisions.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**American Translators Association 42nd Annual Conference**
Biltmore Hotel • Los Angeles, California
October 31-November 3, 2001

For more information, please contact: ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Ste. 590, Alexandria, VA 22314;
Phone: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; or E-mail: ata@atanet.org.
A TA’s 2000 Annual Conference was a success on many levels. There was ATA’s second highest attendance, with 1,525 registrants. (The 1997 conference in San Francisco attracted the largest participation, with over 1,700 attendees.) The overall positive reviews on the educational sessions. And, 60 exhibit booths featured the products and services of 50 companies.

I am also pleased that I made it through my first conference as conference organizer. Now that I have more experience, I will be able to plan for an even better conference in 2001. The conference heads to Los Angeles, California, October 31-November 3. This will be the first time ATA has met in Los Angeles in the association’s 42 years.

Los Angeles’ multicultural communities and the city’s ongoing renaissance are key attractions. To add to the experience, the conference will be held in the beautiful, grand old Biltmore Hotel. I am looking forward to working with the Southern California Area Translators and Interpreters Association, an ATA chapter, in adding the all-important local flavor to the annual conference.

The top priority regarding the conference now is to submit your proposal for giving an educational presentation. The Proposal for Conference Presentation form is available from the ATA Website, www.atanet.org (click on “Conference” where the form is listed and available in PDF format); or by calling ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100. Please submit your proposal by March 15. If you have any questions or comments, please contact ATA Headquarters.

Watch the Chronicle and the ATA Website for more information regarding the conference. We are again working with Stellar Access, formerly Conventions in America, to offer discounted air travel and car rental deals. In addition, we will have more information on registering for the conference and reserving a hotel room.

Thank you for making last year’s conference a success, please mark your calendar for this year’s meeting, and have a happy and prosperous new year.
The ATA Board of Directors has approved the 2001 budget. The balanced budget totals $1,825,436. This is up from last year’s budget of $1,600,155.

The budget includes a new line item for professional development seminars, such as the ATA Financial Translation Conference in New York City, May 18-20, and no increase in dues. Conference fees will, however, have to be increased. As the caretaker of the association’s funds, I ask you to please renew your ATA membership promptly. Dues renewal notices have been sent. If you did not receive your notice, please contact ATA Headquarters. (You may also renew your membership online in the “Members Only” section of the ATA Website.)

Membership dues account for 49 percent of our financial revenues. With more members, we have the financial wherewithal to offer programs and services that may not produce revenues necessary to fund them.

Here is a breakout of the 2001 budget.

Summary of ATA's 2001 Budget

<table>
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<th>Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer/Governance (Committee, Board Meetings, etc.)</td>
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<td>Annual Conference (Programs, Proceedings, Meet, etc.)</td>
<td>$377,502 (21%)</td>
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<td>Accreditation (Exams, Grade, Fees, etc.)</td>
<td>$216,466 (12%)</td>
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<td>Chronicle (Printing, Typsetting, etc.)</td>
<td>$383,296 (21%)</td>
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<td>Membership Services (Voting, Directory, TSD, etc.)</td>
<td>$125,648 (7%)</td>
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<td>Divisions (Printing, postage, etc.)</td>
<td>$135,295 (8%)</td>
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<td>General and Administrative (Headquarters, PR, RCNA/FT, etc.)</td>
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<td>Chronicle</td>
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<td>Professional Development Seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership Dues (General and Administrative)</td>
<td>$899,554 (49%)</td>
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* Figures adjusted to include estimated overhead (rent and salaries).
The Alexander Gode Medal, the ATA's most prestigious award, is presented to an individual or institution for outstanding service to the translation and interpretation professions. This award may be given annually.

Individuals or institutions nominated do not have to be ATA members. However, a history of constructive relations with the ATA and the language professions in general is desirable. Nominees do not have to be U.S. citizens. Petitions and letter campaigns are not encouraged.

Nominations should include a sufficiently detailed description of the individual's or institution's record of service to the translation and/or interpretation professions to enable the Honors & Awards Committee to draw up a meaningful short list for approval by the ATA Board of Directors.

Nomination Deadline: May 1, 2001

Please send your nomination of the individual or institution you consider worthy of receiving the next Gode Medal to:

Jo Anne Engelbert  
Chair, ATA Honors & Awards Committee  
American Translators Association  
225 Reinekers Lane, Ste. 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; E-mail: ata@atanet.org

The ATA invites nominations for the 2001 Ungar German Translation Award. This award is bestowed biennially in odd-numbered years for a distinguished literary translation from German into English published in the U.S. (The Lewis Galantière Translation Prize for translations from any language except German is awarded in even-numbered years.)

To be eligible for the award, to be presented at the ATA Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California, in November 2001, the published translation must have been translated from German into English and published in the U.S. in 1999 or 2000.

The published translation must list the translator's name on the title page and preferably also on the dust jacket. Preference will be given to published works that provide information on the translator. The translator need not be an ATA member, however, the translator should have a strong connection with the U.S. (citizenship or permanent residence). The nomination must be submitted by the publisher of the translated work.

The nomination must include a cover letter, with complete publication information for the work being nominated, together with a brief vita of the translator, at least two copies of the nominated work, plus one extra copy of the dust jacket, and two copies of at least 10 consecutive pages from the original work, keyed to the page numbers of the translations. (ESSENTIAL!)


Award: $1,000, a certificate of recognition, and up to $500 toward expenses for attending the ATA Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California, October 31-November 3, 2001.

Please contact:  
Jo Anne Engelbert  
Chair, ATA Honors & Awards Committee  
American Translators Association  
225 Reinekers Lane, Ste. 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; E-mail: ata@atanet.org
ATA Chronicle • January 2001

ATA 2001 STUDENT TRANSLATION AWARD

In 2001, the ATA will award a grant-in-aid to a student for a literary or sci-tech translation or translation-related project. The award, which will be presented at the ATA Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California, in November 2001, is open to any graduate or undergraduate student or group of students attending an accredited college or university in the U.S. Preference will be given to students who have been or are currently enrolled in translator-training programs. Students who are already published translators are, however, ineligible. No individual student may submit more than one entry.

The project, which may be derived from any facet of translation studies, should result in a project with post-grant applicability, such as a publication, conference presentation, or teaching materials. Computerized materials are ineligible, as are dissertations and theses. Translations must be INTO ENGLISH from a foreign language. Previously untranslated works are preferred.

Applicants must complete a form (available from ATA Headquarters) and submit a project description not to exceed 500 words. If the project is a translation, the description must present the work in its context. It must also be a substantive statement of the difficulties or innovations involved in the project and of the post-competition form the work will take. The application must be accompanied by a statement of support from the faculty member who is supervising the project. This letter of support should demonstrate the faculty supervisor’s intimate familiarity with the student’s work and include a detailed assessment of the project’s significance and of the student’s growth and development in translation.

If the project involves an actual translation, a translation sample of not less than 400 and not more than 500 words, together with the corresponding source-language text, must accompany the application. The translation sample may consist of two or more separate passages from the same work. For poetry, the number of words must total at least 300.

Application Deadline: April 15, 2001

Award: $500, a certificate of recognition, and up to $500 toward expenses for attending the ATA Annual Conference. One or more certificates may also be awarded to runners-up.

All nominations and materials should be addressed to:
Jo Anne Engelbert, Chair, ATA Honors & Awards Committee
American Translators Association • 225 Reinekers Lane, Ste. 590 • Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; E-mail: ata@atanet.org

ATA ANNOUNCES 2000 AWARD RECIPIENTS

The ATA announced the recipients of the Alexander Gode Medal, the Lewis Galantière Translation Prize, and the Student Translation Award at ATA’s 41st Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

The Alexander Gode Medal, the ATA’s most prestigious award, was awarded to Gabe Bokor for the significant contribution he has made over many years to enhancing the quality and status of translation. Mr. Bokor’s translation bureau, Accurapid Translation Services, Inc., has been in existence in Poughkeepsie, New York, since 1978.

The Lewis Galantière Translation Prize, given for a book-length translation published in the U.S., was awarded to Peter Meineck for his new translation of Aeschylus’ Oresteia, published by Hackett Publishing Company. The Lewis Galantière Translation Prize carries with it a monetary award of $1,000.

The Student Translation Award was given to Jessica Cohen for her translation of Milkteeth: An Unripe Novel from Hebrew into English. Ms. Cohen is a student at Indiana University and was sponsored by Professor Breon Mitchell. This annual award ($500, plus an allowance toward attending the conference) is given to a student or group of students for a literary translation or translation-related project.
ATA ACTIVITIES

Accreditation
• An exam sitting was held in Atlanta, Georgia.
• An exam sitting has been added in Houston, Texas.

Board
• The next ATA Board of Directors meeting has been set for March 23-25, 2001, in Alexandria, Virginia.

Membership
• ATA closed out 2000 with 7,757 members. This is 6.2 percent ahead of last year’s record membership figures.
• Dues renewal notices have been mailed. If you did not receive your notice, please contact ATA Headquarters. New this year, you may renew your membership online in the “Members Only” section of the ATA Website.

Professional Development
• The ATA Financial Translation Conference has been set for New York City, May 18-20, 2001. For more information, please see page 2 and the ATA Website, www.atanet.org (click on the “What’s New” section).

Public Relations
• ATA continues to work with the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs, ASTM Translation User and Language Interpreting Standards projects, and the Localisation Industry Standards Association.

About Our Authors Continued from p. 6

mechanical engineer for over 40 years (split almost evenly between the U.S.S.R. and U.S.), he retired last year from his engineering job and moved from the Windy City to the Sunshine State. So nothing stands anymore between him and T&I. He can be reached at bsilversteyn@home.com.

Irena Stone, Ph.D., is a professional linguist with over 15 years of translating, interpreting, language and literature teaching experience. An ATA member, she is proficient in Russian, Ukrainian, and English. She graduated from Kiev State University with an M.A. in translating, interpreting, and Teaching English as a Second Language. She completed a full-time, three-year post-graduate course in literary study (comparative literatures) and linguistics. Her doctorate dissertation was dedicated to the psychological aspects of the American novel. She completed a course for language professionals at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in Great Britain. Currently, she works at NetworkOmni® Multilingual Communications as a director of continuing education and quality assurance. She can be reached at istone@networkomni.com or irena@earthlink.net.

Izumi Suzuki is a Japanese<>English interpreter/translator with extensive experience in various aspects of the automotive industry. She is the president of Suzuki, Myers & Associates, and of the Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network headquartered in the Greater Detroit area. This year, she became the administrator of ATA’s Japanese Language Division after completing a three-year term as a member of the ATA Board of Directors. She can be reached at izumi.suzuki@suzukimyers.com.

Lynn Visson has been a staff interpreter from Russian and French into English for more than 20 years at the United Nations. She holds a Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literatures from Harvard University, and has taught at Columbia University and other institutions. She is the author of a book and an audiocourse on simultaneous interpretation from Russian into English, a study of Russian-American marriages, a book on the poet Sergei Esenin, and Russian and Uzbek cookbooks. Of Russian background, she has also edited and translated several books and written numerous articles on Russian language, literature, and culture. She can be reached at lvisson@aol.com.

Case Study Research Project

Attention: NATO or United Nations Translators or Interpreters

If you served as a translator or interpreter with NATO or United Nations forces in the Balkans any time from 1995 to the present, please contact Robert Burgener by e-mail at internectr@hotmail.com or by mail at 13013 Narada Street, Rockville, Maryland 20853. You will be asked to complete a short survey pertaining to your experiences before, during, and after your deployment as part of a larger research project supervised by the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.
TRADOS Workshops
TRADOS Corporation offers one-day training workshops each month for Translator’s Workbench, MultiTerm, and WinAlign at its site at 113 S. Columbus Street, Alexandria, Virginia. Attendance is limited. For more information, contact: Tel: (703) 683-6900; Fax: (703) 683-9457; E-mail: eva@trados.com or www.trados.com.

Society for Technical Communication 48th Annual Conference
May 13-16, 2001
Chicago Hyatt Regency • Chicago, Illinois
The Society for Technical Communication will hold its 48th Annual Conference at the Chicago Hyatt Regency in Chicago, Illinois, May 13-16, 2001. The conference will feature more than 250 technical sessions covering technical writing, editing, management, Web page design, multimedia, and other subjects of interest to technical communicators. For more information, please visit the STC office Website at www.stc-va.org (from the main page, select “What’s New”). The site also contains a recap of STC’s most recent conference, which will give readers a sense of what the next conference will be like (from the main page, select “Conferences”). Detailed information on the next conference will be posted on the site later this year. For more information about STC, please visit www.stc-va.org or call (703) 522-4114.

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 discuss interpretation in the community (health services, social services, courts, and 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: www.rsss06.gouv.qc.ca/english/colloque/index2.html.

Call for Papers: Canadian Association of Translation Studies 14th Annual Congress
May 26-28, 2001
Université Laval • Quebec City, Quebec, Canada
The theme of the conference will be “Translation and Censorship.” For more information, please contact Dr. Denise Merkle at the Université de Moncton, Département de traduction et des langues, Casier 30, Faculté des arts, Moncton (New Brunswick) E1C 5E6; Tel: (506) 858-4214; Fax: (506) 858-4166; e-mail: merkled@umoncton.ca; or visit www.uottawa.ca/associations/act-cats/index.htm for more information.

AFTI Announces the 2001–2002 Scholarship Program

The American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, Inc. announces its first national scholarship competition. Made possible by grants from the American Translators Association and corporate contributions, two $2,500 scholarships will be offered to students enrolled or planning to enroll in graduate or undergraduate programs in translator or interpreter education at accredited U.S. colleges or universities.

One $2,500 nonrenewable scholarship will be for a student enrolled or planning to enroll in a program of nonliterary translation or in an interpreter-training program for the 2001-2002 academic year; the other $2,500 non-renewable scholarship will be awarded to a student enrolled or accepted into a program for literary translation.

Applicants must be full-time students who have completed at least one year of post-secondary education, and who should have at least one year of academic work remaining to complete their program of study in translation or interpretation. Preference will be given to students in B.A./B.S. or M.A. and Ph.D. granting programs.

Applications must be received by February 28, 2001. Awards will be announced by April 30, 2001.

Application forms and additional information may be obtained by contacting AFTI by mail at: AFTI, Western Michigan University, 335 Moore Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5093; or ATA at (703) 683-6100 or ata@atanet.org.
Message from the Chinese Language Division Administrator

By Frank Y. Mou

Dear translators, interpreters, and friends:

The Chinese Language Division (CLD) is proud to announce its establishment under the American Translators Association. The main purpose of the CLD is to provide a venue where ATA members interested in Chinese translation and interpretation can share their expertise, help one another, promote the standards in the profession, and advocate the policies and objectives of the ATA. We sincerely welcome and encourage all Chinese translators and interpreters to join and get involved with the division as it grows along with the ATA.

As administrator of the CLD, I would like to introduce to you its first administration: Yuanxi Ma, acting assistant administrator; Laura Wang, treasurer; and Robin Feng, newsletter editor. We are dedicated to serving the division, and will strive to make it a true home for all CLD members. We would be glad to have your comments and suggestions so that we can better serve your needs. Should you have any ideas or thoughts for the CLD, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at Frank_Mou@yahoo.com.

The establishment of the CLD is a major event long awaited by translators and interpreters. Without the persistent efforts of the CLD Preparatory Committee and the timely assistance from ATA Headquarters, as well as the ardent support from translators in all languages, the division’s petition and subsequent acceptance for establishment would not have been possible. We are very grateful for your support, and we look forward to your continued interest in the CLD’s future activities. At this moment, I would like to remind you to elect the option of joining ATA’s newest division when you renew your ATA membership. (For those who have paid for a three-year membership, please call for a payment form, indicate that you want to join the CLD, and send in the appropriate dues amount.) We need your continued support!

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Beacons 7: Call for Manuscripts

The seventh issue of Beacons, a periodical of literary translations published annually by ATA’s Literary Division, will appear in 2001 under the editorship of Alexis Levitin (also editor of Beacons 2). Works translated may be fiction, poetry, drama, or essay. Manuscripts should not exceed 15 pages. Submissions from any source language are eligible, but translations must be in English. Works from lesser-known languages, especially non-European ones, are highly encouraged.

All submissions must be accompanied by a copy of the original and by a statement of permission from the holder of the foreign rights. No e-mail submissions will be considered. Those whose manuscripts are accepted may be asked to submit a copy on diskette. The deadline is March 1, 2001. For further information, please contact: Alexis Levitin, Department of English, SUNY-Plattsburgh, NY 12901; alexis.levitin@plattsburgh.edu.
The Nordic Experiment

In Orlando, the Nordic Division offered a translation workshop to its members for the first time. Originally, the plans were to go over translations of one English-Danish, two Danish-English, two Swedish-English, and one Norwegian-English text during the workshop. However, the plan proved to be a little too ambitious for the time allotted.

Due to health problems, Irene Berman was unable to attend the conference, so the Norwegian-English text was not reviewed. The English-Danish text was also laid aside for the time being. Both of the latter sessions are being rescheduled for the WisCONFERENCE, to be held in Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin, on April 19–22, 2001. New Swedish and Danish texts and a Finnish text will be prepared for translation into English. Thanks to David Rumsey and

Continued on p. 18

Members of the Nordic Division enjoyed the authentic Norwegian cuisine at the Akershus Restaurant in Epcot Center during the recent ATA conference.

The Nordics, Orlando and Beyond

By Edith Matteson

At the annual meeting of the Nordic Division in Orlando, Edith Matteson was re-elected administrator while Marianne Dellinger was welcomed aboard as the new assistant administrator. Items covered at the meeting included a discussion of Aurora Borealis, the division’s newsletter. There was a consensus among the members present to make the newsletter available electronically. We will continue to send paper copies to members who prefer that format. Hard copies will also be available for distribution at meetings and other events. Another topic of discussion at the annual meeting was the idea of establishing a listserv to facilitate discussions among members of the Nordic Division. This option is being explored.

Continued on p. 18
The Nordics, Orlando and Beyond Continued

Helle Pals Frandsen for helping me make this experiment a success!

Other Division Activities

On Saturday afternoon, Doug Robinson held a session where he used Pentti Saarikoski’s Finnish Translation of The Catcher in the Rye as an example of Mikhail Bakhtin’s model of double-voicing in the translation process. Thanks Doug, for continuing to provide a Finnish element to the ATA conferences!

On Friday evening, a group of about 20 people gathered for some Nordic ambience and authentic food at the Akershus Restaurant at the Norwegian site in Epcot Center. Thanks to everyone who came and to their friends and family for making this event fun!

Upcoming Conferences

WisCONFERENCE • April 19-22, 2001

As reported in the last issue of Aurora Borealis, the Nordic Division is planning a series of conferences. The next one, WisCONFERENCE, is a joint effort of the Nordic Division and the Mid-America Chapter of the ATA (MICATA). This still-in-the-works conference will begin in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on April 19, 2001. There will be an industrial tour in the morning. This will be followed by a lunchtime discussion of the Graduate Program in Translation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (by Madeline Velguth, UW-Milwaukee). In the afternoon, participants will be able to attend a demonstration of an interpretation facility on the campus. There will also be a session on interpreter training (by Dustin DeGrande, International Institute of Wisconsin). The second workshop planned for Milwaukee will be hands-on. Professor James Mileham will lead this session on terminology featuring software, including the SystranPro Machine Translation System and Trados’ Multiterm, Workbench, and WinAlign.

On Friday, April 20, the WisCONFERENCE will reconvene at the Friedrick Center on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Madison portion of the conference will include presentations on: 1) the University of Wisconsin hospital interpreter-training program (by program coordinator Shiva Bidav-Sielaff); 2) language-specific workshops (like the Nordic ones offered in Orlando); 3) patent translation (by Nick Hartmann); 4) translating Icelandic poetry (by Dick Ringer, UW-Madison, Scandinavian Studies); 5) A panel discussion on getting started in translation (including aspects of education and training); 6) translator-agency relations (by Doris Ganser and Brian White); 7) the inter-relationship of the Scandinavian languages (by Louis Janus, University of Minnesota); 8) technical Japanese (by Jim Davis, UW-Madison); and 9) translating Russian poetry (by Andrew Renolds, UW-Madison).

In addition to the sessions at the Center, hands-on resource search sessions will be offered by the Wisconsin State Historical Society. During the Saturday luncheon, Emily Melcher is scheduled to talk about her experience translating the lyrics of Evert Taube. Emily will be accompanied by her guitar as she sings some of the results of her translations. On Sunday, April 22, ATA accreditation examinations will be offered.

The program for the WisCONFERENCE is still under construction. For more information, watch the Nordic Division Website: www.americantranslators.org/divisions/ND/nordic.htm; the MICATA Website: www.ata-micata.org, or contact Edith Matteson (EMMatteson@earthlink.net) or Anja Lodge (aylodge@primary.net).

After the WisCONFERENCE, the next Nordic Division conference will be in Norway.
1999/2000 was a very busy year for the German Language Division. This report provides an overview of our activities during the past year, as well as a preview of what is to come.

Membership
Division membership is growing rapidly, and was last reported at 716 (up from 568 in September 1999; an increase of 26 percent). This makes the GLD the third largest division within ATA, after the French and Spanish divisions. This increase in membership was especially noticeable in the conference attendance and the contributions made by members of the GLD in Orlando.

GLD Website
Earlier in the year, the GLD officially went online with its own Website. This is now part of the ATA Website, and can be seen at www.ata-divisions.org/GLD/index.html. The site contains information on division activities, lists the administrators, and also contains links to the online version of our newsletter, Interaktiv. As the site continues to grow, we welcome membership comments and input.

The GLD also maintains its own discussion forum under the auspices of onelist.com. Any GLD member is welcome to join the group, and messages are available either as e-mail or in digest format. Further instructions on how to join can be found on the Website under the address www.ata-divisions.org/GLD/list.html. Many thanks to Michael Metzger for his dedicated work with the Website and the administration of the newsgroup!

Newsletter Interaktiv
Our continued thanks go to the team producing the GLD newsletter Interaktiv. Not only is the newsletter informative and well-written, it also has a professional layout and is easy on the eye. Marga Hannon and Manfred Winter as co-editors, Karin Würtz-Schäfer as layout specialist, and Janice Becker as proofreader, have kindly agreed to continue their work with the newsletter, which has been published four times since the conference in St. Louis.

Several important issues will continue to be discussed regarding the newsletter. The availability of the GLD Website and the rising cost of printing and mailing the newsletter as hard copy has many of us wondering whether it would be better to publish Interaktiv as a PDF file, which can then be downloaded by members after receiving an e-mail notice alerting them about a new issue.

While the advantages of an online version of the newsletter obviously include significant savings for the division and a reduction in the paper pile in everyone’s office, there is still concern that a newsletter printed off a downloaded file will have less reader appeal and may be read less. We have also discussed the option of commercial advertising in the newsletter, but have to see how advertisers judge the feasibility of seeing their advertisements published online rather than in conventional print format. During the coming year, we intend to migrate to a PDF-based version online and, as previously mentioned, will continue to offer a printed version to all those who request it. The number of hard copy requests will give us a better indication of the actual number of issues that need to be printed and mailed for every edition.

