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OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 3, 2001

See page 66 for complete registration, travel, and hotel information. Watch for detailed conference information in upcoming issues of the Chronicle and on ATA’s Website www.atanet.org
Translation Quality is the Difference Between “March Madness” and the Craziness of March
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Creating quality is difficult. It is impossible to achieve without an orderly process that is continuously monitored, analyzed, and improved.

Emerging Realities of Community Interpretation in Rural Settings: Focusing on Early Intervention Services
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Latino immigration is spreading throughout the U.S. to new and often rural communities where it has not been seen before. The need for quality community interpretation for new immigrants is growing. This article examines the experience of one such rural community, the impact of immigration on its early intervention services system, and the important role community interpreters have come to play in the process.

The Meticulous Editor as a Translation Quality Resource
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With the increasing importance of subject matter specialization and a growing awareness of quality as a requirement for competing successfully in the translation business, few translators or translation agencies now question the need for editing both before and after translation. This article looks at the benefits that translators and translation agencies might expect an experienced editor to bring to their specialized translation projects. It examines the important, but frequently misunderstood, differences between editing and proofreading, and outlines some of the main quality criteria that technical editors focus on. It also looks at the increasingly important roles of online (or on-screen) editing, as well as terminology extraction tools and strategies for dealing with them.

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The Consequences of Revival or A Work in Progress
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On Translating Paul Verlaine
By Norman R. Shapiro .............................................. 33
We read poems to experience a totality of emotion, one from which the arrangement of sounds and rhythms cannot be casually excluded in favor of the simple “message.” As is often said, the translator’s job is to transmit both—or at least to attempt to do so.
An Easy Reference to ATA Member Benefits

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ATA Chronicle • May 2001
In this article, I compare two *en face* translations going into and out of Spanish, the methods and styles used, and share what I learned from talking to the translators and one of the publishers about the state of bilingual poetry publications these days.

**Spanish Language Division News**
By Rudolf Heller .................................................. 41

The ATA Spanish Language Division is moving along at a good clip, thanks to the work of many dedicated volunteers.

**Language, Media, and National Identity**
By Raúl Ávila, translated by Alicia Marshall, revision by Linda Keller .... 42

In seeking to integrate their ethnic minorities, national states foster the elimination of linguistic differences within their territories. Mass media shares the same interests, as it broadcasts in one language within its territory and beyond, to extend its influence throughout international linguistic communities. The Spanish-speaking community seeks its own cohesion in order to be able to face the challenge that English presents as the *lingua franca* in the international arena.

**What, When, and Why in Key English-Spanish Financial Terminology**
By Alicia Agnese .................................................. 46

A context awareness analysis of key English financial terms, such as *equity*, *management*, *performance*, *principal*, and *capital*, whose translation into Spanish varies according to context. Examples will be used showing what other renditions are possible, when to use them, and why.

**The Translator: Between Reality and Solitude**
By Leandro Wolfson, translated by Queli Pariente Ahmed, Kenny Fitzgerald, and Alicia Marshall ....................... 49

It is generally assumed that the translator should be “invisible.” This precept places him or her in a paradoxical condition as to his own personal language. Between the objective reality of the foreign text and the lone subjectivity of the “invisible” translator, there is the transitional space of creativity.

**Dialectal Dialectics and Diatribes**
By Alexander Rainof ............................................. 51

The Spanish language has 20 major dialects, ranging from the Spanish spoken in Argentina to the one spoken in Venezuela. These dialects often use different words for the same object, or the same word for different concepts or things. This study covers two areas of particular importance to the translator/interpreter in general, and to the forensic translator and interpreter in particular: articles of clothing and adornment and insults—areas where the variations are most numerous.
About Our Authors...

Alicia Agnese is a Spanish translator based in the Washington, DC area. She is ATA-accredited in English to Spanish. A frequent presenter at ATA conferences and other T&I symposia, she co-founded the popular Spanish Forum. She has taught translation courses at Georgetown University, George Mason University, the United States Department of Agriculture Graduate School, and is currently teaching an online commercial translation course for the New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies. She also writes a Spanish translation and grammar column (“Hilando Fino…”) for Apuntes, a quarterly publication of SpanSIG, the Spanish Interest Group of the New York Circle of Translators. She can be reached at alicia@agnese.com.

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ATA Job Bank Online and Board Meeting Highlights

The ATA Job Bank is online. The Job Bank is an easy-to-use, searchable database featuring staff and freelance opportunities and a variety of translation and interpretation-related positions (including project managers and sales reps) located in the U.S. and abroad.

This valuable service is available only to ATA members. Listings are free for ATA corporate and institutional members. Others may post positions for a modest fee.

To access the Job Bank, please go to the ATA Website (www.atanet.org) and click on the Members Only link. Once you login, you will be able to search all jobs or be more selective: by position, language, area of specialization, and/or freelance or staff. Please let me know if you have suggestions to improve it. We have already incorporated feedback from members to enhance the Job Bank.

Be sure to check the listings on a regular basis because jobs can be posted at any time. If you or your company have a job—freelance or staff—please post it on the ATA site. (To post a job, please go to the Members Only section, login, and click on “Post a Job Opening.”)

Again, there is no charge to ATA members to post positions available online.

Board Meeting Highlights

The ATA Board of Directors met March 23 and 25 in Alexandria, Virginia. In addition, the Board had a joint meeting with the Accreditation Committee on March 24 to discuss the proposed changes to the accreditation program. (More on these proposed changes will be published in future editions of the Chronicle and on the ATA Website.)

Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

Corporate dues. The Board approved increasing dues for corporate members to