...This year marked an important event in the history of the GLD, as the division held its first official elections...

Division Elections
This year marked an important event in the history of the GLD, as the division held its first official elections for the position of administrator and assistant administrator to replace Helge Gunther as administrator and Ruth Zimmer-Boggs as assistant administrator. Both had decided not to run for office again, and the GLD is indebted to their hard work for making the division what it is today. The membership is up, the budget is established and balanced, and we had a number of excellent speakers at the conference, not to mention a successful get-together at a local restaurant. The participation rate in the election, despite a string of misfortunes that prevented the newsletter from being published on time, also showed the value our members place on the division.

With the help of a nominating committee, four candidates were identified and ballot voting took place in September. The newly elected administrators are Michael Magee from Austin, Texas (assistant administrator) and
German Language Division Report

Dorothee Racette from Saranac, New York (administrator). As Bruni Johnson explained on behalf of the nominating committee, the division had sought to find a balance between a native English speaker and a native German speaker to represent the two “faces” of the GLD. It is a credit to the division how well the election was organized and planned. Many thanks also to the other candidates, Edith Losa and Amanda Ennis, for their willingness to serve the division as administrators. I am sure we will find a way to utilize their positive energy, and Amanda has already been “shanghaied,” as she put it, into division work.

The official takeover of the new administrative team took place at our annual business meeting on September 22 in Orlando. We heard a final report by our outgoing administrators and special reports by Marga Hannon, editor of Interaktiv, and Michael Metzger, Web coordinator, both of whom, unfortunately, could not attend the conference this year and had their reports read by a representative. Then, Doris Wagner announced the election results, and all four candidates had an opportunity to address the audience. In her last official act as GLD administrator, Helge Gunther passed the “division administrator” tag to Dorothee Racette.

Plans of the New Team

The new team is off and running. Michael and Dorothee met repeatedly during the conference to talk about immediate and long-term goals for the division. A working lunch with 14 interested division members provided an opportunity to share ideas and talk about possible plans for conferences and other activities. The following summary is intended to give an overview of plans in the works.

Budget

In the true spirit of a presidential election year, we promise a balanced budget. Some items in the budget will shift in order for us to invite more speakers to the ATA Los Angeles conference. A membership roster will no longer be printed, since GLD members can be found online at the ATA Website. Publishing Interaktiv partly online, as I mentioned earlier, may also result in savings. Efforts are underway to secure advertisers for Interaktiv as an additional source of division income.

Contacts with German Translators’ Organizations

The new administrative team plans to improve contacts with German-speaking translators’ organizations. While an official effort is underway to sign a memorandum of understanding between ATA and BDÜ (the German Translators and Interpreters Association), we are also interested in finding speakers for mutual conference events and in establishing structures and platforms for exchange. An official letter to the newly elected president of BDÜ has gone out, but there are also efforts to contact smaller regional organizations.

Conference Planning

The emphasis of the GLD presentations at the Los Angeles conference will be on intermediate and advanced training opportunities for German<>English translators and interpreters. This year, the GLD was able to offer a preconference seminar for the first time, a tradition we hope to keep up for future conferences. We are already in the process of contacting interesting speakers, and hope to present a challenging program lineup. It was noted at the GLD business meeting that more presentations should be held in German instead of English as the presentation language.

Conference Reception

Given the increasing size of division membership and the rising numbers of conference attendees, it makes sense to put on a division reception directly at the conference hotel. Money has been set aside in the budget for a formal GLD reception to be held in Los Angeles. Several sponsors have already expressed an interest in supporting the event.

Orlando Conference Events

In addition to the general meetings and events aimed at the entire membership of the ATA, the following events were specifically organized for translators from and into German.

Robin Bonthrone’s preconference seminar, which focused on German financial statements in accounting and reporting, won highest praise from participants. Geoffrey Koby presented a workshop on issues in German<>English legal translation, with detailed information on working with those tricky...
The JLD sessions at the 41st ATA Annual Conference in Orlando were another great success (as anticipated). All together, about 50 people attended the sessions. During the first night’s informal gathering, there were 29 people. We introduced ourselves and had a nice, informal exchange over coffee and snacks. On Thursday night, 40 people went out for our annual JLD dinner. It has been the division’s tradition to go out to a Japanese restaurant in the conference city. We found a nice, large restaurant featuring taiko (Japanese drums) as entertainment. We enjoyed fine food and great camaraderie. Some 30 people attended the JLD’s annual meeting on Saturday. Looking back over the past 10 years, the number of those who participated in this event is just about average.

The good news about this year’s conference was that there were many new faces. Some unwelcome news was that we missed many regular conference attendees. We certainly would like to see more new faces and regulars together at the next conference in Los Angeles.

The JLD is lucky to have many excellent volunteers. Among them, Ben Tompkins, Akiko Sasaki-Summers, and Gerry Gooding worked very hard to put together a wonderful program. In addition, Ben and Akiko did a thorough follow-up of the program by preparing questionnaires and compiling and analyzing responses. This will be very useful for the Program Committee in preparing for the next year’s conference.

All together, there were nine sessions (including the annual meeting at the end). The educational sessions covered a wide variety of topics, from the semiconductor industry, to localization, to biomedical and pharmaceutical, to patents. Being more an interpreter than a translator, I always feel that there should be some interpreting-related sessions, so I gave an interpreting workshop. According to the survey, people who attended the sessions gave high evaluations to all presenters.

The conference concluded with the annual meeting. At the meeting, new officers were installed: myself as administrator, Ken Wagner as assistant administrator, and Ben Tompkins as secretary/treasurer. Some issues discussed at the meeting were: topics for the next year’s conference; amending the bylaws; making The JLD Times distribution electronic; the upcoming JLD Directory and Introductory Handbook; and the division listserve.

...The most wonderful thing about this division is that we have many members who are very willing to dedicate their time for the betterment of the JLD...

I am very pleased to mention that everything we discussed is now moving forward, thanks to many volunteers. We are already communicating through our listserve! The bylaws are being reviewed by a task-force. The Program Committee is now planning great sessions under the leadership of Jon Johanning. And next year’s budget has been turned in!

The most wonderful thing about this division is that we have many members who are very willing to dedicate their time for the betterment of the JLD, and I feel very proud that I can be part of it. We are confident that the JLD will have a fantastic program next year in Los Angeles.
The Role of Interpreters in Addressing Hate/Bias Incidents

By P. Diane Schneider

Interpreters benefit by keeping informed about hate crimes and the dynamics of bias-related incidents for both professional and personal reasons. Interpreters continually seek to provide better quality services, whether the venue is the judicial, medical, mental health, or law enforcement setting. Legislation and ordinances providing special sanctions for newly defined criminal behavior motivated by bias has been passed in many states, counties, and municipalities. Depending upon the jurisdiction, these laws provide for special enhanced penalties against those who commit criminal behavior against persons because of their race, color, or national origin. Many such laws include additional protected groups as well, such as religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and labor union membership, among others.

There are special nuances and terminology associated with such cases and, increasingly, persons who need interpreters may be either victims, witnesses, or the relatives of hate crime victims...

persons of color because of their appearance, speech, dress, demeanor, or associations. Interpreters may also become targets of hate crime perpetrators, even though they think of themselves as impartial third parties who are removed, and somehow insulated, from the tragedies they are exposed to in court, the medical setting, and elsewhere.

What is a hate crime?
I am not aware of any state that has legislation prohibiting "hate crime," although this terminology is commonly used throughout the U.S. as a generic term to refer to regulations intended to punish perpetrators of bias-motivated crimes. Such legislation can be called "malicious harassment," as is the case in Washington State, and may serve to enhance punishment of criminal behavior where it can be shown the crime was motivated by the victim’s race, color, or national origin. Without such findings, common motivations for these crimes may be assumed. These include motivations to rob, assault, deface, or damage, and acts when the victim and perpetrator perceive themselves to be members of the same group. Sometimes the hate-motivated behavior is already considered to be at the felony level.

Whatever the cause, it is more troubling to most of us when we know the motivation to commit a horrendous crime against someone was not for something he/she did or had done, but for who he/she is. For example, Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian immigrant, was pulled from his bicycle in Portland, Oregon and beaten to death. Three Portland skinheads were convicted of the homicide. Later, in October 1990, an extensive civil litigation ensued against the California-based leader of the White Aryan Resistance (WAR) for inciting violence against Mr. Seraw, an immigrant and a person of color. Relatives from Ethiopia were brought to Portland for the trial. The litigation was filed on behalf of the family by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League. The judgment against WAR was more than $12 million.

Vincent Chin, the son of Chinese immigrants and an engineering student in Detroit, Michigan who spoke impeccable English, was baited by two white unemployed auto workers in a bar where he celebrated with friends on June 19, 1982. Mistaking him for Japanese, the workers blamed his race for layoffs in the U.S. auto industry. After trading insults, they followed him outside after he left the bar and beat him to death with a baseball bat. Although the perpetrators were convicted of murder, neither served a day in jail. Each was sentenced to three years of probation and fined $3,780 by a circuit judge in Detroit.

Three Vietnamese men visited Ocean Shores, Washington for the July 4, 2000 holiday. According to media reports, they were baited by approximately 10 white men who used racial epithets and told them to go back where they came from. One
of the assailants began beating on the window with a metal pipe or cane. The Vietnamese men did not run. One of the victims got a knife and, when one of the white men reportedly began to strike him, he struck back with the knife multiple times, killing his assailant. The Vietnamese man went on trial in Montesano, Washington. The result of the first trial was a hung jury.

Although subsequent reports indicate that the same group of white men had participated in a series of harassment and intimidation incidents against persons of color in the area that week, by the end of November 2000, no charges had yet been filed against any of the white men.

On July 5, 2000, in the Carmel Valley of the City of San Diego, four elderly Mexican migrant workers were savagely attacked by eight or more persons near their place of work. Over a two-hour period, they were chased, beaten with iron pipes, stabbed with pitchforks, hit with rocks, and shot with high-power pellet guns while racial epithets were yelled at them and they were told to “Go back to Mexico.” Media reports stated that two of the victims required hospitalization and a third received medical treatment. The perpetrators were described as “Anglo skinheads” ranging in age from late teens to early 20s, one sporting a swastika tattoo. They reportedly came from one of the most affluent areas of San Diego and attended one of the best schools.

The Role of an Interpreter in Hate/Bias-Motivated Incidents

Interpreters may have several types of encounters with hate/bias incidents. They may be called to interpret for a victim advocacy organization or agency supporting the victim, to provide language access for a victim who is documenting an incident, to report the incident or proceeding through a long and arduous investigation process, or to testify at trial if a suspect is identified and charged. The interpreter may also be called to the hospital. Regardless of the setting, the interpreter must be absolutely scrupulous in interpreting all nuances of what the victim says when describing what the attacker said. Were epithets related to race, color, or national origin used? Did the victim specifically express fear of intimidation? Were threats made against him, his family, or his property? Any omission by the interpreter may eliminate key indicators of racial motivation to the attack. Without this information investigators may reach the conclusion that the motivation was, for example, simple robbery, mental illness, or a two-way fight.

Interpreters’ unique knowledge, skills, and abilities can help their own communities to prepare and/or respond to hate incidents.

Interpreters may be members of targeted communities

Interpreters benefit when they are well informed about intolerance or bias, what local, state, and federal laws are in force, and what support can be developed in the community. They can participate in or initiate efforts to educate community members about the laws, the proper documentation of incidents, and how the community can present a united front in the face of such incidents, by publicly opposing such intolerance as a deterrent from one incident eliciting others.

Individuals who perceive they are being targeted by incidents of bias should be made aware of options to address bias. If they feel they have no options, aside from relying on their own resources to protect their family, property, or self through direct action, they may retaliate with violence. If communities are prepared to respond effectively to incidents such as this, even if they are convinced such incidents will never happen, advance measures may prevent the cycle of violence from occurring.

Interpreters are uniquely situated because of their knowledge of “the system” to spearhead or encourage key people in their community to take such steps to protect their community. To achieve this, they may wish to consider taking some of the following actions:

• Identify key community leaders who may be able to help.

• Identify organizations and groups which may have a mutual interest in protecting their community and minimizing the impact of hate incidents. These may include, but are not limited to, local community organizations such as the YWCA, chamber of commerce, local human rights commission, community

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The Role of Interpreters in Addressing Hate/Bias Incidents Continued

action program, local prosecuting attorney’s office, police crime prevention unit, religious group, parents group, fraternal association, etc.

- Contact organizations and agencies which can serve as resources or provide information or technical assistance in confronting hate/bias incidents. Such organizations include:

The Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice (600 E Street N.W., Suite 6900, Washington, DC 20530; Tel: [202] 305-2935) has 10 regional offices with staff members who can respond throughout the U.S. to communities which have experienced hate incidents or seek to develop strategies and contingency plans to confront such incidents. CRS conciliators offer free on-site assessment, consultation, and provide speakers and models to assist communities in this effort. CRS can also assist in developing community statements of unity and inclusion and media statements, rumor control plans, as well as facilitate communication between the community and police, etc. The agency publishes a bulletin, Hate Crime: The Violence of Intolerance, describing its services in more detail. The Web address is www.usdoj.gov/crs/.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation maintains special units which investigate jurisdictional crimes where there is a conspiracy to deprive the victim(s) of civil rights. They also investigate “terrorist groups.” They sometimes work in cooperation with local law enforcement, providing technical assistance to local investigators. They can provide speakers to community groups.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (400 Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 548, Montgomery, AL 36177-9621; Tel: [334] 264-0286), which files civil litigation against groups it alleges are responsible for hate-motivated violence, such as the KKK or WAR, publishes materials for use in schools and communities to educate about hate/bias incidents and the benefits of teaching tolerance. The Website is www.splcenter.org.

The Anti-Defamation League (823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; Tel: [212] 490-2525), with 31 regional offices in the U.S., publishes materials to assist law enforcement in effective investigations and to educate communities, educators, and law enforcement about hate group activities, including examples of model community anti-discrimination programs. Some of the materials are translated into languages other than English.

The Center for Democratic Renewal and Education (P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302-0469; Tel: [404] 221-0025) publishes The Monitor, a newsletter outlining efforts in communities, and other publications such as When Hate Groups Come to Town, a handbook of model community responses, and a series of educational monographs on human rights issues (for example, They Don’t All Wear Sheets).

Glossary of terms which may be heard in this context

Hate crime: A general term referring to criminal behavior motivated by hatred of a target group. This may be more specifically defined in some jurisdictions.

Bias crime or bias-motivated incident: Although each state defines bias crime differently, the Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act defines a hate or bias crime as a crime motivated by “hatred against a victim based on his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin.” Other acts of intolerance may not rise to the legal definition of a crime, yet have the effect of heightening racial tensions within a community by polarizing components of the community along racial lines.

Conspiracy to deprive of civil rights: “If two or more persons conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any person in any State, Territory, Commonwealth, Possession, or District in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or because of his having so exercised the same; or if two or more persons go in disguise on the highway or on the premises of another with intent to prevent or hinder his free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege so secured” (Chapter 13 241 USC).

Church burning: A church (mosque, synagogue) arson may be considered a hate crime if it is determined that the motivation was bias against the race or creed of the persons attending
or persons served by the church. Acts of intolerance: Acts against persons because of who they are may range from expressions of disapproval or dislike (which are not illegal) to threats or actions (which are illegal).

Malicious burning: This is a legal term similar to arson.

Cross burning: The burning of a wooden cross has been used by the KKK in private ceremonies, and also by members and non-KKK members to intimidate persons of other races by burning the cross on the victim’s property or in a place where the intended victim will likely see it.

Swastika: The swastika has been used by Neo-Nazis as part of their uniform and as graffiti on private and public property to alarm and frighten targeted victim groups.

Lynching: Due to a history in this country of hate groups hanging persons of color by a noose in a public place as a warning to others of that group, new hate groups have sometimes used this tactic, or the threat of such a tactic, to intimidate their targeted victims.

Stars and Bars (also known as the “Confederate battle flag,” or simply “Confederate flag”): Some persons have made use of the flag of this banner by wearing it or displaying it in other ways to send a message intended to intimidate persons of color.

Skinhead: Originally a group of shaved headed youths in England, the term has come to describe numbers of shaved headed youths who, as a group, seek to participate in random violence or violence against targeted groups. Other apparel accoutrements may include “Doc Martin” boots with bootlaces of different colors as an indication to others of their degree of commitment to violence.

Aryan Nation: Also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Aryan Nations, an organization based in Hayden Lake, Idaho, which has been declared by the U.S. government to be not a church but a political organization. The organization has been reported to host gatherings of many different groups of Neo-Nazis, skinheads, other white supremacists, and the Ku Klux Klan.

White Aryan Resistance (WAR): A loosely knit organization of reported skinheads whose headquarters was, or is still, based in California. They publish supremacist leaflets which are distributed sporadically throughout the country, produce television programs, and warn of a coming worldwide war between the races.

White Separatist: Persons and groups who seek to distinguish themselves from supremacists and say they do not claim one race to be superior to others, but simply believe in segregation of the races into their own communities.

Militia: Many paramilitary groups call themselves militias. Some say they only seek to prepare themselves in case of a foreign or domestic invasion so they can protect this country.

Survivalist: Groups or individuals who seek to prepare for invasion or disaster by collecting arsenals, supplies, and other protective gear as a contingency plan.

Hate leafleting: Leaflets and publications distributed with the intent of demeaning or intimidating targeted groups or of recruiting persons to join.

Neo-Nazi: Persons who honor Adolph Hitler as a martyr to the Aryan cause, who may dress in pseudo Nazi uniforms, participate in paramilitary training, and promote Aryan supremacy.

Ku Klux Klan: A secret society of white supremacists who, when promoting their group in public, affect pointed fabric hoods, face masks with eye holes, and robes; all of white with the exception of certain high officials in the organization who may wear robes of purple. Also known as the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Skinheads Against Racism (SHARPS): Youth who dress in a similar manner to skinheads and proclaim they are often racially integrated and do not target minority groups as their victims.

Fire bombing: Involves throwing a “Molotov cocktail,” a flammable fuel

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in a glass bottle with a burning wick, usually at a residence, business, or vehicle to send a message.

**Fighting Words:** Words which, in spite of the guarantee of freedom of expression as provided for in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, nevertheless, have been found by the courts to be so volatile in specific settings that they are intended, not to express an opinion, but to incite violence.

**Racist graffiti:** Racially demeaning names and or caricatures or symbols written, painted, or inscribed with the intention of threatening or warning the targeted group.

**Name-calling:** Generally not defined as a hate crime, involves calling a member of a targeted group a derogatory name or names. It is often intended to elicit a violent response from the victim.

**Racial slur:** See name-calling.

*Note: More than 800 groups have been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as part of a growing “patriot” movement. The Anti-Defamation League has estimated that militias, with about 15,000 members, are active in 40 states. Most of the groups operate independently, but are linked by a hatred of other groups and government authorities. Among the groups the center has linked to the movement are white supremacists, Neo-Nazis, Klansmen, Freemen, anti-abortion radicals, and Christian Identity followers. (Bureau of Justice Assistance Monograph: A Policymaker’s Guide to Hate Crimes)*

**Some symbols commonly used by hate perpetrators to demean and/or intimidate their targets**

**Noose:** A hangman’s noose may be fabricated of rope, string, drawn on paper, or scratched as graffiti.

**Demeaning caricatures of racial minorities:** Often included on hate leaflets or in literature promoting white supremacy. These may also appear as graffiti.

**WAR:** White Aryan Resistance, which may appear on graffiti or leaflets.

**No Fear:** National Organization for European American Rights.

**White.Power:** May be seen as graffiti.

**KKK:** Ku Klux Klan.

**Epithets demeaning specific groups:** See demeaning caricatures.

**Hate literature:** May be distributed in the form of posters, leaflets, left on doorsteps, car windows, or sent through the mail. May or may not include threats against targeted groups.

**Heil Hitler:** May be used by Neo-Nazis or imitators to intimidate nonbelievers or targeted groups via speech or graffiti.

**Nazi salute:** Right hand raised palm down, hand flat, arm straight, at an angle above the shoulder. This salute is often accompanied by the cry “Heil Hitler.”

**Confederate battle flag:** Red flag crossed by two blue stripes within which are white stars.

**Representation of persons as animals sometimes used to demean targeted groups**

**Opossum (possum):** Used to indicate the targeted person’s or group’s lack of diligence, intelligence, or laziness.

**Raccoon (coon):** Used to indicate that a targeted person or group is dishonest and would steal from behind one’s back.

**Monkey:** Used to indicate that a target person or group is subhuman.

**Gorilla:** See monkey above.

**References**

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German Language Division Report

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contracts and statutes. Gerhard Preisser spoke about editing strategies in English-German translation. (This area is particularly important for putting out high quality work.)

Frank Dietz and Christoph Niedermair prepared an interesting PowerPoint presentation about working tools for translation, including CD-ROMs and Web-based glossaries and an introduction to software localization. Ruth Zimmer-Boggs and Michael Magee, outgoing and incoming assistant division administrators, gave a joint presentation on working with the Website of singer Willie Nelson, detailing the challenges of working with creative text. Edmund Berger prepared a workshop with a collection of particularly challenging examples and possible pitfalls of German>English chemical translation. His workshop turned into a classroom, and participants came away with a big stack of annotated handouts and notes.

Glenn Cuomo, of the University of South Florida in Sarasota, gave a helpful overview of the rules of the Neue Rechtschreibung. During the discussion that followed, it became obvious that many colleagues are struggling with problems related to the spelling reform. The problem is that the rules are not uniformly applied (some are mandatory and others optional), so there sometimes is a difference in rule application between primary translators and reviewers. Some German clients seem to ignore the new spelling rules, while others are zealously updating old company materials. This is obviously a topic that needs our continued attention, and I would also like to recommend Manfred Winter’s excellent essay in the September 2000 issue of Interaktiv on the topic.

One of the last events of the conference programs included a highly interesting presentation by Barbara Mueller-Grant on the challenges of court interpreting in Germany. Even for those of us not directly involved in interpreting work, the presentation contained a wealth of cultural and legal information important for working with court materials.

In addition to the valuable presentations, the GLD outing on Friday night at the local Pebbles restaurant provided us with an evening of conversation with colleagues in a relaxed atmosphere. Many thanks to Ruth Zimmer-Boggs for organizing the event.

I would like to close this article by encouraging division members to join the dialogue and efforts of directing the division’s work. In the short time I have been division administrator, members have contacted me about a wide variety of issues, ranging from address changes to accreditation examinations. I look forward to receiving your input and suggestions and to serving the division in any way I can.

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Translating Texts, Interpreting Cultures

By Lynn Visson

Note: This article is based in part on the Susana Greiss Lecture, delivered by the author at the ATA 41st Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

In tracing the art of translation to its beginnings, one might go as far back as the Tower of Babel. The interpreters, without whom this project could not have been mounted, had to mediate between people who not only spoke different languages but also came from different cultures. “If any man speak in an unknown tongue let it be by two, or at most by three...and let one interpret,” commands Saint Paul (First Letter to the Corinthians, 14:27). The very word “translation” implies this transfer from one language and one culture to another, for it is derived from the Latin trans latus (past participle of ferre, to carry), meaning “to carry over.” The Russian переводить and the German übersetzen have the same sense of “taking from one side to the other,” of reworking words and semantic units to render the meaning in new form.

While language forms the way we see culture, culture impacts on how we perceive language. As the linguist Benjamin Whorff wrote: “Facts are unlike to speakers whose language background provides for unlike formulation of them.” This problem of “cultural interpretation” is one I have encountered both professionally, during my 20 years as a simultaneous interpreter from Russian and French into English at the United Nations, and personally, growing up in a Russian émigré family.

After leaving Russia during the revolution of 1917, my parents spent several decades in France before coming to the U.S., and I was raised on a combination of three languages and cultures—Russian, French, and English. That probably predisposed me to a career as an interpreter. And being married to a Russian, a personal interest in the clash of languages and cultures led me to my study of Russian-American marriages. Of linguistic-cultural communication and conflict are cross-cultural marriages made.

It is ironic that in America, a land of immigrants, the interpreter’s standing is lower than in many other countries. He is, as an observer noted, often seen as “a rather low status individual. The image is of a middle-aged person in a shabby jacket who speaks English with a noticeable accent, and who is probably an immigrant to the United States.” At countless meetings at the United Nations and other international organizations, these skilled professionals who make mutual understanding possible are commonly dismissed as “the services” or “the facilities,” as though they were machines, or worse.

Despite the obvious need for good interpreters, this profession has not been taken very seriously in the U.S., and the failure to recognize its critical importance for communication among nations and cultures is hard to understand. The concept of interpretation seems to run counter to the homegrown American notion that “we are basically all alike”...

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interpreters, business couriers, and trade negotiators. Throughout history they have served as interpreters of culture and politics as well as language. During the Punic Wars, negotiations were often carried on by interpreters, and the 12th century dragomans—official interpreters appointed by local authorities—specialized in foreign affairs and were frequently entrusted with highly sensitive missions. The French dragomans, who were trained in Oriental languages, were required both to translate what was said and give advice on the meaning of specific words or situations; in other words, to provide “cultural interpretation.” Columbus sent young Indians from the New World to Spain to be trained as interpreters so that he could use them as go-betweens.

Far better than America, Russia has understood that interpreters translate culture as well as language. Many distinguished Russian diplomats began their careers as interpreters. Stalin’s interpreter, Valentin Berezhkov, went on to a career as a diplomat, and Khrushchev’s interpreter, Oleg Troyanovsky, became a Soviet ambassador, first to the United Nations and then to China.

In diplomatic negotiations, the interpreter may often be more familiar with the culture of the languages with which he works than the parties to the negotiations. He may also have greater knowledge of the background of the issues and the history of the talks, particularly when, as so often happens, delegates are transferred to other assignments or are replaced by colleagues new to the problem under consideration. Here, the interpreter provides continuity as well as translation.

A case in point occurred when an interpreter friend of mine was working with a delegation from a high-level international organization attempting to mediate a violent and bloody ethnic conflict. The high-ranking ambassador heading the mediators fell ill and was replaced at a crucial point in the negotiations by a diplomat with little experience in this particular conflict. Having been informed that the two sides had been making real progress in their peace talks, the new top mediator was horrified by the highly inflammatory statements of both sides at the opening of a new round of talks.

“What kind of progress is this?” he asked. The interpreter who had been with the negotiations from the beginning told him that such statements were always intended for domestic consumption and for the hordes of journalists present at the opening session of each round of talks. Moreover, the representatives of these ethnic groups were accustomed to using language that in other countries would have been taken as a declaration of war or an unpardonable insult to the other side’s history, culture, traditions, leaders, and religion. The interpreter’s familiarity with this background saved the mediator—who was preparing to castigate both sides in no uncertain terms for their lack of goodwill—from a major blunder. Instead of expressing indignation at these bellicose pronouncements, the diplomat calmly stated that both sides naturally had their reasons for concern, and then took up the issues that had been successfully negotiated at the last meeting. Content with having blasted their opponents for the benefit of the domestic and international press, the parties got down to business and the negotiations made further progress.

While the translator, who works with the written word, has the luxury of time and can render the complete source-language text in the target language, the interpreter is under constant time pressure. And the interpreter working from English into Russian is under even greater pressure than his colleague working from Russian into English. Owing to the length of Russian words and the structure of the Russian language, English-Russian interpretation requires one-third more time than Russian-English. The interpreter may consequently be forced to condense a statement to keep from falling behind. Such editing can be very tricky, particularly when dealing with sensitive subjects or delicate negotiations in which every word counts. Here, knowledge of the subject matter and the cultural backdrop is vital to avoid omitting integral elements of the speaker’s thought.

Considering how important it is for an interpreter to know the cultures he works in, it might be assumed that bilinguals equally at ease in two languages, and generally familiar with the two cultures, would make the best interpreters. Yet bilingual interpreters are like Goldilocks: when they are good, they are very, very good, and when they are bad, they are horrid. While some bilinguals make superb interpreters, others cannot cope with even a five-minute conversation because they are incapable

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of code switching and cannot move back and forth between their languages. “Most people believe that if you are bilingual, you can interpret,” commented an official of the Administrative Office of the UN Courts, a frequent user of interpreters. “That’s about as true as saying that if you have two hands you can be a concert pianist.”

What, in fact, is the simultaneous interpreter doing when he translates linguistic and cultural material? His work has been compared to that of many different professions: a cook, who takes raw materials and processes them into a finished dish; an air controller; a parrot (!); a fireman (attempting to extinguish verbal conflagrations); a ventriloquist; or even a centipede, which takes immensely complicated steps but cannot explain how it does it. A colleague of mine suggested that the interpreter is like a soldier who spends many hours in grueling training and then has one minute in the life-and-death heat of (verbal) battle to decide. Within a split second he must dredge up from the depths of his memory and knowledge not only the lexical, but also the cultural equivalents, of words and concepts. Quite a tall order!

Words embedded in the culture of one country often have no precise equivalents in the language of another. It has even been argued that only proper names, geographic, scientific, and technical terms, days of the week, months and numerals have full lexical correspondence in several languages. As the anthropologist Edward Hall pointed out: “No two languages are alike; some are so dissimilar...that they force the speaker into two different images of reality.” For an American, the word “lunch” may suggest a ham and cheese sandwich and a cup of coffee, while for a Russian, обед points to a vegetable salad, soup, meat, fried potatoes, and dessert.

The difficulty of finding cross-cultural linguistic equivalents—one which confronts both translator and interpreter—was beautifully illustrated by the translator Richard Lourie.

The translator’s heart sinks at the sight of words like коммуна, which he knows he must render as “communal apartment.” He is willing to lose all the coloration of the original—the slightly foreign, коммунал, made Russian by the kiss of the diminutive suffix ка, here expressing a sort of rueful affection. The English term conjures up the image of a Berkeley, California, kitchen, where hippies with headbands are cooking brown rice, whereas the Russian term evokes a series of vast brown rooms with a family living in each, sharing a small kitchen where the atmosphere is dense with everything that cannot be said and the memory of everything that shouldn’t have been said, but was.

This problem of cross-cultural communication is nicely demonstrated by a Japanese-speaking American professor who attended a faculty meeting on a strike-torn Japanese campus. The American assumed that all the Japanese professors present approved of the measure under discussion, since they had all spoken in favor of it. “All that may be true,” a Japanese colleague remarked at the end of the meeting, “but you are still mistaken. The meeting arrived at the opposite conclusion. You understood all the words correctly, but you did not understand the silences between them.”

Certain words or phrases translated literally can lead to stereotypes and clichés that last for years, creating a kind of “Me Tarzan, you Jane” situation. The American assumed that all the Japanese professors present were in favor of it, since they had all spoken in favor of it. “All that may be true,” a Japanese colleague remarked at the end of the meeting, “but you are still mistaken. The meeting arrived at the opposite conclusion. You understood all the words correctly, but you did not understand the silences between them.”

...in doing so they do not accuse their opponents of falsifying facts, but merely of not interpreting them ‘correctly.’ This attitude is explicable only if viewed within the context of the Marxist-Hegelian pattern of predetermined manner. Thus, an attitude not in accordance with theory is not in accordance with truth either; it is as incorrect as the false solution to a mathematical problem. Conversely, representatives of our side tend to promote compromise or transactional solutions. Margaret Mead writes that this attitude merely bewilders many representatives of the other side, and leads them to accuse us of hypocrisy, because it does not embody any ideological position recognizable to them. The idea that ‘there are two sides to every question’ is an embodiment of nominalistic philosophy, and it is hard to understand for those unfamiliar with this philosophy or its influence.
The heavy use in translation of “incorrect” or “wrong” led many Western diplomats to see the Soviet side as stubborn and dogmatic, while the Soviets viewed the American insistence on looking at both sides of the question as a deliberate attempt to avoid taking a position or as a way of covering up. Unless he had time to explain Hegelian theory to his listeners, the interpreter could finesse the problem by saying “we disagree” or simply “no,” instead of “that’s incorrect.”

While Marxist jargon has been relegated to history, its linguistic effects have trickled down deep into the Russian language. In my interviews for my book, many of the Americans married to Russians were distressed at how often their spouses announced “You’re wrong” or “That is not correct.” Aside from religious fundamentalists or mad scientists, Americans tend to reject the notion that philosophical systems can explain everything, and that there is always a “right” or a “wrong” answer. Rather, the American is trained from elementary school on up to preface his view with “You may be right, but,” or “We might look at this another way, too.”

Russian-American couples often encounter similar linguistic-cultural problems when discussing a play or a movie. One woman told me she hated going to a movie with her Russian husband and their American friends because they could never have a real discussion afterwards. “This was a bad film,” her husband would declare, or “The director was not successful.” An American with a similar reaction might have said, “I think this wasn’t a very good film,” or “The director seemed to have had trouble with that one.”

Differences in translating names can cause linguistic and cultural misunderstanding. Russian is highly productive of diminutives of nouns and names. A woman named Elena may be addressed as Lena, Lenochka, Lenka, or Alyona, while Aleksandr may also be known as Sasha, Sashenka, Sash, or Sanya. Attempts to force American names into diminutives can result in such baby talk as “Little Joycekins” or “Tommychik,” to the dismay of the party addressed. This form of endearment, however, does not imply belittling or condescension any more than the French penchant for petit—Ma petite femme, mon petit jardin, une petite promenade—implies a miniaturized view of the world. Nor does the French habit of beginning sentences with Moi, je require a literal interpretation implying an outsized ego.

Another word that often causes misunderstandings is “friend,” for here the literal translation and cultural connotations are worlds apart. For an American, a friend can be an old college roommate he sees every five years, a business associate with whom he plays golf every week, or someone who attends the same church. Americans tend to see friends as people with whom they engage in activities, such as tennis or going out to

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plus rather than a minus in terms of his ability to translate culture, though not necessarily language, if he is not working into his native tongue. The issue of working into a native or foreign language is a separate—and highly important—problem, but space does not permit for a discussion of this topic here.


6. Ibid., p. 9.

7. Not that all Russian speakers deliver their texts at a slow, measured pace!

8. The problem is even more acute for interpreters working from Chinese into Russian. Since Chinese is a monosyllabic language, in two minutes a speaker can utter 10 times as many words as in Russian, leaving the interpreter to gallop along trying to squeeze the text into Russian poly-syllabic words and lengthy grammatical constructions. By comparison, Russian-Chinese interpretation—i.e., working from a polysyllabic into a monosyllabic language—is child’s play.


In theory, translator-training programs prepare translation students to seek work and immerse themselves in the real world of professional translation. In practice, these programs often do a good job. For example, they teach students to use CVs, portfolios, and advertising in order to solicit work from organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union for jobs as in-house translators, and to solicit work from agencies and bureaus as freelance translators. However, most programs do not prepare students well enough for those first months of work in a professional environment or the first real assignment as a freelance translator. Newly educated translation professionals are launched (or they feel they are launched) into a real world where they must “sink or swim.”

It is true that no professional program in any field can adequately prepare trainees for every single eventuality that might come up during subsequent professional practice. Recently trained professionals in any field often feel insecure, and work providers in all professions often feel leery of these newcomers. In the field of translation, work providers insist on training and experience, while recent graduates of translation programs, who often lack experience, insist on the strength of their training as the single most important factor to qualify them for the job. The effect of this is that once students have finished their programs and find work, those first few months as an in-house or freelance translator become a time when they must learn (largely on their own by trial and error) how to handle the challenges of the real world in order to survive.

The “sink or swim” metaphor poses a serious question for our profession. How can translation programs embrace more elements of real-world professional translation practice in order to guarantee that, in the first few months of their careers, students will be swimming (and continue to swim)? I feel that translator-training programs are already adequately incorporating many aspects of real-world professional translation practice, such as how to seek work (since this is always an immediate concern of all students in such programs), how to deal with terminology, how to translate faster, more accurately, and more efficiently, how to write glossaries, and how to work in groups and teams. However, I do not feel that they incorporate enough of the type of insidious and unavoidable challenges translators face every day that ultimately threaten to encroach on translation quality. Therefore, I would like to share some ways I feel these insidious challenges may be harnessed as pedagogical tools for the translation classroom. My suggestions are based on both my experiences as a translator trainer and as a practicing professional translator. Hopefully, these aspects will be helpful for teaching students how to keep the work they get.

Perhaps I should give an example of the kind of “insidious challenges” I am talking about. Let us examine translation difficulty and translation text type. Translator-training programs and courses assume that there should be a progression from less difficult texts to more difficult texts, which means that students start with general texts and progress to specialized ones. These programs also assume that there should be a progression from less difficult text types to more difficult text types. This usually means that students start out with less difficult informative text types (those whose main function is the delivery of information) and progress to more difficult vocative (those in which the text writer encourages the text reader to take some course of action, such as buying a product or hiring a service) and expressive text types (those in which the writer lets his or her creative expression abound). This progression does, of course, reflect sound pedagogical principles, but from a professional translator’s point of view, this progression does not reflect the real world of translation very well. Translators deal with assignments of a wide range of text difficulty and text type on a daily basis, and I feel that translation students should be given some exposure to this fiercely non-progressive and wildly unpredictable aspect of real-world translation while they are still in the classroom.

Translator-training programs and courses should include some of this nonprogressive unpredictability by offering a varying range of text difficulty and text types. This element could be easily superimposed on

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existing programs and courses by occasionally “surprising” students with a text of a difficulty or type that forces them to see the unpredictability of the professional world. For example, staff translators often have no choice but to translate what they are given. Freelance translators often see themselves in the same situation, but for different reasons (not wanting to refuse the assignment because they need the work or want to pursue a particular client or agency as a source of work). By situating our students outside the comfortable realm of the gentle progression from less difficult to more difficult and from informative text types to vocative and expressive text types, we can force them to “live” a bit in the real world while still in training. We will also be able to observe them under duress and help them to deal with it. I believe that this will offer them a guarantee of success later on in their professional lives. Addressing real-world situations in the professional environment in the classroom will also enhance the credibility and prestige of our training programs.

Another area in translator-training programs and courses that is treated as if this were an ideal world is translation instructions. In functionalist translation theory (skopos theory), which has contributed so greatly to translation pedagogy in general, scholars have stated that: 1) professional translators can be effective creators of functional target texts if they receive effective translation instructions from the initiator (or client), and 2) that translator trainers should always explicitly state the translation instructions on assignments and exams (for example, rather than simply stating “translate the following text,” trainers should state something like “translate the following text into English for a specialized journalist who, after reading it, will use it as a source for an article he or she is writing for a monographic issue of a journal which examines the economic situation of Eastern European countries”). This sounds wonderful, but what happens when students are later thrown into the real world and discover, as is often the case, that instructions are not always provided as they were for their classroom assignments? Functionalist scholars have addressed this by saying that it is true that translation instructions are not always given and that translators may have to obtain them.

Therefore, I think that techniques for obtaining instructions from the client should be expressly taught in translation programs and courses. Generally, clear and distinct instructions can be obtained when there is a direct client/translator relationship. However, when there is an intermediated client/agency/translator relationship, instructions for assignments are much more difficult to obtain. In intermediated relationships, instructions may be given briefly, if at all, and usually in a form something like: “this is a general (or technical, or specialized) text on economics (or marketing, or business),” which is often shortened to simply “a text on economics.” To make matters worse, instructions, particularly in intermediated translations, may be wrong, and, of course, instructions in all situations are subject to change.

The most important piece of information the translator needs to know is whether the translation will be published. Teach your students to ask the client directly or to ask the intermediary. But always remind them to be aware that expressly given translation instructions could be wrong or change. Students may have to rely on implicit textual clues to provide the translation instructions. In case of doubt, have your students assume that the text will be published. This will help them to see the target text in a much clearer target-language context. Knowing that a potentially large number of people will be reading their work will help students do a much more contextually accurate and polished job. Never allow them to assume that the translation will not be published when they are in doubt, because that is where mistakes that are potentially damaging to any translator’s reputation occur. Remind them that publication may not necessarily mean that target texts will be formally published in a book, journal, magazine, newsletter, brochure, flier, or leaflet, but it may mean that they could be photocopied and used by various people as a source document, a visual reference in a meeting, and so on. The effect is the same: students will be able to envision the context of their work better if they assume it will be published, and this assumption will force them to be more polished when doing the work.

Another area that is seldom discussed in relation to translation pedagogy is the length of translation for assignments and examinations. Translation trainers generally choose texts under 1,000 words in length, but I would venture to say that the average text length is probably in the area of 500 words.
Another very useful assignment, which does occur in the real world of translation, is to split a lengthy document into various parts. Select a long text and divide it among as many individual students, pairs, or small groups as you deem fit. Have each individual or group translate one segment. Then photocopy each translated segment so that all students have a copy of all of the segments, which they should then assemble into a complete document, making changes to the segments as the longer textual coherency and cohesion seem to demand. This exercise will give students a taste of the process and editing required when translations must be done this way in actual practice. Translation by parts is almost always done for the sake of urgency.

The economic conditions of translation is another area of real-world practice. Although texts of this length are both comfortable and accessible for teaching and assessment, are they really reflective of real-world practice? I don’t think so. When using texts of this length we are either using: 1) complete texts that are extremely short and which do not adequately represent the nature of longer texts, or 2) short segments extracted from longer texts, which do not adequately represent the complete text. Both complete texts that are short and short segments of longer texts are not common in the real world of translation.

How can we overcome the need to give our students texts of manageable length for assignments and examinations and, at the same time, represent to them the nature of text length in real-world practice? For complete texts that are short, trainers tend to select abstracts, which summarize longer texts, or sidebars, which complement longer texts. Therefore, give your students the complete texts as reading material to accompany the assignment or examination. By giving them more clues to the context, we will help them to situate their work more easily in a real-world scenario, even though we are only asking them to translate a short text that is actually related to a longer one. For segments of longer texts, we should do the same, and give them the complete text in order for them to see how the segment fits within the context of the whole document.
How Can We Incorporate More of the Real World into Translator Training? Continued

translation that seems to get neglected or taken for granted in training programs and courses. I feel it is fundamental for students to know how much money the work they perform in the classroom would earn them on the actual translation market. This will be particularly relevant for the many students who will seek work as freelance translators after completion of their programs. Part of knowing the economic value of a translation involves knowing stipulated prices as stated by professional associations, and also knowing actual prices that are pursuable on any given market. In the case of Spain, for example, the margin between the two can be quite considerable, with professional associations stating as a professional standard as much as twice the amount that one could realistically charge on the market. Knowing this, translators will start doing business on a sure foot.

After giving out a translation assignment and before having them translate it, have your students write out a formal estimate for the job under the same conditions as they envision themselves doing in actual practice. Their estimates should clearly state things such as method of delivery, length for validity of estimate, and so on. Then discuss their estimates with them. Alternatively, have them do the same type of exercise with invoices after they have finished an assignment. They should attach an invoice to their assignments for the work they have done as if you, the translator trainer, were the final customer. Discuss their invoices with them. Probably the most helpful thing you can have them do is to draw up a terms of business document to which they and their customers can refer to when doing estimates, invoices, and dealing with business on a daily basis. Have them draw up a list containing all of their services (translation types and also interpreting, multilingual proofreading, and so on) and their fees for each service followed by their terms of business at the bottom of the document. If you find these exercises too lengthy, just have your students put a price (per word, per page, or whatever is the general standard of the area where you teach) on their translations from time to time to make sure they are aware of the current market value of the translation work they are doing in their training programs and courses.

It is very difficult to imitate the actual working conditions of translation in the classroom, but it should be attempted in all translator-training programs. One of the easiest ways to do this is to have your students use class time to do translations. Whether you have your students work individually, in pairs, or in small groups, you should actively observe them under real working conditions and informally discuss their approaches with them. This may sound very obvious, but it is something that is not often done or not often done well enough. I know that students appreciate their translator trainers looking over their shoulders as they work and pointing out that perhaps they should work with fewer dictionaries, put off consulting them for longer, improve their posture, relax their grip on their pens, concentrate harder, and so on.

I believe that translator trainers should value the opportunity of such in-classroom translation sessions to act as a model for their students to follow. Translator trainers always have the advantage because they get the chance to select texts, prepare them, and think of a version of them before giving them as assignments. Trainees often wonder about their trainer’s ability to deal with translation tasks under actual working conditions, because they never get the chance to see their trainers in action when they encounter a text for the first time. Therefore, select a day when you want a designated student to bring in a text of his or her choice (perhaps from within an area he or she wants to specialize), and work collaboratively as a whole class to translate the text under your guidance. This type of spur-of-the-moment exercise will give trainers the chance to act as a behavioral model for students, and it will give trainees a chance to observe their instructor perform under real working conditions as a professional.

The exercises I have proposed here are all simple, relatively short, and may easily be applied to any existing translator-training program or course. I feel that by incorporating many of these exercises into training programs and courses, we can give our students a powerful taste of the real world before they leave the doors of our classrooms. This will increase both the chances for them to be successful, and, at the same time, this will increase the prestige of our programs and courses. The benefits will be mutual.
The Limitations of Dictionaries

There are many misconceptions about dictionaries, both among the general public and among such professional practitioners of the written word as writers, editors, and translators. When one first starts learning how to read and write, there are certain books one encounters which seem to carry an enormous amount of authority. One such example is the dictionary, first the one in our own language and then, as we get older and start learning a second or even third language, the bilingual dictionary. The dictionary, after all, is the repository of the building blocks of our language, namely, words. It is the final authority on how we express ourselves in writing, and how we use words properly and effectively. The expression “I looked it up in the dictionary” means I can now speak with authority about the meaning and/or spelling of a given word. You cannot argue with me. What I am telling you is final.

When we leave the artificial world of the classroom and go into the real world, we begin to realize there is a lot more to language than what dictionaries have to offer. We hear words which are not in the dictionary. We find additional meanings which are not given under a particular entry. We learn that while we share a common language with others, every profession and every area of human endeavor seems to have its own language, replete with terminology not readily understood by the people outside it. We find that there is such a thing as corporate language among members of large corporations and organizations, which includes such things as acronyms and expressions generated and commonly used by that particular entity. It gradually becomes clear to us that a dictionary is by its very nature a limited tool, which provides some answers, but certainly not all the answers.

And yet, no translator or any other language practitioner can operate without dictionaries. They are, after all, the tools of our trade, and we tend to acquire as many of them as we can. As we do, we find that truly outstanding dictionaries are few and far between. Most dictionaries, especially technical ones, are limited tools. Once this reality sinks in, we begin to look at dictionaries more rationally and forgivingly, and we no longer expect them to provide all the answers.

The Intrusion of American English

As American translators whose primary language is American English, we ought to be acutely aware of the fact that the leading democracy of the world has never taken the time and the trouble to develop what one might call The Great American Dictionary. We are still waiting for something remotely resembling the Oxford English Dictionary, a multivolume work that would encompass the many aspects of American English in the same way that the OED encompasses British English. Not having such a reference source, we American translators are linguistically handicapped and are left to our own devices in more ways than we realize.

And this is only the beginning. As if all of the above were not enough, as we move into the new century, we are facing a host of other problems which exceed anything translators have had to deal with in the past. Let us begin with the nature of language. Contrary to popular belief, language is not a well-defined set of symbols that convey clear and precise meanings. Words are by nature imprecise, and particularly today, as some basic, everyday words take on entirely new meanings, one can no longer take any word for granted. Examples? The word “web,” which in the past referred mainly to a spider’s spinning, today tends to elicit the image of the World Wide Web, which more and more people are being exposed to with every passing day than have ever been exposed to a spider’s web.

Another example, “to fax,” which did not exist a few years ago, is now one of our most common everyday expressions. The adjective “friendly,” which only a decade ago referred mainly to people and to an animal known as “man’s best friend,” is nowadays often applied to computer software (another young word), as in “user-friendly.” One could go on and on.

Another major linguistic phenomenon typical of the start of the 21st century is the symbiotic relationship among languages around the world. Languages have always influenced one

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Getting More Out of Dictionaries Continued

another. Words have traveled around the globe, and the vocabularies of every language are enriched by words from other languages, which may have first originated in a place no one is aware of any longer. But today, the rate of cross-fertilization among languages has greatly accelerated. Our unprecedented means of communication allow us to interact with cultures all over the world by sitting at our table or lounging in front of our television screen and “surfing the Net” (an expression which did not exist 10 years ago). Almost unconsciously, we absorb new words from other languages all the time, and before we know it, they become part of our own language.

What is of particular importance to those of us whose “homebase language” (an expression I made up) is American English, is the incredible intrusion of our particular variety of English upon many languages around the world, particularly in the industrialized countries. I use the word “intrusion” advisedly, because I view this phenomenon as a corrosive influence on other cultures, something the French, for one, are keenly aware of. The French are lucky because they have a highly developed language and culture which can compete with American English. Other cultures, including most of the European and practically all of the Asian and Latin American ones, are not so lucky. In some of these cultures, such areas as computer technology, for example, are being hampered linguistically by the dominance and penetration of American English, which, for one thing, causes those who are not fluent in English to be left out of the world’s high tech revolution.

For translators in particular, the foregoing phenomenon has far-reaching implications. In translating from English into another language, one is often at a loss as to whether to find a way to render something in the target language or leave it in English. And here, once again, dictionaries fall short of expectations because they are not built to deal with this problem. In Japanese, for example, computer terminology is basically left in English, using Japanese characters and pronunciation. In Slovak, most computer terms are left in English. In Hebrew, we find a mixture of both English and Hebrew neologisms. And so on. In Spanish, the situation is utter chaos, with more garden varieties than one can count, ranging from Chicano usage in Texas to the Argentine variety at the other end of the Spanish-speaking world. As computers and the Internet become more and more prevalent in Latin America, the situation can only get worse.

Lexicography does not seem to be able to keep up with this uncontrolled cross-fertilization, which is basically a one-way street. When does a foreign word used in one’s own language become a legitimate part of that language? In 1, 10, or 50 years? After all, words may come and go rather than take permanent root in their host language. Some years ago, the Academy of the Spanish Language in Madrid banished the word “football” (the kind Americans call soccer) from the pantheon of pure Spanish and substituted the word balompié. The Hispanic world, whose passion for this game surpasses Spain’s passion for bullfighting, completely ignored this edict and continued to call the game “futbol.” Languages, after all, are not created, much less legitimized, by language academies, but by common usage in everyday life.

Language and Demographics

More people are migrating across the planet today than ever before. Millions of Turks are now living in Germany. Millions of Hispanics and Asians have migrated to the U.S. in the past 20 years. Millions of Russians and other East Europeans have left their countries since the end of the Cold War and have settled elsewhere. In addition, languages in countries like France and Spain, that have been suppressed for centuries, are now being recognized by the state and reintroduced into the school system. The countries of the former Soviet Union, which, for the better part of the 20th century were forced to operate in Russian, are now using their own languages, which cover a wide spectrum of the world’s languages. This, coupled with instant communications spanning the globe due to the Internet, is going to advance the process, which has already begun, of an accelerated linguistic transformation beyond anyone’s imagining. Dictionaries are going to have a very difficult time keeping up with this rate of change. For translators, this means great new challenges—by no means easy ones—and great opportunities as well.

What, then, are we to do with our dictionaries? Are we ready to dispose of them and rely on our own self-generated glossaries and terminology databases? Not really. In spite of
explaining such expressions as “It is raining cats and dogs,” pointing out the differences in meaning of such phrases as “tabling a motion” in American and British English, expanding the latest computer and Internet acronyms, and much more.

The Compendium was well received both in the U.S. and abroad (it is particularly popular in England and Japan). Recently, it was selected by the Writer’s Digest Book Club as its July 2000 book, after it came out in a second revised and expanded edition. This time, it also includes English terms typical to other parts of the English-speaking world, such as Australia, India, and South Africa, and new sections such as colors and baby talk around the world.

The Multicultural Spanish Dictionary

When the Multicultural Spanish Dictionary first appeared a year ago (September 1999), the first printing of 4,000 copies sold out in two months. A second printing came out in December, and a third is due out in 2001. Like the Compendium, this reference source is also an innovative book, fulfilling a long-felt need. While it does not replace the traditional Spanish-English dictionaries, it complements them in a very vital way. It is no longer enough in this day and age to know Spanish and English when working in this language pair. One has to be prepared to deal with the varieties of Spanish which exist in the Western Hemisphere and in Spain. This is by no means a simple task. My best example to illustrate this point dates back to January of this year, when my wife and I took a short vacation in Puerto Rico.

When the airport van turned off the highway to the side road leading up to our hotel, I saw two small shopping strips on either side of the highway. I explained...
managed to detect four different names for “food store” on four different store signs, all within an area of less than one acre: colmado, supermercado, supermarket, and minimercado. Now which of the four is the most prevalent on the island of Puerto Rico? Furthermore, is the prevalent word the same one used 10 years ago? Does anyone have the definitive answer to this question? My two Puerto Rican translators who participated in the Multicultural Dictionary project opted for colmado. Clearly, while this is most likely the prevalent word on the island, there are other choices.

When we first issued this dictionary, we knew we would elicit both praise and criticism. Praise, because many a Spanish translator has long felt the need for such a reference tool. Criticism, because no matter what term you use, someone is going to disagree. As we prepare a new revised and expanded edition, we know that no matter how good a job we do, we will still come under fire from different quarters of the Spanish-speaking world. Hopefully, most of the criticism we get will be constructive.

**Dictionary of Medicine**

*(French/English)*

Our latest venture into lexicography is a French-English medical dictionary. Unlike the American English Compendium and the Multicultural Spanish Dictionary, this new work is not innovative per se, since dictionaries covering this subject have been around for a long time. The main difference between the older ones and the new one is quantitative. While other French-English medical dictionaries have roughly between 20,000 to 30,000 entries, this dictionary contains almost 105,000 medical terms, three-and-a-half times more than the rest of the pack.

This major one-volume reference tome of over 1,300 pages is the result of 22 years of painstaking research and editing by a French-English medical translator at the U.S. Social Security Administration in Baltimore, Maryland, ATA member Paul Djordjevic. To quote the author: “What prompted me to embark on this long and arduous project, which took me practically two decades to complete, was the frustration I experienced as a French medical translator. I found it incredible that there were no adequate single-volume French-English medical dictionaries, general in nature, that I, as a translator, found even remotely satisfactory. I translate medical evidence daily, and in the course of my work I would come across various terms which the existing dictionaries failed to help me with...Intimately familiar with the published French-English reference work on the market, I am firmly convinced that there is absolutely nothing out there in print that can even remotely compete with this project.”

This new dictionary is an example of the kind of truly extensive reference source in a specific subject area and language pair that professional translators usually look for. It represents the experience of someone who, for many years, has worked on a daily basis in that subject and language pair, and has collected not only the terminology found in the pertinent dictionaries, but also thousands of additional terms. Much of the terminology is of a more recent origin, particularly in such areas as clinical and laboratory medicine, as well as biochemistry, biotechnology (genetics, enzymology, cell engineering, and AIDS research), health insurance, psychiatry, and psychology. As such, it is the best source of its kind currently available.

**Dictionaries on CD-ROM and Online**

Plans are underway for putting the new Dictionary of Medicine on CD-ROM and online. This brings us to examine the advantage of such media vis-a-vis the traditional book format. Online dictionaries and glossaries are growing in importance, and the Internet has already become a major source of information on practically everything. It is possible that a few years hence the electronic format will be more commonly used in lexicography than the book format, and it will become more common to own and/or use dictionaries on the Internet and in such electronic media as a CD-ROM. All this is still too early to predict. A good technical dictionary in print form is still a major reliable tool one wants to keep around.

**The Future**

Looking far into the future, one can envision a time when an international body will be formed to coordinate the lexicography of the world (it may involve FIT and the ATA). The United Nations may be the right host for such a body (perhaps
Trans-Libations: Spanish-English Wine Terminology from the Vineyard to the Glass

By Kirk Anderson

Wine and the Spanish-Speaking World

There’s just something special about wine. It’s been around for a long time. In most Spanish-speaking countries, it has at least a sacramental use, if not a niche in the day-to-day culture. It’s even got its own Greek God: Bacchus. And that’s not even taking into consideration that it’s a damn good drink. Wine is produced in at least 11 Spanish-speaking countries, not including the U.S., using grape varieties and winemaking techniques spanning the full range of the global industry. Winemaking in what is now the Spanish-speaking world began well before the rise of the Spanish language on the Iberian Peninsula during Phoenician times. Wine has not only grown into an integral part of Spanish and much of Hispanic culture, it has also become an art and a craft producing some of the world’s finest wines. Spain has more land planted to vine than any other country in the world, but, given its dry climate, is only the number three producer of wine in the world following Italy and France. It’s also in the top three in consumption per capita, as anyone who’s ever been to Spain can certainly attest.

Spain is also largely responsible for the spread of wine culture around the world. Spaniards were the first to bring noble grape varieties to the New World, when, thanks to Cortés, European vines were planted from seed in Mexico in 1521. Within the next century, vines were planted all over Latin America with varying success, and a wine industry continues to exist, or has been reborn in one form or another, in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. There is no doubt that Spain has had a huge impact on winemaking in all these countries (and still does to a large extent), but many of them have also benefited from technology, grape varieties, and know-how imported over the years from France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and even other New World countries (including the U.S. and Australia).

Despite these wide-ranging influences, Spanish-language wine terminology is remarkably unified, with the possible exception of the more subjective tasting terminology. For the most part, the origins of this terminology can be found within the long winemaking history of Spain.

My plan for this article is to take you on a virtual tour of the winemaking process, from the vineyard to the glass, highlighting key bilingual terminology along the way. Although this tour will focus on wine, I think it’s also a good model for understanding industry-specific terminology in any field. I hope it will provide a rough framework for future articles on other topics.

The Vineyard: El viñedo or la viña

Long before wine ever gives you a buzz, vines are planted. It usually takes several years before they produce grapes fit for making wine. For well over 100 years, ever since the tiny parasitic louse known as phylloxera (filoxera) was introduced into Europe in 1863 from samples of U.S. vines, consequently destroying virtually all indigenous vines throughout Western Europe, the noble varieties of European grapes (known as vitis vinifera) have been grafted onto American rootstock (portainjertos) which is resistant to this pest. One of very few exceptions to this rule is Chile, where they were lucky enough to plant the traditional French grape varieties before the scourge of phylloxera began. Some of these prototype vines...

...Wine has not only grown into an integral part of Spanish and much of Hispanic culture, it has also become an art and a craft producing some of the world’s finest wines...

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two elements, which are vital to the final balance (equilibrio) and structure (estructura) of the wine itself.

While the grapes grow, great pains must be taken to optimize their development for wine. The goal here is not to increase the production of grapes, but rather their quality for winemaking. In general, older vines produce fewer grapes of higher quality, and most controlled wine regions limit grape yield (rendimiento) and irrigation (riego). The winegrower (viticultor) must also monitor his or her vines for various diseases (enfermedades), including fungi (hongos), viruses and bacteria, as well as pests (plagas) including phylloxera, which still plagues vines worldwide.

Optimizing the vine’s growth also includes monitoring the climate and soil, trellising the vine (conducción en espalderas), and pruning (poda) to maximize or control its exposure to the sun. The latter process is known as canopy management (a term often used in English since the concept was developed in California, but which I’ve seen in Spanish as gestión o control de la vegetación).

When the winegrower determines the peak of ripeness, which varies by grape variety (variedad) and region, and the type of wine to be produced, and while praying for no major storms or rains which could damage or water down the product, the harvest (cosecha or vendimia) begins. In many parts of the world, grapes are still harvested by hand, and this is an absolute necessity for certain types of wine. It should be noted that a wine’s vintage (also cosecha) is the year the grapes (or at least the vast majority of them) were picked. In the Northern Hemisphere, this occurs between September and November, but in the Southern Hemisphere, it takes place between March and May. Thus, a 1998 Cabernet from Chile will be about six months older than its Californian counterpart.

Winemaking: Vinicultura or Elaboración de vinos

Once the grapes are harvested, the winemaking or vinification (vinificación) process begins. Since stems and stalks (raspón or escobajo) contribute to a wine’s astringency, the process often begins with removing the stems (despalillado or desrasponamiento) from the grapes (racimos). Of course, this can be done by hand, but most modern facilities combine this process with crushing (estrujado), using a crusher-stemmer (despalilladora). Here, the grapes are broken and the juice, skins (hollejos), and seeds (pepitas) are separated from any stems or leaves. The crushing must be delicate enough so the seeds are not broken, which would release their bitterness into the wine. Presses (prensa), including modern bladder presses (prensas neumáticas) and more traditional basket presses (prensas de husillos), are also used to extract juice from the grapes, as is the good old human foot (pisado). Once the juice is extracted, it is called must (mosto) and is transferred to a fermentation tank or vat (depósito o cuba de fermentación). Some wines are made exclusively from free-run juice or wine (vino de yema), which is when the must is produced naturally from the weight of the grapes prior to pressing. The press wine (vino de prensa), as its name implies, comes directly from the press and is usually darker and more tannic.

Fermentation (fermentación), the process by which enzymes in yeasts (levaduras) convert sugars into alcohol, is another key process in making quality wines and determining the more subtle aspects of a wine’s aroma and structure. Fermentation can take place in enormous stainless steel tanks, which impart no flavor to the must, or in oak vats or even smaller oak barrels or casks (barricas), which contribute notable qualities to the final wine. The length of the fermentation period is also important, as is the temperature at which fermentation takes place, and some wines may undergo multiple fermentations. For example, in a fortified wine (vino generoso), fermentation is stopped by the addition of alcohol (encabezado) before all the sugars have fermented, resulting in a sweeter flavor and a higher alcohol content. Champagne-style sparkling wines undergo a second fermentation in the bottle. The type of yeast used to inoculate (inocular) the must is also an important factor. Wild yeast naturally grows on wine grapes, but many winemakers prefer to use controlled yeasts (levaduras seleccionadas) to inoculate their musts.

The fermentation process can last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, and once it is complete, the must is racked (trasvasado or trasegado) from one container to another, leaving the solids behind. These solids (orujos) may be used to make brandy, or are used as fertilizer in the vineyard. If fermentation occurs in a barrel, some white wines are left to rest on the lees (the resulting dead yeast cells: liás), which contribute flavor and complexity.
Aging: Crianza

The new wine needs time to develop and mature before it is finished and subsequently bottled. The time of aging and the type of container used will vary by variety and style of wine.

Of Spanish-speaking countries that produce wine, Spain has the most highly regulated system for aging wine, which is quite similar to the French and Italian systems. In all Spanish viticultural areas (denominaciones de origen, D.O.), the use of the terms crianza, reserva, and gran reserva is strictly regulated by the local wine quality control board (consejo regulador). For example, in Rioja, a red wine must age in an oak cask (barrica) at least 12 months, and then in a bottle for a total of 24 months before it can be released as a crianza. A reserva must spend at least 12 months in a cask and age a total of 36 months before release, and a gran reserva must age for at least 24 months in wood and 36 months in a bottle (a total of five years) before it can be released. Of course, it is vital during this aging process that the wines be maintained at a relatively cool and stable temperature and that the barrels be topped off (rellenado), since some wine will be lost over time.

Malolactic fermentation (fermentación maloláctica) is another secondary, nonalcoholic fermentation process used in winemaking, which converts the sharper malic acids (ácidos málico) in some wines (the taste is reminiscent of green apples) into softer lactic acids (ácidos lácticos), the same acids which are also present in dairy products. For white wines, the winemaker usually makes a conscious decision to induce malolactic fermentation, but sometimes it will occur spontaneously.

After the aging of the wine is completed in various batches or lots, the wine is often blended to maximize the potential of the final wine. A typical example of blending occurs in the classic Rioja-style wine. The primary variety used in Rioja is Tempranillo, which is also commonly grown in Argentina. Tempranillo is usually blended with Garnacha (also known as Grenache and common in Southern France and many Mediterranean winegrowing regions), Mazuelo, and Graciano. According to winemaker José Palacios of Bodegas Palacios Remondo in Rioja, the Graciano grape “le da gracia al vino.”

Before the wines are bottled, many undergo a finishing process that may include fining, which involves using egg whites (albúmina de hueso), bentonite (bentonita), and numerous other fining agents to remove suspended particles from the wine through absorption or coagulation. Afterwards, the wine may be racked, filtered, or centrifuged to separate it from the sediment, although many wines now proudly state on their labels that they are unfiltered.

Types of Wines

Most of the material in this article addresses table wines (vinos de mesa), which are generally defined as still wines (vinos tranquilos) containing up to 14 percent alcohol by volume. Other basic types of wine worth mentioning are sparkling wines (vinos espumosos), which are fermented in the bottle or in relatively small containers to preserve the carbon dioxide produced in the process and also contain up to 14 percent alcohol. There are also fortified wines (vinos generosos), like Port or Sherry (Jerez), which contain between 14 and 24 percent alcohol, due primarily to the addition of alcohol either during or after the fermentation process (encabezado).

Red Wines: Vinos tintos

Most of the table wine produced in the Spanish-speaking world is red (tinto), including the following major varieties: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha, Malbec, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Sangiovese, Syrah, and Tempranillo. Red wines are typically best cultivated in warmer climates and produce wines with relatively high alcohol content. What makes the wine red is the fact that it is fermented on the skins, a process known as maceration (maceración), which contributes color and tannins (taninos) to the wine. Rosé or blush wines are usually made from red grapes, but the must is only left on the skins long enough to extract a little color.

After fermentation, red wine is racked off the solids and placed in an aging container, usually oak barrels, or, in the case of lighter reds, stainless steel vats. As a rule, reds meant for aging (vinos de guarda) are racked into fresh barrels several times during the first year, and are then transferred into a final aging barrel.

Some red wines undergo a process called carbonic maceration (maceración carbónica), in which whole bunches of freshly picked grapes are dumped into a fermentation vat filled

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with carbon dioxide and yeast. The weight of the fruit crushes the grapes at the bottom, creating enough juice for fermentation to begin. This produces more carbon dioxide which envelopes the upper grapes as well, protecting them from exposure to oxygen. Soon, fermentation begins naturally inside the whole grapes, producing light red wines with intense color and fruity flavor meant for early consumption.

The classic example of one of these wines is Beaujolais.

Finally, most red wines are inoculated to go through malolactic fermentation to soften the tannins and make them more readily drinkable. These wines spend time aging in oak barrels and are then fined, filtered, and bottled.

White Wines: Vinos blancos

The most commonly grown white varieties in the Spanish-speaking world are Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, and Airén (the little appreciated white grape which is the most widely planted, not only in Spain, but in the world). It is often blended into cheap wines, both red and white, and used to make brandy. The process of making white wine is similar to that of making red wine, only the must is pumped off the skins and seeds immediately. Certain white wines, especially Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, are often fermented in the barrel.

It is interesting to note that as white wines age, they become darker, while as red wines age, they become lighter. After enough time in the bottle, a quality red wine may be nearly the same color as its white counterpart, although rarely are white wines “built to last” as long as reds.

Tasting: Cata

Now that we’ve more or less figured out where the wine comes from, the time has come to put it to its intended use. Now in certain circles, tasting can be an intimidating experience, where people are served a thimble-full of wine in big glasses in which they swirl it around, sniff at it endlessly, then gargle it for a while, and spit it into a bucket. There’s nothing inherently snobby about this mechanical procedure (although the gargling and spitting may be a bit disgusting), but it’s afterwards, when they start talking about the “earthy, chocolate dark berry nose with overtones of vanilla oak on the finish,” that can really make your stomach turn. But fear not. Wine lingo does not have to be baffling, intimidating, or only for the select few.

Take these descriptions for example, from a recent edition of Wine X magazine, where they describe the 1997 Sandeman Vau Vintage Porto as “Like eating cherries jubilee off big American breasts.” Or the 1995 Gallo Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon: “Imagine Stephen King working for the IRS—dark, brooding and really scary (in a good way)” (Ref. 1).

The bottom line is to understand what you like, and to do so, it’s often helpful to be able to put that into words. That said, there is still a bottomless pit of wine jargon out there that is commonly used in the industry, and if you ever want to do any serious translation of wine-related material, you have to understand how wine people talk about wine.

The disgusting tasting process I just described is actually the industry standard. It basically goes like this.

First, look at the wine. Note the depth of its color (capa), its brightness (intensidad), and look for any evidence of gas. Are there any tiny crystals sticking to the side of the glass? Does the color vary from the center of the glass toward the rim? Swirl the wine around in the glass and note the “legs” or “tears” (pierna o lágrimas) as the wine sticks to the side of the glass. The more slowly the legs slide down the glass, the more full-bodied the wine will be.

The next step is to appreciate the aroma of the wine, or its “nose” (nariz). First, it’s important to know the difference between “aroma” and “bouquet” (both of which are commonly used terms in Spanish). Aroma is the simple, fruity smell of a wine, usually a young wine, and bouquet is the complex fragrance of a wine developed through fermentation and aging, specifically bottle aging. Swirling the wine around in the glass helps aerate the wine and opens it up its aroma. Give it a couple swirls and stick your nose right in the glass. What do you smell? Is there a hint of earthiness (terruño)? If so, the conversation may turn to the concept of terroir, a French term often used by wine snobs worldwide to conjure up the flavor imparted by the magical earth where the wine was grown. Talk may also turn to microclimates (microclimas), referring to the particular hillside and angle of the sun on the vineyard where the grapes were grown. What about fruitiness (afrutado)? Or oak? Oak often imparts flavors or aromas reminiscent of vanilla. Can you feel the burning of alcohol in the back of your
nose? Does anything smell wrong to you? Can you smell detergent from the dishwasher? If so, ask for a fresh glass.

Now is the time to put your lips to the glass and take a sip. Bear in mind that the tongue can only discern four basic tastes: sweet (dulce), on the tip of the tongue; salty (salado), on the front sides of the tongue; acids (ácido), on the middle sides of the tongue; and bitterness (amargo), on the back of the tongue. The rest of the “flavors” are actually smells picked up either directly through your nose or through the retronasal passages. What do you taste? Do you note acidity on the sides of your tongue? What sort of acids? Acetic acid tastes vinegary, citric acids may hint of lemon or grapefruit, malic acids tastes like green apples, and lactic acid may remind you of cream or yogurt. Do you end up with a leathery feeling on your tongue? That’s the tannins (taninos) at work. If you’re not tasting the wine with food, the tannins may seem overbearing, but with a nice steak to accompany them, you’ll notice that they soften dramatically. How long do the flavors persist? Does the wine have a long or short finish? Is it high in alcohol? If so, it may seem a bit sweet. Finally, the most important question of all: Do you like it? Would you buy it again?

If you can understand this basic process, you hold the key to unlocking all the wine mumbo jumbo out there, regardless of the language it’s written in. This basic tasting process is the framework for all professional tasting and wine commentary in the world, and can even shed light on more alternative wine writing like you find in Wine X. Let’s take an example:

Color cereza granate oscuro o picota, con borde violáceo vivo. Aroma fresco, afrutado, varietal, con recuerdos de zarzamoras y grosellas, ciertas notas florales, látexas y anisadas. En boca está bien constituido, cuerpo medio, afrutado, sabroso y aromático, con taninos dulces, una acidez perfectamente integrada y persistente retronasal (Ref. 2).

First of all, what the hell does this mean? Well, it starts with a look at the wine and an analysis of its color and intensity: “Deep garnet or cherry color, fading to bright violet at the rim.” Garnet is a classic adjective for quality reds; the fact that it fades to violet at the rim is an indication of a young wine. “A fresh, fruity, varietal aroma, recalling blackberries and currants, with certain floral, dairy, and anisette notes.” The fresh, fruity, varietal aroma again indicates a young wine made primarily from a single grape. Blackberries and currants are common descriptors for a young Cabernet Sauvignon, but the floral and anisette notes indicate an herbaceous quality that may point to another variety, or a blend dominated by a single grape. The dairy notes point clearly to malolactic fermentation. “Well-structured on the palate, medium-bodied, fruity, savory and aromatic, with soft tannins, perfectly integrated acids, and a long finish.” The fact that it is well-structured indicates quality winemaking, and its medium-bodied “mouth feel” (sensación táctil) points to a wine that is meant for early consumption. It’s fruity, savory, and aromatic qualities reinforce the perception of a young quality wine. The soft tannins tell us that the wine didn’t spend too much time on the skins, and combined with the well-integrated acids, shows us a well-balanced wine.

Finally, the long finish indicates that the flavors and sensations produced by the wine remain on the palate and in the nose for several seconds after swallowing. That’s good.

As it turns out, this is a description of a young 1997 Rioja Cosecha (which is not aged in oak), and knowing what the wine is helps us talk about it even further. But if we only have the description to go on, it might well have been a young Merlot from Chile, California, or Argentina.

**Terminology Development**

Unfortunately, the wine industry doesn’t really represent big business for translators. Consider the fact that the entire U.S. wine industry—including all salaries, retail sales, commissions, fees, grapes, fertilizers, equipment, accessories, even bottles and corks—doesn’t even total half the annual gross revenues of Hewlett-Packard (Ref. 3). So I can’t, in good conscience, recommend bagging software localization for wine translation.

But, for me, it has been an opportunity to indulge in one of my interests on a professional level. Wine-related translations only come up for me a few times a year, but it’s fun to be able to combine work and a hobby. What I hope this article will do, besides make you thirsty, is inspire you to indulge in your own

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Trans-Libations: Spanish-English Wine Terminology Continued

interests and hobbies and turn them into terminological resources.

Through a series of coincidences, a little effort on my part, and a lot of drinking, I’ve come to know a little more about wine than the average person. I imagine most translators have some special pet field that may not represent a ton of work, but that they truly enjoy reading and learning about. With a little bit of effort and a lot of perseverance, you can turn this knowledge into a valuable resource for the industry in question, and, as in my case, the whole process may start with a little translation job.

I grew up in a wine drinking family. Even before wine was popular in the U.S., my parents had a bottle on the table for as long as I can remember. As children, my sister and I always got a sip with dinner. Later in life, while studying in Spain and France, I found that wine was plentiful, cheap, and good, and after spending a week in Burgundy something changed inside me that’s never been quite the same since. For some strange reason, I was often called upon to select wines at dinners, then, working in college as a bartender, I got a glimpse of the industry itself. I seized opportunities to visit vineyards, both in Spain and the U.S., and taste new wines, and finally, on a whim, I signed up for a wine course and ended up getting certified as a sommelier.

In the meantime, I read avidly about the subject, starting with general literature and lay texts on the subject, and gradually upping the dose and diving into more specialized journalisms, texts, and references. Then one day a few years back, out of the blue, a regular client sent me a job about a winery in Chile. Then several months later, another client sent me a similar job. The wheels started spinning. I saw how I poured myself into these translations, with a passion rarely inspired by other work. By this time, I had amassed several shelves full of books on the subject and had begun working on a bilingual glossary of wine terminology. Does this sound familiar?

There are so many tiny specialized fields out there for which there are few or no solid terminological references. If you have a hobby, a collection, a passion, and due to coincidence or circumstance, you happen to know something about it in your languages, don’t you have the obligation to share that with the world? Or at least synthesize your knowledge and save it for posterity?

It’s really not that difficult. If your interest coincides with an industry, every industry has a process not unlike the one I’ve just described. Documenting the process, step by step, like a good technical writer, and then finding the keywords and their corresponding translations is really fairly simple. It does take a little effort and persistence, but by finding parallel sources in each of the languages in question, you can find all the answers you need. These sources can be general periodicals like The Wine Spectator, The Wine Advocate, or Wine X and their Spanish counterparts, Vinos de España, Bacchanalia, or Mi Vino (many of which now have an Internet presence). They can also be general introductions to the field, like Entender de vino by Carlos Falco and Wine for Dummies by Ed McCarthy and Mary Ewing-Mulligan, most of which already have monolingual glossaries or indices. The next step, of course, is more technical literature about more specific aspects of the industry and specialized reference works. Taking a few notes as you read for pleasure may turn out to be the beginning of your own dictionary.

The beauty of it is that this research will also pay off with other jobs. I recently leveraged my reading about the agricultural aspects of winegrowing in a job on agricultural machinery. My knowledge of wine also came in handy in marketing texts for a multinational with significant wine holdings. It has even helped me with legal jobs for a beverage distributor.

So, I hope, in addition to giving you a basic understanding of wine terminology and the wine industry in general, I’ve given you some food, or drink, for thought about how your own pet projects, interests, or hobbies can make your work more rewarding. Hopefully, it will give you ideas about how to turn these interests into terminological resources that will benefit us all. ¡Salud!

Notes

Trans-Libations: Spanish-English Wine Terminology Continued


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**Internet Resources**

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Getting More Out of Dictionaries Continued from p. 40

called WLO, or World Linguistic Organization, like WHO, the World Health Organization). Language in general may become more and more globalized as time goes by, and by coordinating international lexicography, solutions may be found to problems which have always seemed to be insoluble. One is reminded of the attempts made about a hundred years ago to invent an international language, the most notable of which was Esperanto. While one language may not replace all the others, not even American English, a great deal of terminology, mostly technical, may indeed become global, and serve as a bridge that unites people across all linguistic and cultural divides.
Choosing the Right Tool for the Job—Advice from the Support Manager

By Denise Baldwin

In the world of translation memory (TM), which tool should one buy? There are now so many different tools on the market. How do you know you are purchasing the correct tool that will grow with the forever changing trends of the market? Why should you use TM? Will it improve your productivity or not?

From the perspective of any support manager, you should go for the easiest tool that is going to do the job quickly and efficiently with as few problems as possible...
The problem is that every tool on the market will give you a different word count. What is accurate? MS Word and some TM tools would count “smith-jones” as one word, while others would count it as two. If your file type is a Help file, MS Word would give you a word count for either all or none of the footnotes. Other products would give you the word count for just the translatable footnotes. So, a tool that gives you the option to use its own MS Word counts would be useful.

**Versatility and Ease of Use**

Another factor to consider is the type of file your client generally provides you with to translate. Can your TM tool easily import these files? How does your TM tool cope with them?

HTML files can be very problematic. When writing HTML code, you can get away with leaving the tags off. However, this could cause a problem when trying to import the file into a TM tool. Make sure you run some tests on the sort of HTML files you get before you purchase your TM tool.

Something else to take into consideration when translating Websites is that you will receive hundreds of small HTML files. Can your TM tool handle these efficiently? Can you glue them together, then unglue them into the original format once the translation is complete? Does the TM tool recognize the folder structure where the files originated, and when completing the translation does the folder structure remain the same?

What about Framemaker files? Do you need to understand Framemaker to be able to translate the files? It could be quite time-consuming to learn Framemaker, so a product that can bring Framemaker files into a simple-to-use format would be very useful. The same goes for XML/SGML, Help, RC, C++, Visual Basic, and any other file types. You need a single interface to bring all of them in to the translation tool.

So, your TM tool really needs to be able to import and export files simply and easily without the need for time-consuming pre-processing. Once the translation is complete, the tool should be able to put the files back together in their original file format and folder structure without any post processing. What a luxury!

**Industry Standards**

A tool that supports OpenTag can be very useful. OpenTag was originally developed by the R&D group at ILE Corporation in Boulder, Colorado. People from various other companies also participated in its development. Today, several tool sets developed for in-house or commercial use are taking advantage of the format. But what does it do?

The TM tool will extract translatable text from existing documents to OpenTag format files whilst placing all nontranslatable information (e.g., graphics and tags) into a formatting file. This way, it does not matter what the original file format is. Once in the TM tool, the files will all look the same. However, the advantage of using a tool that uses OpenTag as its format are:

- Cross-leveraging of TMs means you can create a TM using one file type and then apply it to another. For example, you can create a TM from

  
  
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a Framemaker file and easily apply it to an HTML or any other file.

- Source and target file types do not need to be the same for alignment purposes. For example, you can align a Word document with an HTML file if you wanted.

- You do not need to have or know how to use Framemaker to translate, for example, MIF files.

- Your OpenTag files will be tool- and supplier-independent. They will be able to be read by any TM tool that supports OpenTag.

Something else to consider—does the TM tool conform to the TMX Level 2 standard?

TMX (Translation Memory Exchange) is a standard generated by the OSCAR steering committee, part of the Localisation Industry Standards Association. TMX enables the import and export of other TMs to occur with ease. If the TM is fully compliant with TMX Level 2, you will be able to import and export text and formatting information completely. If the TM is not fully compliant with TMX, there may be problems. So the first thing to do is to demand that your TM tool be fully compliant. If it is not, make sure it has the ability to import and export to other TM tools that are compliant. This way, you do not have to be locked into any vendor, and you can choose the tool that works best for you.

Quality and Flexibility

What if you have a TM tool that a lot of users have been updating, or have imported the TM from another tool, or you know there are a few mistakes in the TM? Something that a lot of companies talk about is the “quality” of their TMs. This can be a problem if you know there is something to correct in the TM, but don’t know exactly where. Keep in mind that this happens quite regularly if you have a number of users updating the TMs. Some companies will review files before a TM is allowed to be updated, however, others want the TM to be updated as you translate so all the translators get the benefit of the TM. This is very subjective, so you need a tool that allows you to do both, but also allows you to easily correct the TM if required.

Something else to think about when purchasing a TM tool is whom you are purchasing the tool from. Does the company have extensive localization knowledge and experience? How old is the tool? How has it been tested? What will be the future enhancements?

A further consideration would be the flexibility of the tool. If a third party developed their own filter and it could be easily integrated with your tool, it would demonstrate that the tool is versatile and flexible with other products.

If I Were You

If I were a translator buying a TM tool, my personal requirements would be to have something that is simple and easy to use with a user-friendly interface. I would like something that could do all my tasks in a totally integrated environment. I would want a TM tool that could easily handle the file types I translate, without any hassle importing and exporting, so I don’t have to utilize engineering time. Then, of course, I would want a tool that would speed up the translation process so that I can ensure consistency throughout my work and produce a high quality product.

I would also choose a tool that adopts industry standards like TMX, Unicode, and any new emerging standards, such as OpenTag and TBX. Foremost, I want a tool that is constantly moving with the trends of the market and will not be left behind.

I also want excellent customer support from the company I buy the tool from, especially at the beginning when I need the most help. I wouldn’t want to be charged big money for this service either!

With all of these requirements, it’s no surprise that TM tool designers have got their work cut out. The support manager’s involvement in the development process will help ensure that the tool meets all of the end-user’s needs. In an age where technology is making all things possible, TM tools must be rich in features, versatile, user-friendly, and provide value for the money.

Choosing the Right Tool for the Job—Advice from the Support Manager Continued
Josephine Bacon woke us all out of our ATA conference Saturday 8:30 a.m. stupor with her lively presentation about the translation of nonfiction books. She started with a definition: the category “nonfiction books” does not refer to scientific, technical, or legal books. She explained that what people are talking about when they refer to nonfiction books are entertaining books with lots of color plates. For example, books on cooking, interior design, and art.

Publishers need to defray the cost of such books. In the U.S., a law requiring that all books published in this country be printed here as well was abolished about 10 years ago. Consequently, U.S. publishers now have to compete with their European counterparts. In Europe, publishers are able to defray the cost by two means: 1) printing in Hong Kong, and 2) printing in a few languages. As a result, there is a huge demand for translators into English, especially American English.

Why are so many nonfiction books published in this country? First, with a population of 230 million, the U.S. represents a huge market. But also, distribution is easier in the U.S. as opposed to, for example, third world locations. It’s a matter of infrastructure.

If you are interested in becoming a translator of nonfiction books, you must begin with some expertise in a subject area. For example, if you are an equine expert, your field will be books on horses. Ms. Bacon’s own field is cooking, which served as her entrée into nonfiction. If you don’t know the subject well, she warned, you are taking the risk of having to do a great deal of research, so the work will not pay.

Furthermore, however much research you do, if you started out with no knowledge at all, you may still make serious mistakes unwittingly. Although this is not the publisher’s problem, it can end up being yours. Publishers are often desperate for translators and may try to push you into doing work that is not profitable for you. Such work could also threaten your good reputation.

Your knowledge of the subject matter may also be needed for direct research and writing portions of the book (something you may be required to do, regardless of your intention to limit yourself to translation). In the event that the book you have translated ends up short of text, it is not uncommon for the publisher to ask the translator to write copy to fill the allotted space. As a case in point, Ms. Bacon referred to her “translation” of a French book about fishing. The book ran so short that she ended up adding 1/8 of the text for the entire volume.

With nonfiction books, you may begin with translation and move on to being a co-writer, but that’s not all you will be doing. In addition to expertise in the subject matter, you will need to have a good command of a graphic design program. QuarkXPress is the one most publishers use. For example, in a book Josephine translated on mushrooms, one page had three illustrations, a text box, and three captions. Everything was on different graphic layers, for a total of six layers. Because of the type of graphic layering involved, the Quark spell checker did not work on anything but the top layer.

The translator needs to be knowledgeable about graphic design to some extent. If you cannot travel comfortably from layer to layer in graphic design programs, you will have to hire a freelance designer to help you. That may not be a bad idea, anyway, because it will enable you to have someone else review your work. A professional designer can pick up typographical errors you may have missed, such as extra spaces.

...there’s lots of work translating nonfiction books for the translator with solid expertise in both a subject area and graphic design programs...

Being able to use QuarkXpress gives you much more control of the end product. The editor often becomes aware that the book is too long at the last minute. In such cases, it is not uncommon for an editor to simply chop off the end of the index. Josephine saw one such book recently in which the index ended with the 1’s. That is because the book had been written and sent in a word-processing format to the design company, which had not consulted anyone in its haste to shorten the index. It never occurred to them to reduce the point size!

We are not talking about bargains, here. Quark Passport costs well over $1,000. This is a Quark program that works in all major European languages. Hyphenation and word breaks will not
The Dictionary: My Friend, My Enemy

By Boris Silversteyn

W

hence the title? Probably everybody in our business would agree with the first part. The dictionary is my friend, but why “my enemy”? I’ll start with the “friend” part, and discuss the “enemy” part later.

For the sake of brevity, I am using the term “translator” to cover translators and interpreters, and the masculine form to cover both genders. Also, the term “hard copy” covers both paper and CD-ROM dictionaries.

Dictionaries have always been our indispensable tools. Few translation jobs, if any, can be done without turning to a dictionary. The use of dictionaries is not a sign of a translator’s professional weakness or insufficient command of the source (SL) or target (TL) language. On the contrary, I would submit that, all other things being equal, a translator who consults dictionaries regularly provides higher quality products. Moreover, I would also submit that the more experienced a translator is, the more important it is to use dictionaries regularly and frequently rather than occasionally.

Why? Because it is human nature that as one becomes more experienced in one’s trade, one can get more complacent, overconfident, and I would even venture to say, smug. And when this happens, one puts one’s guard down and — bingo — an improper TL equivalent of a “multifaceted” SL term slips into the translation, thus corrupting the meaning of the original document.

The advent of online dictionaries has not eliminated the need for, or the use of, hard copy ones. I will discuss the advantages and limitations of different dictionary structures, as well as pitfalls lying in wait for a translator treading into an unfamiliar territory (subject area). I’ll show how I use the described methods for deriving TL equivalents of SL terms not found directly in dictionaries.

The Dictionary: My Friend

There are several rules I formulated for myself many years ago. I call them the General Laws of Dictionary Usage.

Law 1

A dictionary is a translator’s most valuable treasure.

It is easier, albeit more expensive, to replace a computer than a dictionary. Of course, it is quite another story if along with the computer you lose your data. However, this can be avoided by doing diligent backups.

Law 2

Generally speaking (no pun intended): The bigger (the more entries it contains) a dictionary, the better.

Law 3

Just as one can never be too thin or too rich, one can never have too many dictionaries.

But there is also a negative side to having too many dictionaries—I’ll discuss this in the “enemy” part.

Law 3a

A corollary: It is preferable to have more than one dictionary for a subject area.

Of course, having one dictionary is better than having none, but it is not enough. No dictionary is exhaustive. Also, different dictionaries sometimes give different TL equivalents of a SL term. So inevitably there comes a time when, while translating a document, the translator will need to consult more than one dictionary.

Law 3b

Another corollary: If you have several dictionaries for a subject area, choose the most comprehensive dictionary as your main tool for this subject area.

Treat the other dictionaries as support tools, and consult them when the main tool does not provide an answer or when you need to clarify and/or confirm the chosen TL term. Sometimes, for a specific job, a support tool will be used as the main tool (more on this later).

Law 3c

Remember the titles (and subject areas) of your dictionaries.

Law 4

Eventually, every dictionary, no matter how old or how
odd, will be used, even if only once. At least this has been my experience.

**Law 4a**
A corollary: Do not discard an old dictionary or older editions of a new-edition dictionary.
They may, and probably will, come in handy sometime in the future. Due to space limitations, new editions omit some terms and examples included in previous editions, but the omitted stuff is exactly what you might need for the document you are translating right now.

**Law 5**  
Beware of false cognates.

**Law 6**  
When translating technical, legal, promotional, training, etc., documents, distinguish between generic terms and brand names.
Failure to do so distorts the intent of the original document and misleads the recipient.

**Law 6a**  
A corollary: If in doubt, consult the client.

There is also Law 7, but I’ll get to it later.

**Dictionary Types**
The two broadest classes are general and specialized dictionaries.

Language-wise, dictionaries can be mono-, bi-, or multilingual. The latter come in two shapes. I call them truly multilingual (each entry is shown on the same line or in the same cell in every language of the dictionary) and quasi-multilingual (containing several bilingual dictionaries under a common cover).

The majority of bilingual dictionaries are mono-directional (e.g., Russian-English, English-Russian). But there are also bi-directional bilingual dictionaries (e.g., Kenneth Katzner’s *English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary*).

Medium-wise, dictionaries come in paper, CD-ROM, and online form.

**General Dictionaries**
We use these no matter what type of text/document we translate. They are usually mono- or bilingual. I’ve never seen a multilingual general dictionary. One exemption is that a dictionary containing foreign words and expressions is technically multilingual.

Thesauri, dictionaries of acronyms/abbreviations, dictionaries of problem words and expressions, and dictionaries of slang also belong to this class.

Other types of general dictionaries are what some people call “Pictionaries.” They come under different names—pictorial dictionaries, visual dictionaries, illustrated dictionaries, “What Is What?”, etc. These can be very useful—if one can find what one is looking for (and this depends on whether one can correctly state the query).

**Specialized Dictionaries**
Specialized dictionaries cover individual subject areas. They are the most important component of a translator’s dictionary library. No matter how comprehensive and extensive the general dictionaries available to the translator are, hardly any job can be done without turning to at least one, and quite often several, specialized dictionaries covering different subject areas.

Specialized dictionaries can be mono-, bi-, or multilingual. They come in two “flavors.” What I call general specialized dictionaries (not an oxymoron) cover a broad subject area. I call specialized dictionaries that cover a narrow subject matter (a subset of a broad subject area) first-tier specialized dictionaries. Examples are shown in Table 1 on page 54.

Now, certain first-tier dictionaries can be considered general dictionaries in relation to dictionaries covering an even narrower subject area (second-tier specialized dictionaries). Examples of these appear in Table 2.

A practical application of this discourse is: when starting a project, I select a respective general or first-tier specialized dictionary as my main tool. If the document pertains to a specific narrower area, I use as my main tool a pertinent second-tier dictionary. In this latter case, “higher-hierarchy” dictionaries will be used, when needed, as support tools for the project.

*Continued on p. 54*
The Dictionary: My Friend, My Enemy

Techniques of Using Dictionaries

The main purpose of using dictionaries is to find a good (I am afraid to say “the best”) rendering of a SL term. If the term is one word, the task is often simple: find the term in a dictionary and select the appropriate TL equivalent. But what if my dictionaries do not list the term? Then I use some of the techniques described below.

Things get more complicated when the source text contains a compound term that consists of a headword (usually a noun or a verb) and one or, worse yet, several modifiers. One would be lucky to find the compound term in a dictionary. But what is a translator to do if he does not know the correct TL compound term and cannot find it in the dictionaries available to him? Then he has a problem.

Before I share the techniques/methods I use to solve such problems, a word about dictionary structures. Of course, all dictionaries arrange the terms in alphabetical order. But as far

Table 1

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<th>General Specialized Dictionaries</th>
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<td>Dictionary of Machine Building</td>
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Table 2

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<th>First-Tier Specialized Dictionaries</th>
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<td>Maritime Dictionary</td>
<td>Shipbuilding Dictionary</td>
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as compound terms are concerned, dictionaries have two different structures.

Most dictionaries are alphabetized by the headword, and modifiers are listed in alphabetical order under the headword listing. This is the so-called alphabetical cell system—all compound terms with the common headword form a cell.

On the other hand, some dictionaries are purely alphabetical—alphabetized by the first word in the compound term.

Both structures have their advantages and disadvantages. The best thing would be to have both versions of the same dictionary. I haven’t seen such a combination, but the next best thing is to have at least one purely alphabetical dictionary for each subject area.

So, here is how I approach the problem:

1. First, ascertain the TL equivalent of the SL headword. Sometimes the headword and/or modifier can have a slightly different spelling in a dictionary (examples 2, 4).

2. Look up all compound terms with this headword—there might be a term synonymous with, or close in meaning to, the one I am looking for, or at least pointing me in the right direction.

2a. In addition, look up compound terms with a synonym or synonyms of the headword. For instance, if the headword is “fracture,” I would also look up compound terms with “crack” as the headword.

3. Then, look up the modifier and its derivative(s). If I find a TL equivalent and it makes sense to combine it with the TL equivalent of the headword, the problem is solved.

4. If this has not worked, try to find the compound term in a “reverse” (TL-SL) dictionary. Sometimes it is listed there—with the exact source document term (example 3).

5. A variation of the above technique: look up dictionaries that have the index of TL terms. It is even better if the index is purely alphabetical.

6. If this still does not solve the problem, go to a purely alphabetical dictionary and look for the modifier(s). If there are one or several compound terms with the same modifier as the SL compound term in question, they can help you come up with a TL term that makes sense.

7. If one knows one or more languages, one can use another avenue: try finding an answer in a SL—“third” language or “third” language—SL dictionary. In my case, I work in Russian and Ukrainian. So, when I translate, say, an English document into Ukrainian, and my English-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-English dictionaries do not provide an answer, I go to English-Russian and Russian-English dictionaries. And if I find the answer there, then the only remaining step is to go from Russian to Ukrainian.

Well, this is all fine if I have at least an idea or, better yet, a clear understanding of the meaning of the SL term in the document context. If I don’t or if I’m in doubt, I would (not necessarily in the order shown):

8. Consult monolingual dictionaries—they may have an explanation of the SL term.

9. Consult glossaries.

10. Consult encyclopedias.

11. Go to pictionarys.

12. Ask the client for definitions/clarifications, and then go back to the process described above.

What if the client does not respond or there is no time to ask (the deadline is approaching fast)? What if none of the above techniques work? Then I try to come up with the best equivalent I can think of, followed by the original (SL) term in square brackets, hoping that somebody at the receiving end (the end user) knows the subject matter and will understand my rendering of the term.

Examples
Here are several examples of using these techniques in English-Russian translations. In all examples the dictionaries available to me contained no exact SL compound terms.

Continued on p. 56
Example 1. *warning gage.*

1st step: Ascertain the headword: *gage*—контрольно-измерительный прибор, датчик (Ref. 1).
2nd step: Find compound terms close to or hinting at the meaning of the term in question: alarm pressure gage—сигнальный манометр (ibid.).
3rd step: Look up and select an appropriate TL modifier: *warning*—предупреждение (ibid.).
4th step: Final result: *warning gage*—предупреждающий сигнал.

Example 2. (a WWII story). *осветительная бомба.*
The term is not listed in my Russian-English military dictionaries.
1st step: Use English-Russian dictionaries.
2nd step: Find compound terms close to or hinting at the meaning of the term in question: illuminating [illumination] bomb—осветительная авиа/bомба (Ref. 2).
illuminating bomb—осветительная мина (Ref. 3).
3rd step: Final result: *осветительная бомба*—осветительная бомба—осветительная мина.

Example 3. *spinal meningitis.*
The term is not listed in my English-Russian medical dictionaries.
Use a Russian-English medical dictionary: *спинной менингит*—spinal meningitis (Ref. 4).
Problem solved.

Example 4. (a fiberglass boat). *gel coat.*
1st step: Find the term in dictionaries: gel coat—наружный смоляной слой (в армированных пластинах) (Ref. 5).
2nd step: Because the two TL terms are not exactly identical, ask the client for clarification.
3rd step: Final result (after receiving the client’s clarification): *gel coat*—наружный отделочный слой.

Example 5. *leveler.*
1st step: Find the term in dictionaries: *leveler*—уровневатель, выравнивающая добавка (в электролите) (Ref. 1).
leveler—выравнивающая добавка (Ref. 7).
2nd step: Consult the client.
3rd step: Client’s explanation: Spray-on paint thinner used to smooth out or level the coat of paint sprayed on first; will thin out or smooth the paint finish.
4th step: Look up the SL term derivatives: *levelness*—равномерность, гладкость (Ref. 6).
leveling—разравнивание (например, смоль краски) (Ref. 5).
5th step: Final result: *leveler*—разравнивающее покрытие.

1st step: Look up the modifier (ютерный) and/or compound terms containing the modifier: *ютерная колонна*—continuous distillation column (Ref. 8).
2nd step: Look up the TL modifier (distillation).
distillation column—ректификационная колонна (Ref. 7).
distillation column—дистилляционная колонна (Ref. 6).
distillation—перегонка, разгонка; дистилляционный, перегонный (ibid.).
3rd step: Final result: *ютерная вода*—дистилляционная вода.

The Dictionary: My Friend, My Enemy

So, when does a dictionary become the translator’s enemy? I can think of several scenarios.

1. **False cognates.** A dictionary offers several TL equivalents of the SL term, and the translator, who is not very familiar with the subject matter, picks an irrelevant equivalent, violating Law 5. Of course, a good dictionary will explain, or at least hint at, proper usages. But not all dictionaries are good, and even good ones do not, and cannot, cover everything.

2. The translator has too many dictionaries for a given subject area, and some of those practically duplicate each other.
This is a waste of time, money, and shelf and desk space. This is also a negative corollary of Law 3.

3. The translator **does not remember** the titles (and subject areas) of some of his dictionaries—a violation of Law 3c. As a result, he: a) is not using the “forgotten” dictionaries when they could be most helpful; and/or b) buys duplicates, wasting money and shelf space. This has happened to me on more than one occasion. To avoid duplication, it might help to have your dictionary list handy when browsing/shopping for dictionaries.

4. The translator has several dictionaries for the subject area, but **has not selected the main tool** and uses all these dictionaries at random—a violation of Law 3b and a waste of time and desk space.

5. The translator looks for **individual words** in dictionaries without focusing on the meaning of the text, and comes up with a non-idiomatic translation.

6. A term in the document is a **brand name**. Not realizing this, the translator handles (translates) it as a generic term, violating Law 6.

I am sure you can think of a number of other situations.

As you probably have guessed by now, it is not the dictionary that is the translator’s enemy—it is the **translator** who is his own enemy. Some of us have probably sinned in these areas at one time or another. I certainly have.

**Conclusion**

About five years ago, my then six-year-old grandson had coined (unintentionally) a term for what we are doing: **Trans-thinking**. I like the term very much (and not just because I love its author). I think it explains the nature of our business in a nutshell: **Thinking and then transmitting information, sometimes—as interpreters**—(almost) simultaneously, from one language/culture to another.

So, after everything has been said and done, after all available dictionaries have been consulted, and after all Laws of Dictionary Usage have been complied with, the main rule is very simple. I call it:

**Law 7: THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR COMMON SENSE.**

I would like to thank Lydia Razran Stone for the help and the encouragement she gave me in writing this article.

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**References**


Telephone Interpreting: Elements of Effective Communication

First established almost 30 years ago as a community service, telephone interpreting has gone through tremendous change and extended its numerous applications to meet the growing needs and trends in various industries requiring instantaneous communication. Worldwide migration, revolutionary technology, and the tendency towards a global economy have contributed to the growing recognition and need for an immediate, on-demand interpreting service.

...Worldwide migration, revolutionary technology, and the tendency towards a global economy have contributed to the growing recognition and need for an immediate, on-demand interpreting service...

Telephone interpreting is no longer limited to the “exchange of raw data” (Ref. 1, p.1). It has become a sophisticated tool in today’s accelerated and complex communication practice. Modern telephone interpreting requires a broad spectrum of communicative skills that presume superb language fluency, but are not limited to interpreting proficiency. It requires special attention to varied aspects of human communication, to new findings of cognitive science, and to different areas of knowledge that can help professional interpreters refine their communicative skills to facilitate fast, clear, and effective exchange of information.

Every language expert would most likely agree that a high degree of interpreting skill is inseparable from communicative talent. We can immediately detect a good communicator: he is the one who instantly entices the attention of the entire audience regardless of the discussion topic; he is the one whose language captivates and whose ideas inspire; he is the one you always want to follow and learn from. What is it exactly that fascinates us so much? Is it the knowledge of an ample number of extraordinary facts? Or, maybe we are attracted by some amazingly gracious and inexplicable courtesy style. Or is it simply the language—an immense vocabulary along with the ability to elegantly maneuver large quantities of words?

Interpreters, more than anyone else, know the meaning and role of language in human communication. We know that any language, like a drop of clear water constantly changing its shape, reflects the eclectic and turbulent state of human existence. We understand that language not only shapes our thoughts into logical messages, but also works as a precision instrument triggering our thoughts and ideas. We are familiar with the magic of language, for language is our medium. We are well aware of how powerful a word can be. A word can bring vital energy to a doomed patient, or can instantaneously destroy a friendship. It can lead to a blood-spattered brutal war, or help a criminal escape just punishment. It can, literally, send a satellite to the wrong orbit or become a symbol of wisdom, insight, and intellectual breakthrough.

A startling idea might remain unnoticed or be delayed for centuries, buried in an awkward style of delivery. Or, on the contrary, a dazzling and striking speech turns into “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” obscuring a naked emptiness. Words influence, lead, sparkle fires, leave us restless, or instill endless boredom, drag us into a gloomy and precarious state of mind, or cloud our mind with confusion when a stimulating idea partners with an unhealthy emotion. New words reflect each step forward in an ongoing process of self-actualization. Depending on the language we use to express ourselves, we can see and even shape the contour of our individual and common destiny. A word and the thought that stands behind it—significant or mediocre, brave or graceful, fruitful or malicious—form an unbreakable intrinsic bond.

We ask ourselves over and over again: is it the language—thought architect and initiator—that should be our sole focus in mastering interpreting and communication techniques?

The United Nations Chief Interpreter Sergio Viaggio answers: “Quality is more than a merely linguistic concept: many an interpreter knows his languages inside and out, misses nothing, makes no serious mistakes, and yet does not quite succeed in interpreting altogether satisfactorily. The main problem is too much of an obsession with words and not enough attention to sense. I prefer professionals who are prone to talk less and say what really counts, idiomatically, with elegance, precision, natural intonation, and poise. I find it difficult to put up with practitioners who sound bored and boring, or...
have a halting delivery, or scarcely pause to take a breath and then at the wrong places. In this regard, I am irritated by the same things that irk any listener in any speaker. I want my interpreters to be top-notch communicators. Next, I treasure a user-friendly professional; someone who is constantly mindful of his audience’s specific needs, who will strive to find out what they are and then tailor his approach accordingly” (Ref. 2, p.2).

What magic transforms a good interpreter into a brilliant communicator? Some say it’s a God-given talent. Others argue it is a skill that can be acquired and mastered. Some develop theories on how to build, enhance, and cultivate the ability to communicate. Others simply speak and write, setting incredible examples to learn from. I would like to call attention to an extraordinary example of the ability to find the precise word for true meaning by examining the last printed words of one of the most remarkable communicators of modern times. This example will clearly illustrate NetworkOmni’s approach to interpreting, along with new concepts for telephone interpreting, and allow us to analyze the key interpreting principles from a new angle and through the prism of a magnificent touch of a communication genius—Italo Calvino’s Six Memos for the Next Millennium.

Traditionally, world-renowned Nobel Prize winning writers are invited to the large American universities as honorary lecturers. In 1985, Italo Calvino was scheduled to deliver six lectures at Harvard University on the art of writing. Only five of the lectures were actually committed to paper. The preparation of the rest was interrupted by the writer’s sudden death. Although, strictly speaking, these lectures were dedicated to literature, from first sight it becomes apparent that they are far from mere literary interpretations of the world’s greatest writing. In his short foreword, Calvino outlines a much broader object of study: “The millennium about to end has seen the birth and development of the modern languages of the West, and the literatures that have explored the expressive, cognitive, and imaginative possibilities of these languages” (Ref. 3, p.1). Calvino’s findings of the communicative potential of language are central to the goal at hand. Calvino’s words can help us to meet the challenge faced by all professional interpreters—to uncover the right language for the true meaning—and to activate our communication potential.

One might ask: Why use literature as a model? Writing and speech are obviously different manifestations of language. The connection, however, is direct. Written language is always more formal and thoroughly thought out. Finished and retouched elements and “formulas” of the written language, especially those originating from a creative genius, get stored in our memory and sometimes appear directly, sometimes as a link to better and more accurate thought formation. Learning better and faster ways of thought organization and expression is crucial for a telephone interpreter, who has to compensate for the parties’ inability to see each other.

Throughout the text of the Memos, we constantly encounter various concepts of language and come to understand the intricate ways it creates and shapes meanings. The text itself is a brilliant result of a meticulous and eloquent analysis of the possible paths to precise verbal configuration in expressing complex phenomena. Calvino embarks on an intense search for true meaning and the expressive capacity of language to deliver such meaning. The titles of the lectures (“Lightness,” “Quickness,” “Exactitude,” “Visibility,” “Multiplicity,” and “Consistency”) inevitably launch multilevel associations with our everyday interpreting practice.

**Lightness**

In many linguistic sources we find an idea of a “light,” “transparent” language allowing spontaneity and ease in the exchange of ideas. Every interpreter dreams of reaching the level of fluency where language is so refined that it becomes “unnoticed,” creating the effect of a direct stream of thought. Calvino shows us a way to this level through his analysis of illustrious canonical writings and through his unique method of thought composition.

Both the content and style of the first lecture reveal the goal of Calvino’s life work: “to remove weight from the structure of stories and from language” (Ref. 3, p.16). This principle, however, did not remove the weight of his magnificent intellectual power. “Lightness for me goes with precision and determination, not with vagueness and the haphazard. Paul Valéry said: ‘Il faut être léger comme l’oiseau, et non comme la plume’”

*Continued on p. 60*
New Concepts for Telephone Interpreting Continued

(One should be light like a bird, and not like a feather) [Ref. 3, p.16].

Interestingly enough, Calvino constantly uses the word “encyclopedia” in characterizing the writings that are closest to his heart: from Greek mythology, Ovid and Lucretius to Dante, Shakespeare to Voltaire, and Swift to Henry James, Leopardi, and Kafka. Calvino’s own text is also truly encyclopedic, but in a very provocative way. It does not read like an encyclopedia and the style is not rigidly scientific or purely scholastic. Some dynamic force brings you to return to the essay over and over again. Half a sentence might carry an undercurrent of information, bringing visual images and prompting numerous associations. This technique goes back to Flaubert, who changed the course of literature forever by getting away from a traditional “heavy” descriptive narration in which days were spent formulating one paragraph and loading it with the perceived necessary amount of information. It reminds us also of Hemingway’s famous laconic style that added an almost physical visual dimension to his words.

Calvino brings numerous illustrations from past and present, going beyond literature to draw examples from different areas of knowledge to demonstrate his concept of lightness.

“Today every branch of science seems intent on demonstrating that the world is supported by the most minute entities, such as messages of DNA, the impulses of neurons, and quarks, and neutrinos wandering through space since the beginning of time…. Then we have computer science. It is true that software cannot exercise its powers of lightness except through the weight of hardware. But it is software that gives the orders, acting on the outside world and on machines that exist only as functions of software, and evolve so that they can work out ever more complex programs. The second industrial revolution, unlike the first, does not present us with such crushing images as rolling mills and molten steel, but with “bits” in a flow of information traveling along circuits in the form of electronic impulses. The iron machines still exist, but they obey the orders of weightless bits’ (Ref. 3, p.8).

We can go on with analogies: a slight change in a color palette that might either distort or enlighten the whole concept of a computer graphic design; a minor distraction that might carry us away from the essence; or a minute change in wording that might either create or solve a communication problem. Interpreters do not have an option to select what needs to be interpreted. Every single element of information has to be preserved. Omission is a serious fault, but there is always an option to choose the most appropriate wording for a “light” and easy communication flow. Lightness and transparency become especially important for telephone interpreting, where the parties involved are impaired by an inability to see one another. There is always a perfect match from a thread of synonyms that can suit a particular situation best. This selection has nothing to do with “editing” or “polishing” the speech to be interpreted. Rather, it is associated with precision and clarity in wording based on multilevel, thorough evaluations of the dialogue media.

Unlike translators, however, who have the luxury of “production” time to search for the best matching equivalent in the target language, an interpreter faces the challenge of having to come up with terms instantly, sometimes automatically. This ability requires not only an encyclopedic knowledge, but also a genuine desire to constantly add to it. And so, along with the desire to learn the meaning and essence of various facts and facets of life, we deal with languages that are all subject to eternal evolution. Language does not exist in a vacuum. Flexible, dynamic, ever changing, it constantly finds new elements and meanings, alterations, transformations, reflecting immediate changes in the social and professional arenas. These changes are sometimes so fast and unpredictable that they escape timely registry, even in the most complete and comprehensive specialty dictionaries.

This flux in language leads us to an important quality of a professional interpreter—a passion to learn and a profound understanding that the highest level of interpreting expertise is only another step on an endless road to excellence. In another words, it’s a journey, not a destination. Results indubitably manifest themselves in facilitating clear communication and, in turn, transform the perception and significance of an interpreter’s role. A vivid example was brought up at the ATA conference in St. Louis by former White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers:
“There is an interpreter who does Russian—Peter Afanasenko. Now, Peter has been there for more than 20 years. He is an expert on everything, from Russian language, to history, to culture, to the history of diplomatic relations with the United States. The first big international summit that President Clinton attended was with President Yeltsin in Vancouver in the spring of 1993. The most seasoned diplomat at that event was the interpreter, Peter—by a long shot. Obviously, there were some permanent staff from the State Department, but at the president’s side and in the room, Peter was the one person with the most experience. He bonded with the president.”

Many of us have never met this interpreter personally and probably never will, but the “light” language of the description gives us almost a visual image of the weight of his communicative power.

A professional interpreter is an exceptionally attentive perpetual student of the facts of life and the ever-changing language reflecting it. Lightness in the rendition of thought always presumes the weight of immense knowledge, as well as inexhaustible energy to process and develop it further.

**Exactitude**

Volumes have been written on accuracy and objectivity—cornerstones of the interpreting profession. Various definitions we come across in the manuals, codes of ethics, research articles, conference presentations, seminars, and speeches related to professional interpreting lead us to a rhetorical question that also appears in Italo Calvino’s lecture on exactitude. “Why do I feel the need to defend values that many people might take to be perfectly obvious?” His answer, surprisingly, echoes our everyday collision with language metamorphoses, and formulates the challenge of accuracy in the spoken language that goes far beyond the virtue of learning a bulk of industry-specific terms. Calvino’s contemplation also reveals the delicacy of spirit and the nature of self-criticism a man must have to be a Noble Prize winner for the striking accuracy in expressing brilliant ideas.

“It seems to me that language is always used in a random, approximate, careless manner, and this distresses me unbearably. Please don’t think that my reaction is the result of intolerance toward my neighbor: the worst discomfort of all comes from hearing myself speak. That’s why I try to talk as little as possible. If I prefer writing, it is because I can revise each sentence until I reach the point where—if not exactly satisfied with my words—I am able at least to eliminate those reasons for dissatisfaction that I can put a finger on. Literature—and I mean the literature that matches up to these requirements—is the Promised Land in which language becomes what it really ought to be” (Ref. 3, p.56).

The Promised Land, in turn, becomes the best source of learning for the professional practitioner of a spoken word.

Calvino offers several attributes of accuracy that he values above all: “a well-defined and well-calculated plan for the work in question; an evocation of clear, incisive, memorable visual images; a language as precise as possible both in choice of words and in expression of the subtleties of thought and imagination” (Ref. 3, p.55). This is a precious intellectual addition to the many techniques we use in our everyday interpreting practice. Calvino brings numerous illustrations of the great men struggling for perfection in the accuracy of thought expression, among them Leonardo da Vinci—“a significant example of the battle with language to capture something that evaded his powers of expression.” This image of a creative genius driven by curiosity, genius in search of a “spiky language, from which he seeks richer, more subtle, and more precise expression” (Ref. 3, p.77), is purposely left at the end of the discussion to remain as a symbolic reminder of the eternal effort “to present the tangible aspect of things as precisely as possible” (Ref. 3, p.80).

An intrinsic aspect of accuracy is objectivity stemming from a willingness to see things through others’ eyes. This does not mean yielding to other people’s beliefs, rules, or behavioral, and hence, communication patterns. It means being aware of differences and to understand and deal with them. D. Davidson, in his study of the meaning of truth in interpretation, mentioned: “…we cannot infer the belief without knowing the meaning, and have no chance of inferring the meaning without belief. Various strategies for breaking into this circle suggest themselves. One is to find evidence for what words mean

*Continued on p. 62*
that is independent of intentions, desires, regrets, wishes, approvals, and conventions, too, for all these have a belief component. Perhaps there are some who think it would be possible to establish correctness of a theory of interpretation without knowing or establishing a great deal about beliefs, but it’s not easy to imagine how it could be done” (Ref. 4, pp.143-144).

Objectivity is a vital part of the interpreting process and one of the most challenging objectives in telephone interpreting. Every professional interpreter will most likely give a good definition of objectivity, but when it comes to actual practice, we sometimes find ourselves trapped into internal evaluations dictated by our own personality. Interpreters are frequently compared to machines; computers with human brains. But we are humans, and no matter how impartial we want to be, we always have some feelings about the subject we interpret.

We deal with many other human beings coming from different cultural, educational, professional, religious, and psychological environments. We are interacting with humans with different abilities to express their ideas and feelings, and with a spectrum of emotions that might seem irrelevant and odd, but which are very real and significant. This aspect of interpreting is purely psychological in nature and is extremely important for telephone assignments, which present an unseen range of life views and situations while depriving the interpreter of visual cues. “Knowledge of the circumstances under which someone who holds sentences true is central to interpretation” (Ref. 4, p.162). Telephone professionals handle numerous scenarios daily requiring not only different terminology selection, but also different approaches to interpreting and stress management. Interpreters have to be ready to “switch gears” quickly and naturally.

Objectivity comes into effect when we tame our own attitude, and activate all of our senses to detect what exactly causes certain human reactions. We need to see and feel the heart of the matter, and get to the essence of a message. Objectivity comes into effect when an interpreter takes a stand for each of the parties, and must speak on behalf of each of them. Objectivity comes into effect when there is a keen attention, unbroken patience, and tolerance. It comes as a gift for a humanistic approach, a respect, recognition, and positive perception of other people’s ways. Objectivity stems from rigid self-analysis, a willingness to learn and grow, and from a genuine desire to become a better human being.

Visibility

Somebody asked Thomas Edison, an electrical wizard, “Mr. Edison, what is electricity?” He replied, “Madame, electricity is. Use it.” “Electricity is the name we give to an invisible power which we do not fully comprehend, but we learn all we can about the principle of electricity and its uses. We use it in countless ways. The scientist cannot see an electron with his eyes, yet he accepts it as a scientific fact, because it is the only valid conclusion which coincides with his other experimental evidence. We cannot see life. However, we know we are alive. Life is, and we are here to express it in all its beauty and glory” (Ref. 5, p.214). Language is. Use it. Make your thought visible.

The concept of an invisible interpreter is one of the most popular images among language professionals. Objective, impartial, and well versed, an interpreter whose presence is almost unnoticed becomes the voice of the two parties. The interpreter “disappears” in order to create an illusion of direct and clear communication. It’s not so important for the parties addressing each other in their native languages to physically see the interpreter, but it’s crucial for an interpreter, who wants to be precise in conveying the essence of a message, to see both parties in order to effectively use various nonverbal codes as additional source of information.

Nonverbal communication is a vital part of any communication, but especially the interpreting process. Have you ever thought of the complexity of our instant subconscious analysis of the slight changes in the expression of a smile or the eyes in a personal conversation? How many times have we experienced that our communication with other people has nothing to do with words? We sometimes learn more from an instinctive movement of a facial muscle than from the words we hear. And how powerful these messages can be! A combination of communication codes originating from facial expression, eye contact, body language, postures, gestures, and voice tone can generally provide up to 50-70 percent of the message content. Larry McLauchlin, a communications specialist and CEO of Leading Edge Commu-
nications Ltd., says that over 90 percent of the information we
gather from others is nonverbal in nature. Among other nonverbal
codes, the tone of voice carries an extra weight. According to
some studies, the tone of voice carries up to 40 percent of how
others perceive us in face-to-face communication.

On the phone, interpreters are, indeed, physically invisible. The
effect of this is that the significance and power of voice tone
increases dramatically when we speak on the phone, because all
other nonverbal elements are eliminated. This is why our voice
tone is so important when we interpret over the phone. It reflects
our attitude, objectivity level, communication competence, and
professionalism in general. The components of voice tone, such
as projection, pitch, speed, volume, intonation, and the ability to
maintain the right balance of the above components in order to
faithfully and objectively convey the message, become an inte-
gral part of the training we provide. Telephone interpreting
would be impossible without thorough consideration of compli-
menting how we sound with what we say.

“Some interpreters are disturbed by the inability to see the
speaker, and find alarming the notion of interpreting, for
example, trial witness testimony over the telephone. Non-
verbal cues are an enormously important component of
human communication under any circumstances, but all the
more so where subjective judgments of such things as cred-
ibility are being made, and the delicate process of interling-
gual transfer of meaning is in play, with all its complexities,
ambiguities, and nuances. The countless subtleties of facial
expression and body language have an effect on our (live)
interpretation, whether or not we are conscious of those
effects. All this is lost over the telephone, raising the ques-
tion of what impact that loss might have. Obvious though
the fact of this loss may seem, there is not much published
research on interpreting, less on court interpreting, and
probably zero on telephone interpreting. So the debate
remains speculative on both sides insofar as no one can say,
‘studies have shown conclusively that...’ To do their best to
understand and be understood, interpreters need all the sen-
sory input they can get; they need to see the people for
whom they are interpreting” (Ref. 6, p.3).

Many interpreters do not trust the idea of an accurate rendi-
tion on the phone except for simple information exchange. Ines
Swaney, a member of the National Association of Judiciary
Interpreters and Translators, for instance, strongly believes that
“in situations involving the fate of human lives, the character
of an individual, or under circumstances requiring the ren-
dering of opinion about a person, there is no substitute for live,
face-to-face contact” (Ref. 1, p.1). This might be true for long
and complicated criminal hearings, but how about numerous
emergency situations, and 911 in par-
ticular? These parties cannot wait for
an interpreter to arrive on the scene. In
such circumstances, life dictates its
own course, and innovative technology
leads us to overcome the challenges
that seemed impossible several years
ago. Today, these types of interpreting
assignments, whether we like it or not,
are done over the phone. And it
requires rigorous training that encom-
passes the findings of cognitive sci-
ence, which result in the development
of a unique set of communication
skills. An interpreter’s personality
becomes central to such assignments,
and is subject to very careful selection.

Multiplicity
The new millennium will inevitably
bring many technological and social
changes as it interfaces with the cultur-
ally diverse global community. The
effective communication across cul-
tures is no longer a domain limited to
intellectuals. It has become a necessity
of everyday life.

The ability to function in two
worlds, to understand sensitive cultural
concepts, as well as the ability to create
and synthesize shared meaning across
cultures, is an integral part of the inter-
preting profession. As previously men-
tioned, many manifestations of these
cultural concepts are nonverbal in
nature, and it takes an extra effort on the
part of a telephone interpreter to detect
and “decode” them. To achieve max-
imum communication efficiency, Net-
workOmni trains its interpreters to
master their skill of recognizing and
“blending” various cultural patterns into
mutually comprehensible meanings.

“Interpreting has many challenges,
but few greater than those caused by dif-
ferent cultures. The Japanese, for
example, never directly say ‘no’ because
it is considered impolite. To overcome

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New Concepts for Telephone Interpreting Continued

this, they have in their language many untranslatable sounds to avoid using the direct negative. This is a case where the interpreter must have a deep understanding of the culture” (Ref. 7, p.1). Deep understanding of cross-cultural communication comes into play when an interpreter’s own culture is experienced as just one of many equally complex and valuable worldviews. Acceptance does not mean agreement in this scenario. Cultural differences might be viewed in various ways, but judgment is not ethnocentric and is not noticeable during the interpretation process.

Some cultural models are known and predictable, allowing interpreters to automatically get a message across cultural lines. Every professional Japanese interpreter, for instance, knows the cultural value of “modesty” and the negative attitude of Japanese people to direct confrontation. Formal introductions and expressing politeness to seniors are very important in Korean communication models. Russians sometimes have a tendency to modestly agree with the first suggested decision, rather than being open to multiple options that could be available. For Hispanics, it’s customary to “bond” with an interpreter as with a close friend or a relative, and subconsciously “invite” an interpreter to be an advocate or a counselor. These examples are endless, and so are the ways to overcome a communication barrier caused by cultural incongruity. Visual indicators of the cultural differences are not available to telephone interpreters, and therefore they need to be well prepared to “decode” this culturally sensitive information from verbal and nonverbal signals in a telephone conversation.

“Not speaking the same language’ is a virtual synonym for incommensurability, but to a psycholinguist, it is a superficial difference. Knowing about the ubiquity of complex language across individuals and cultures and the single mental design underlying them all, no speech seems foreign to me, even when I cannot understand a word. The banter among New Guinean highlanders in the film of their first contact with the rest of the world, the motions of the sign language interpreter, the prattle of little girls in a Tokyo playground— I imagine seeing through the rhythms to the structures underneath, and sense that we all have the same minds” (Ref. 8, P.430).

Language and culture are deeply interrelated. Our culture affects the way we use our language, and our language usage influences how we relate to our culture. Learning other cultures’ traditions, values, concepts, attitudes, thought patterns, as well as the universal communicative skills to generate shared meanings is one of the main answers to endurance and success in our constantly evolving and merging multilingual world.

Quickness

Centuries ago, Montaigne said: “So we see that in the gift of eloquence some have facility and promptness, and, as they say can get it out so easily that at every turn they are ready; whereas others, slower, never speak except with elaboration and premeditation” (Ref. 9, p.25). Today’s experimental science makes it possible to locate some of the speech centers, to identify the grammar gene, to analyze the...“neurological reality of different modes of expression...neural mechanism that made use of preadapted properties of this [vocal] tract for rapidly induced speech” (Ref. 10, pp.90-91).

The perception of time by our fellow contemporaries has become remarkably conscientious, considering the sensational accumulation of knowledge brought by information technology. Time feels too fast, too dense, too packed with information, and is extremely precious. Quickness of thought expression and idea exchange has become a necessity. It’s no longer merely a privilege of a mysterious talent. The ability to speak quickly along with a sharp reaction time are desirable qualities of any interpreter. They become essential for the telephone.

Italo Calvino brings examples of various narrative techniques used in different genres that can either speed up or slow down the perception of time for specific purposes of communication flow. Analyzing these techniques used to emphasize the importance of certain information elements, shifting the weight of wording for the meaning to take its natural course, and verbalizing the feeling of urgency for key ideas, can be very useful for our study of the intricacies of telephone interpreting. This analysis might be interesting from the standpoint of a variety of scenarios a telephone interpreter handles, compounded by the fact that, in many cases, the English-speaking client on the other end of a telephone line might not be familiar
with the specific communicative principles suitable for that particular situation.

For obvious reasons, consecutive interpreting is always time-consuming. In a face-to-face setting, the time the interpreter takes during his turn to deliver a message is used by the parties ready to address each other in their native languages to “take a breath,” study each other’s body language, evaluate the environment, and anticipate the next idea to be expressed. Visual transparency allows them to look around, to glance at the notes or documents, to estimate (or guess about) each other’s perception, and to think of the most appropriate answers. Although using the consecutive interpreting mode of a classical face-to-face setting delays the process of information exchange, time goes by relatively fast thanks to invaluable visual information cues.

The perception of time on the telephone is quite different. Having no access to any visual information, a party listening to the interpreter’s delivery into an unknown language has to wait in the dark of virtual telephone space wondering about the other party’s reactions and probable feedback. Nothing is more unpleasant than the state of uncertainty; it turns into frustration when the feeling is prolonged. The party listening to the foreign language on the phone without being able to see the counterpart feels isolated and “left out.” Evaluation of various non-verbal codes still takes place, but this time it is limited to the intonation and overtones of voice and, in many cases, becomes very subjective. Time goes slowly and the whole communication process does not seem to be effective when the message to be interpreted gets lengthy. The length of the message for telephone interpreting becomes crucial. In many cases “shuttle communication,” appropriate techniques of breaking long messages into short segments, speeds up the whole communication process.

In some telephone interpreting settings, clients, for the sake of time and efficiency, expect interpreters to deliver selective messages, and often instruct them accordingly. There are numerous situations when interpreters cannot exercise the rules required in a classical courtroom. An interpreter’s speed and reaction on emergency calls is expected to be very different from the speed in an extra courteous customer service setting. Individual styles of thought verbalization on the phone, especially unstructured, illogical, and in the raw form of the “stream of consciousness,” bring additional complexity to an interpreter’s job and slows down the communication if the interpreter is not familiar with special techniques and “shortcuts” applicable for telephone assignments. Any message in any telephone interpreting setting, however, has to be delivered promptly and precisely. This requires careful matching of an interpreter’s individual set of skills with the particular assignment. It also requires rigorous training on both the interpreter’s and client’s end in order to use specified communication techniques unanimously and consistently to achieve the best results in speeding up effective communication.

Consistency

Consistency in the further advancement of telephone interpreting necessitates the urgency to establish, and keep a proper balance of the communicative elements introduced above, along with other relevant rules of communication introduced by modern cognitive science. Consistency implies a methodical and systematic approach to telephone interpreting, which has indisputably positioned itself as a compelling and unique type of professional interpreting.

Telephone interpreting has undergone tremendous transformation since the time of its introduction. Many years ago I was astonished watching a “wanting-to-be an interpreter” with limited language skills attempting to communicate in a three-way conference call. In 1997, Language Line® specialists noted a dangerous trend of associating an interpreter with a “ready-to-help bilingual friend.” This concern has been streamlined by many service providers through the careful selection of professionals for telephone assignments, as well as with the development and implementation of comprehensive testing and training programs specifically designed for telephone interpreting.

Regardless of the differences in the analytical approach to language and interpretation, both N. Chomsky and D. Davidson have unanimously proved that the “theory of interpretation is the business jointly of the linguist, psychologist, and philosopher” (Ref. 4, p.142). This is especially true for telephone interpreting, as it makes a significant contribution to the efficiency

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of modern communication. Today’s concept of telephone interpreting integrates major principles of professional interpreting along with the combined findings of contemporary cognitive science, linguistics, psychology, and various theories of communication.

Quality assurance in telephone interpreting today goes far beyond language and interpreting skill assessment. It encompasses a methodical analysis of typical telephone settings and clear definitions of an interpreter’s tasks for each of them. It also comprises an objective assessment of quality for this particular kind of interpreting, which includes careful examination of expectations among distinct users and their role in the communication process. It includes thorough evaluation of various purposes of communication, careful consideration of its nonlinguistic aspect, and, finally, expansion of the integrated educational opportunities for both providers and users of telephone interpreting services utilizing innovative teaching methodologies.

We can only guess what Italo Calvino wanted to share with us about consistency. The context of his writings transpire broader and deeper meanings of this notion, which will undoubtedly lead us to the next millennium as a reminder of the magic of our profession and limitless opportunities available to an attentive student of language and communication.

Notes


References


We recently got a particularly interesting question from a staff member here at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). She wanted to know how to translate two English terms into Spanish: “timing” and “benchmarks.” Since translation depends so much on context, we asked her how the terms were used in what we foolishly assumed was an original English source text. “El timing de los benchmarks,” she replied to our dismay.

First of all, I think we should award this alert reader the Cervantes Prize for Defense of the Spanish Language for blowing the whistle on this Spanglish double-whammy. Now for the terms. According to my trusty Webster’s Third Unabridged, “timing” can have two main meanings. One is “observation and recording of the elapsed time of an act, action, or process often by means of a stopwatch.” In other words, “timing” in this sense is what the Olympic officials were doing when Marion Jones sprinted to gold medal fame. This meaning is rendered in Spanish simply as cronometraje.

Timing Is Everything

The second, more widely used, meaning of “timing” is “the selection for maximum effect of the precise moment for beginning or doing something.” For example, “No doubt Gov. Bush now questions the timing of the disclosure of his DWI [drunk driving] arrest” (The Washington Post, November 6, 2000).

Some ways of expressing the notion of “selecting a time for maximum effect” in Spanish include: oportunidad, sincronización, secuencia cronológica, or distribución cronológica. But in the case of an IDB project, “timing” may actually emphasize the “selection” part more than the “maximum effect” part, almost like “scheduling” or even “schedule.” So other options leaning in this direction in Spanish could be cronología, calendario, cronograma, or plan. In the case of meetings, sometimes even fecha(s) will work.

Any Point of Reference

As for los benchmarks, a “bench mark”—spelled as two separate words—is “a mark on a fixed and enduring object (as on an outcropping of rock or a concrete post set into the ground) indicating a particular elevation and used as a reference in topographical surveys and tidal observations.” You may have noticed a bench mark under a bridge, for instance, with markings for floodwaters.

Written in one word as “benchmark,” the term means “a point of reference from which measurements of any sort may be made” [emphasis added]. For instance, in its market reports, The Washington Post refers to the Nikkei average as “Japan’s benchmark Nikkei stock average”: it’s the one against which all the others are measured. Here at the IDB, the “benchmarks” that the previously mentioned staff member stumbled across generally refer to indicators that will be tracked to measure the developmental impact of an IDB project.

The idea of “a point of reference” is our best clue to rendering the term into Spanish. For many international organizations, referencia is the Spanish term of choice: for example, for “benchmark indicator,” the International Monetary Fund uses indicador de referencia; for “benchmark price,” both the World Bank and the Free Trade Area of the Americas use precio de referencia; for “benchmark survey,” the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean uses encuesta de referencia.

Performance Anxiety

However, for “performance benchmarks,” many organizations, including the IDB, prefer indicadores de desempeño or indicadores de resultado(s). But then what’s the difference between “performance benchmarks” and “performance indicators”? From what we can gather, not a huge one: a “performance indicator” for, say, a microcredit project, could be the number of microentrepreneurs, while the “performance benchmark” for the same project would be the specific number, like 10,000 microentrepreneurs.

The “timing of the benchmarks” for our hypothetical microcredit project could look something like this: 2,000 microentrepreneurs in year one; 3,000 in year two; and 5,000 in year three. In Spanish, you could call it el cronograma de los indicadores de desempeño. That looks and sounds a whole lot better than el timing de los benchmarks, don’t you agree?
In the digital age of binary 1s and 0s, there should definitely be more millennia, if only for the opportunities such events create for the publication of new dictionary editions!

The sixth edition of Harrap’s Shorter Bilingual English-French, French-English Dictionary comes in celebration of the new millennium, and in celebration (Y2K + 1) of the one hundred years since the foundation of the original Harrap Company in 1901, in Covent Garden, London. And, once again, this is a dictionary whose size (seven pounds, 2,304 pages, 305,599 words referenced), and institutional stature, belies its affectionate title: The Shorter. Originally, The Shorter was designed as an abridged, shorter version of the French Standard Dictionary. Currently, it is still The Shorter; abridged version of Harrap’s New Standard French & English Dictionary, which comes in four volumes.

This sixth edition of Harrap’s Shorter comes with 2,805 new words, reflecting the vast changes that have occurred linguistically since 1996, the year of the fifth edition. These new words arise in the world of the Internet, e-commerce, telemedicine, and the Euro. As mentioned in the Harrap’s 2000 preface to the sixth edition: “Now, more people go surfing on the Internet than at the beach.” Additionally, and of novel practical significance, there is an article supplement about the Internet in the initial pages of the dictionary, which places these new words in narrative context. Thus, if you are in need of a “firewall” (mur coupe-feu) to protect your system from a bunch of “hackers” (pirates informatiques or “bidouilleurs”) when your “shopping cart” (panier) is full, then you are in for a good explanatory treat, in narrative format. Similarly, if you have no idea how to pronounce “Vincent.Guerin@balthazar.fr” in French, you will find “Vincent point Guérin, arrobas, balthazar, point F R,” not to mention those familiar acronyms such as “ISDN” [Integrated Services Digital Network] or “ISP” [Internet Service Provider], which respectively and magically yield “RNIS” [Réseau numérique à intégration de service] and “Fournisseur d’accès à l’Internet.” And, finally, if you are unhappy on a “low traffic” (diffusion restreinte) mailing list, you may want to quickly switch to “high traffic” (grande diffusion). And if you are pondering how to translate those familiar desktop features such as “drop-down menus” (menus déroulants), “status bars” (barres d’état), “toolbars” (barres d’outils), and “navigation bars” (barres de navigation), then, again, you are in for an easy time. Easy on two counts: first, finding a hit translation, and second, finding a succinct narrative explanation of what these words refer to, how they occur, and where they fit in the domain of the Internet.

Beyond the conscious effort to supply updated terminology and translation, this edition of The Shorter also provides a new and uncommon feature, termed usage notes. These appear as gray boxes in the listings to warn against some of the pitfalls of translation, such as false cognates and “false friends.” So, while you may be seasoned at translation, churning out an average of more than 2,500 words a day, sometimes five days a week, students may find these reminders of the utmost importance.

For example, the following usage notes are found in the text, for listing of the terms “engine,” “engineer,” and “umbrella”:

For the term “engine”:

Note that the French word engin is a false friend, and is rarely a translation for the English word engine. Its most common meaning is machine.

For the term “engineer”:

Note that the French word ingénieur is never used to mean repairman.

And for the term “umbrella”:

Note that the French word ombrelle is a false friend. It means sunshade.

Similarly, The Shorter presents another useful feature with the indexing of grammatical rules. When a term is subject to special grammatical treatment, the reference to such a rule is marked, in the text, next to the listed term, allowing for quick reference to the grammatical compendium that has been inserted at the center of the dictionary. Thus, for example, the English terms “kinetics,” “economics,” and “politics,” as nouns with an “-ics” suffix, are all referenced to an English grammatical note pertaining to subject-verb agreement: “Economics is a difficult subject” versus “The economics of the project are to be considered.” Conversely, for French terms, there are grammatical references for such terms as “Je, j,’” referring to ellipsis, or for the terms “année (year), journée (day), matinée (morning),” referring to the use of these feminine forms, in contrast to their masculine forms “an” (year), “jour” (day), “matin” (morning), “soir” (evening),” referring to the use of these feminine forms, in contrast to their masculine forms “an” (year), “jour” (day), “matin” (morning), “soir” (evening). This referencing appears as bold characters, in parenthesis, in the listed text, and is easy to find in the central blue grammatical compendium section.

Finally, in the popular and new era of translation localization, that is, the era where it does matter whether the audience is Canadian or Parisian French; or American or British English; or Mexican or Argentinian Spanish, it follows that the British roots of The Shorter also matter. Perhaps not to the extent of claiming mutual unintelligibility of these major lan-
guage variations, but certainly for some of the finer differences. Thus, you’ll find that the translation for “appel interurbain” is a “trunk call” which, in the U.S., usually refers to a “long-distance call”; and that “appel gratuit” is a “freecall,” where it would most likely be “toll-free or an 800 number” in the U.S. You will also find that the warmth of your “édredon” (down comforter) has become an “eiderdown” or “quilt”; not to mention the indispensable rainwear: your beloved “bottes en caoutchouc” (rubber boots), which you will discover transformed into “wellingtons, or ‘wellies’, in British English. Thus, after stubbornly refusing to back down on the definite mutual intelligibility of British and American English (similar to Canadian and European French), you will almost certainly want to consult The Shorter for texts that require British localization.

In sum, The Shorter is an indispensable general bilingual reference tool for translators of French and English. With such features as the effort to stay current, including clear narrative support, usage notes, easy grammatical referencing, and British localization, the sixth edition of The Shorter comes as a terrific tool that continues to fully live up to its fine, and longstanding, reputation.

Incidentally though, in the digital age of binary 1s and 0s, and for all who would rather discontinue weightlifting with their seven-pound Shorter, there is a Y2K +1 CD-ROM version of Harrap’s Shorter, with such wonderful, and bonus, mediaspecific highlights and innovations as audio pronunciation of terms, conversion tables, and document templates. But this must be the subject of another review.

Not to mention the specialized Harrap’s companion bilingual dictionaries for the Internet, marketing, and finance. All forthcoming reviews…. Till then, happy hard copy Shorter! And alternative body sculpting!

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Translating Nonfiction Books: The Opportunities and Pitfalls Continued from p. 51

be correct in the translation if the original Quark was the French or German, or even the U.K. version.

While we are on the subject of money, Josephine referred us back to the Victorian books that began with: “Dear Reader, I implore you not to make the mistakes I have made.” Because, she said, I’ve done it before, and I’ll do it again; every translator of nonfiction books does it: undercharge. Try to anticipate pitfalls and make sure you get paid for them. Is this design so tight that I will have to translate everything twice, once for the meaning and once to fit the page? Are there a lot of quotations that I will be expected to research so I can put them in the standard English translation?

Publishers will ask for an overall quote; they don’t care how you split it up. Most will pay some percentage of your fee in advance. The advance ranges from 25 percent to as low as 10 percent. Add in a substantial amount for typesetting. For example, if it is £70 per 1,000 words without typesetting, that should be in the range of £80–90 per word with typesetting.

Of course, if you have an unusual language combination (Josephine does: French<>Hebrew), you can charge much more.

In summary, there’s lots of work translating nonfiction books for the translator with solid expertise in both a subject area and graphic design programs (preferably QuarkXPress). And let’s not forget business savvy. Be sure you negotiate a proper price for all the work you, and only you, will have to do.
Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail: JDecker@uplink.net. Generous assistance from Roy Wells (weststar@totacc.com) is gratefully acknowledged. Please make your submissions by the 25th of each month to be included in the next issue.

Congratulations! If you are reading this, then you accomplished what far too many did not: survived all the violence and craziness of the Twentieth Century. And many did not: survived all the violence that accompanies the financial one.

New Queries

(C-E 1-01/1) Terri Morgan’s work on a book on Wudang Qigong included a philosophical passage that was especially difficult, because of multiple meanings for the key words energy, breath (“Qi”), and spirit. All the organs and viscera of the body are said to have particular “Qi.” The section that gave her trouble is as follows:

(D-E 1-01/2) Sandra Zoet wants to know what is meant by “voorlopen” in the following context: “Het voorlopen van het werk door aannemer en directie zal in week 47 gebeuren.” Might it refer to preliminary work?

(D-E 1-01/3) Keith Freeman needs help with the latest management-speak terms for Dutch personnel management and human resources management: (3.a) “begeleiding,” which is literally accompanying supervision. Could it be mentorship, perhaps? (3.b) “personeel & organisatie,” the latest “in” name for a personnel department, in which “organisatie” may or may not mean anything in practice. Who can help? And lastly, (3.c) “sociaal jaarverslag,” which is some sort of social annual report, whatever that means. Could it be a type of human resources management annual statement that accompanies the financial one?

(D-E 1-01/4) Mieke Lancaster suspects there may be some other meaning for “ten overstaan van” than in the presence of or before, as in before a solicitor. The context sentence even seems to demand something like towards: “Voor elke storting die X dan doet, verkrijgt zij een regresvordering ten overstaan van Y.”

(E-L 1-01/5) Zilda Buzack wonders whether anyone knows the Latin name for the herb Pennyroyal.

(E-Pt 1-01/6) Lucinda Mobarak wondered whether there might be differences between Brazilian and Lusitanian Portuguese when trying to decide whether days of the week were written in lower case, as she learned, and months and seasons in upper case, again, as her education made them out to be. She has had her work corrected so that the months were lower case, and then, having adapted to this as a standard, subsequently encountered a translation agency that changed them to upper case again! Who is right, and where geographically?

(E-Sp 1-01/7) Milagros Morales was translating an informational book about loans and mortgages into Spanish and had trouble rendering townhouse, since “casa adosada,” as found in the Harper Collins Unabridged Fifth Edition, did not appeal to him. Since townhouses are very common found in the suburbs, he questions the appropriateness of “residencia urbana, casa de la ciudad,” and is also dissatisfied with “casa lujoza.” A colleague suggested “casas en serie.” Any other ideas?

(E-Sp 1-01/8) This cluster comes from champion contributor Renato Calderón, and is timely to the n-th degree, as this column was written in late November of 2000. The challenge is to render into Spanish all the new, arcane terms having to do with paper ballots, not merely in Florida, but anywhere in America they are used, including where the Translation Inquirer does his voting. Since the ballots are punched by a stylus, they leave behind a fragment of paper, for which the neologism (8.a) chad is used. Renato suggests “broza” for this. Numerous kinds of fragments exist: (8.b) swinging (“oscilante?”), (8.c) clinging (“desprendida?”), (8.d) hanging (“colgante?”), (8.e) dangling (“suspendida?”), (8.f) dimpled (“no perforada, pero con hoyuelo”), (8.g) indented (“con muesca, hendidura o abolladura”), and (8.h) pregnant (“con comaburta o pando”) chad.

(F-E 1-01/9) Gerard Mryglot was working on a financial statement from France, and the terms (9.a) “mise en bourse” and (9.b) “Cluquet” (under other income and expenses) proved difficult. Clues are needed.

(F-E 1-01/10) This query from Derry Cook-Radmore has to do with the AIDS crisis in an area of Africa. The troublesome phrase is in bold: “À peu d’exceptions près, les effets d’annonce des chefs d’État sont restés prisonniers des slogans convenus.” Does the phrase simply mean pronouncements by, or something else?

(F-E 1-01/11) When talking about “pages sécurisées” on the Internet, Alex Greenland wondered about how “sécurisé” could be rendered into English: secure, securitized?

(F-E 1-01/12) The context for this mini cluster from Christine Reid is drug checks of jockeys: (12.a) “autorisation de monter;” some sort of license to ride? How is it rendered in British English? (12.b) “courses de galop;” race courses for flat racing?

(F-E 1-01/13) Alex Greenland wonders whether “consommation spécifique” (specific consumption) can be rendered more intelligible, as it relates to a parameter that is one of a list to be taken into account in the economic and financial analysis of a dam project for an African river that borders on both English-speaking and French-speaking nations.

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ATA Chronicle • January 2001
A transatlantic correspondent found “hippomobile” in a French tourist guidebook. One possible rendering is *horse drawn* as an adjectival noun, but something better may be possible.

Working in a legal context, Doris Ganser found the unknown term “Aktivrubrum.” Now “Rubrum” has a whole cluster of legal-related meanings, but “Aktivrubrum” remains a puzzle on which dictionaries and other sources are silent.

Does “acervo” in the context of the following sentence mean something like accreditation, certification, or skills, asks Doris Ganser? The context: “A comprovação de vinculação do profissional detentor do acervo técnico devaria atender aos seguintes requisitos.”

José Llurba needs to translate *acervo* into Spanish, and needs an explanation of what it takes to reach these degree levels, so that proper Spanish equivalents can be found.

This is something of a teaser, in the sense of seeking a clever and elegant rendering into English: “Ni los todos los que están, y no están todos los que son.”

Replies to Old Queries


Paul Hopper asserts that where he works in the Department of State, in accord with is rarely encountered with respect to laws or agreements.

In using *outreach* as an adjective, Mario Chavez has found that “de extensión” works well. Hence, outreach strategies become “estrategias de extensión.” Jan Gibboney claims that outreach as a noun is rendered variously as “acercamiento,” “extensión,” “diseminación,” “alcance exterior,” or “divulgación,” according to context, although in this case it could be ignored with no serious damage done.

These are established acronyms, says Mario Chavez, and remain so even in Spanish.

There are the policing agency at the state level.

This means that “find, catch.” Using a different approach, Julia Steinmetz states that on its trips through the pipes, the “Molch” (see October 2000 Chronicle, p. 57) should cause the electronic indicator to go off repeatedly in case of larger cracks. Hence, “dingfest machen,” a series of ding sounds or electronic pings indicating successful detection.

Denzel Dyer believes this is not a chemical term. He suggests it is a typo for “Peptisierung” (peptizing), which, according to a chemical dictionary, is stabilization of hydrophobic colloidal solutions by addition of electrolytes that provide the necessary electric double layer of ionic charges around each particle. The term is also loosely applied to the softening or liquefaction of one substance by trace quantities of another.

(Continued on p. 74)
The following is general information on the accreditation exam. Combined with additional material, it is part of our workshop and informational presentation. It is included in the 2000 conference Proceedings, and can be found on our Website.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Accreditation Examination

Q: What is the most common avoidable mistake?
A: Careless omissions. When you finish a passage, take a minute to check whether you have omitted a title, a heading, an item in a bulleted list, a sentence, or an entire paragraph.

Q: Do I need to bring a calculator to convert measures, distances, money, and the like?
A: You are not expected to make these mathematical conversions. You will not be penalized if you convert correctly, but you will if the conversion is wrong.

Q: In the literary passage, how much do I have to worry about style?
A: You will be expected to preserve the author’s style and tone. For example, if the author uses sentence fragments, you probably should retain these; if the source text is written in the first person, don’t change it to the third person; if the author uses simple language, you should also.

Q: Can I break a long, complicated sentence into two or more shorter ones?
A: Yes, provided nothing is added or omitted to change the meaning. Be cautious about this in a literary or legal passage.

Q: What should I do if I find an error in the source text?
A: If you find a typographical error, please tell us in a note at the end of your translation of that passage. (Don’t just write it on the exam passage itself—it might not be noticed.)

Q: What is the most common avoidable mistake?
A: You will be expected to preserve the author’s style and tone. For example, if the author uses sentence fragments, you probably should retain these; if the source text is written in the first person, don’t change it to the third person; if the author uses simple language, you should also.

Q: The instructions say “Translate everything below the horizontal line.” Does this mean that I must translate terms like Le Monde or Der Spiegel, or Pleasant Street, or café au lait, or Gesundheit?
A: The instructions are a reminder that any headings or subheads, for example, are considered part of the passage. Follow the conventions of your language combination with regard to words or terms that remain in the source language.

Q: When will I find out whether I passed or failed?
A: Allow six to eight weeks. There are periods of the year with a high concentration of exam sittings, and the waiting period may increase to eight to 10 weeks. This would be noted in your exam confirmation letter.

Q: Why does it take so long?
A: The exams are sent to ATA Headquarters and photocopied, then mailed to two graders (working translators in the U.S. and abroad who volunteer their services to this ATA program). If these graders disagree on the outcome, the disputed passages then go to a third grader. After the graded exams are returned to Headquarters, the results are recorded and you are notified by mail.

Q: Does the grader know who I am?
A: No.

Q: When will I get my exam back to see my errors?
A: The exam is a no-comment, no-return exam. You will be notified only whether you pass or fail.

Q: Is there any way to see my exam and the marked errors?
A: If you pass, you will not see your exam. If you fail, the accreditation review process allows you to see your exam and the marked errors.

Q: How do I apply for a review?
A: You have a year from the date that you take your exam to pay a fee of $100 and apply for a review, but the review will not take place until new exam passages are issued at the following annual conference. The policy and request forms are available on the ATA Website and from our offices.
Q: How does the review procedure work?
A: Your record is scrutinized at Headquarters for possible processing errors. Photocopies of the graded passages are then sent to a reviewer, who evaluates the errors to determine whether they conform to the grading criteria. The reviewer also grades the exam again.

In the case of a reversal, the review fee paid is refunded, and you receive a certificate of accreditation, dated as of the original notice of failure. Your name is published in the Chronicle with the names of other recently accredited members. No disclosure is made of the fact that accreditation was awarded based on a review. You will not see your exam.

If the reviewer upholds the grade of “fail,” you will receive copies of two passages with at least the minimum number of errors marked to substantiate the result, along with the source text for those passages. If you completed only two passages, only one “failed” passage will be returned. You may not appeal the outcome of the review procedure.

If you are interested in taking the review mainly to discover your errors and avoid them for a future exam sitting, you may receive more benefit from waiting until the new exam year begins and taking the failed passages as practice test passages. A review does not necessarily identify all errors.

Q: Why can’t ATA schedule the exam in my hometown?
A: ATA only schedules the exams given at the annual conference. Other exams are scheduled by local groups and chapters, by agencies, or by translators who combine their efforts to schedule a sitting. If an affordable site is available and an accredited ATA member is willing to serve as proctor, an exam sitting can be held for as few as three candidates. Contact Headquarters or visit the ATA Website for more information.

Q: How does a person become a grader for the ATA accreditation program?
A: Graders are selected from among ATA members who are accredited in the language combination they will grade. Some are translators who performed especially well on the examination; others are recommended by current graders, or express an interest to the program administrator at ATA Headquarters. As part of the selection process, potential graders are asked to grade a previously marked exam, which is then reviewed to determine that the grading conforms to the established grading guidelines.

Q: Why can’t we use computers for the exam?
A: The primary reason is a combination of practicality and fairness. With exam settings held all over the country, and increasingly around the world, it would be a logistical nightmare for the accreditation program to provide appropriate computers for all exam candidates, or even to provide time, space, and the other requirements for candidates to set up their own systems. Allowing some candidates to use laptops would give them an advantage over candidates who don’t.

Finally, if any candidates used computers, the issue of exam security would require the accreditation program to change passages more frequently. Because passage selection and preparation is both difficult and time-consuming, it’s possible that the quality of the passages would suffer.

However, the Accreditation Committee is looking to the future and investigating ways to overcome these obstacles.

Q: How often are the exam passages changed?
A: So that candidates who fail can take the exam again, new passages are introduced each year at the ATA conference. In addition, passages may be modified or new passages introduced at any time during the exam year. Because passages may be used again, candidates are bound by a confidentiality agreement not to discuss or reveal the contents of the examination. Violation of this agreement may be grounds for loss of accreditation.

Q: I’m a well-respected medical [legal, technical] translator, but I can’t seem to pass the accreditation exam. Why not?
A: The only way to be sure of the reasons you failed is to apply for review. If you don’t want to do that, another option is to take a practice test, which will give you some feedback on the types of errors you may be making. Keep in mind that candidates frequently do well in one passage category, but not in another. The exam is not directed to one particular specialty area.

Q: I have X years of experience as a translator already. Is there any value to practice tests for me?
A: Again, the practice test is a way for you to see what an accreditation passage is like, how it is graded, and what types of pitfalls to avoid when taking the exam.

Q: How does the practice test program work?
A: Practice tests are exam passages from previous years, graded by the same people who grade the exams. Your practice test will be returned with any errors marked and explained, and the grader may give suggestions about how to improve.

Q: Which of the five passages is used for the practice test?
A: You can request a practice test in any of the five passage categories. (It might be a good idea to ask for one...
Chloros, another trade name for an insecticide, is spelled Chlorofos (generic name, Trichlorfon). (7.f) Paraoxone, another insecticide, is actually spelled Paraoxon. (7.g) Dipyroxime: a synonym for 1,1’-trimethylenebis (4-formylpyridinium bromide) dioxime. (7.h) Armine: apparently a trade name for Ethyl 4-nitrophosphonate. (7.j) Syntone: synths exist, which are prostaglandins, but that does not seem to fit. (7.k) Octin: a trade name for isomethoprene, a pharmaceutical. Denzel warns that the fact that he found a name means that it exists, but it is not necessarily the right one.

(Sp-E 8-2000/11) (Panamanian food queries): Genevieve Sierra found that (11.a) (“otoe”) was a tara root, a tuber similar to yucca or cassava, used in soups. And (11.b), “pabito de aceite vegetal,” is a single-serving, plastic pouch of “Pabo” brand palm oil, equivalent to two tablespoons of vegetable oil.

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. (Signed) Walter Bacak, Publisher and Executive Director.

The Translation Inquirer Continued from p. 71
Humor and Translation
By Mark Herman

Incomprehensible Words: A Clockwork Orange
What does a translator do with a text in which at least some of the words are purposely incomprehensible to source-language readers? What if the words are incomprehensible on the reader's first encounter, but gradually become meaningful in context as the reader plows on? What if the words were once incomprehensible, but, now, decades after the first publication, after the book has been a bestseller and been made into a film, glosses are available to define the unknown words for all who care about the matter?

Such a text is Anthony Burgess's A Clockwork Orange, a novel written in English first published in 1963 and turned into a film by Stanley Kubrick in 1971. The setting is sometime in the future, and the central character is a teenage hoodlum. He and his friends use a slang invented by the author, largely based on Russian words. However, some of the words work as English slang without reference to their Russian origin.

Here are words from the first page of the novel, in the order of first appearance. After the words, separated by slashes, are their English meanings, the Russian words they are based on, and the meanings of the Russian words.

- droog (plural droogs)/friend/друг
- lhen (plural lhepmz or lheptq)/friend
- rassoodock/mind/расудоок/reason, intellect
- mesto/place/место/place, site
- skorry/quick, fast/скоро/quick, fast
- veshch (plural veshches)/thing/вещь (plural вещи)/thing
- moloko/milk/молоко/milk
- peet/to drink/пить/to drink
- horrorshow (adjective)/very good/хорошо/well (adverb)
- Bog/God/Бог/God
- mozg/brain/мозг/brain

Three things are obvious from this list. First, most of the made-up words are simply transliterations of Russian words, more or less, with more or less the same meanings. However, Russian is a language completely unknown to most English speakers. Second, once transliterated, the words, when made plural or otherwise transformed, are treated as English words, not Russian words. Third, there is at least one word—and there are more throughout the book—which goes beyond transliteration. It not only looks and sounds like an actual English word, it also could easily have the slang meaning attributed to it without any reference to its Russian source. For example, the transliteration of "хорошо" is "khorosho" or "horosho." It was a brilliant stretch for Anthony Burgess to turn it into "horrorshow," since an American or British teenager could conceivably speak of a "horrorshow" experience, meaning a "very good" one.

Readers who have wrestled with translating anything like what has been described here are invited to submit comments for incorporation into future columns.

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.

Accreditation Forum
You might try but are least confident about.) If you do not specify, a general passage will be sent. Each practice test costs $40, and you can request as many as five.

Q: How will accreditation help me? Will it guarantee me a job?
A: ATA accreditation will not guarantee you work, but it can help. While there are other ways to prove yourself in the marketplace, translation agencies, bureaus, and clients often look for accreditation as an initial criterion when hiring a translator. ATA accreditation is the only widely recognized measure of competence in translation.
ATA Chapters

Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT)
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aaitinfo@aait.org • www.aait.org

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318 Bandock Drive
Durham, NC 27703
Tel: (919) 577-0840 • Fax: (919) 957-0473 (call first)
C.A.T.I.@pobox.com • www.ncgg.org/CATI
• Local group meetings held in Asheville, Charlotte, and Research Triangle Park, NC; and Columbia and Greenville/Spartanburg, SC.
• 2000 membership directory, $12; CATI Quarterly subscription, $12.

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E-mail: translate@kc.rr.com • www.ata-micata.org

National Capital Area Chapter of ATA (NCATA)
P.O. Box 65200
Washington, DC 20035-5200
Tel: (703) 255-9290 • Fax (703)393-0387
E-mail: sbrennan@compuserve.com • www.ncata.org
• The Professional Services Directory of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association (NCATA) has gone online. It lists NCATA members and the services they offer, together with additional information that enables translation and interpretation users to find just the right language specialist for their projects. Bookmark www.ncata.org and check out the NCATA directory. If you maintain language-related Web pages, you may want to include a link to the directory. NCATA is always interested in comments and suggestions.

New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)
P.O. Box 4051, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051
Tel: (212) 334-3060
www.nyctranslators.org

Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA)
1963 E. Sprague Road
Seven Hills, OH 44131
Tel: (440) 526-2365 • Fax: (440) 717-3333
E-mail: mondil@ameritech.net • www.ohi translators.org

Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)
P.O. Box 14015
Berkeley, CA 94712-5015
Tel: (510) 845-8712 • Fax: (510) 883-1355
E-mail: nctancta.org • www.ncta.org
• Telephone/online referral service. See searchable translator database on Website.
• 2000 NCTA Membership Directory available in print version for $25 or on diskette for $10. To purchase, mail remittance to the above address, or fax/telephone MasterCard/Visa number and expiration date.
• A Practical Guide for Translators, 1997 revised edition available for $10. To purchase, mail remittance to the above address, or fax/telephone MasterCard/Visa number and expiration date.

Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS)
P.O. Box 25301
Seattle, WA 98125-2201
Tel: (206) 382-5642
E-mail: info@notisnet.org • www.notisnet.org
• Accreditation Workshop, Saturday, January 27, 2001, 1–4pm.
Contact: jean_leblon@msn.com

Southern California Area Translators and Interpreters Association (SCATIA)
P.O. Box 34310
Los Angeles, CA 90034
Tel: (818) 725-3899 • Fax: (818) 340-9177
E-mail: info@scatia.org • www.scatia.org

Affiliated Groups

Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MiTiN)
P.O. Box 852
Novi, MI 48376
Tel: (248)344-0909 • Fax: (248)344-0992
E-mail: izumi.suzuki@suzukimyers.com • www.mitinweb.org

Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)
P.O. Box 433
Salt Lake City, UT 84110
Tel: (801)359-7811 • Fax: (801)359-9304
E-mail: JCA lleman@aol.com • www.stampscapes.com/utia

Other Groups

This list gives contact information for translation and interpretation groups as a service to ATA members. Inclusion does not imply affiliation with or endorsement by the ATA.

American Literary Translators Association (ALTA)
Box 830688
Richardson, TX 75083-0688
Tel: (214) 883-2093 • Fax: (214) 833-6303

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

The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
345 S. HWY 101, Suite F2
Encinitas, CA 92024
Tel: (760) 635-0273 • Fax: (760) 635-0276
www.ccia.org

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
P.O. Box 804595
Chicago, IL 60680
Tel: (773) 508-0352 • Fax: (773) 508-5479
E-mail: 74737.1661@compuserve.com
Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
P.O. Box 295
Eldorado Springs, CO 80025
Tel: (303) 554-0280 • Fax: (303) 543-9037
E-mail: eldorado@aries.csu. tem ple.edu
• For more information about the online directory, newsletter, accreditation exams, and professional seminars, please visit www.cta-web.org.

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

El Paso Interpreters and Translators Association (EPITA)
1003 Alethea Place
El Paso, TX 79902
Tel: (915) 532-8566 • Fax: (915) 544-8354
E-mail: grdelgado@aol.com

Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA)
P.O. Box 61285
Houston, TX 77208-1285
Tel: (713) 935-2123
www.hitahouston.com

Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL)
4646 40th Street, N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20016
Tel: (202) 966-8477 • Fax: (202) 966-8310
E-mail: info@languagepolicy.org • www.languagepolicy.org

Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)
4319 Durango Lane
McKinney, TX 75070
Tel: (972) 540-6891
www.users.ticnet.com/mita/

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3025
New York, NY 10175
Tel: (212) 692-9581 • Fax: (212) 687-4016
E-mail: headquarters@najit.org • www.najit.org

Nebraska Association of Translators and Interpreters (NATI)
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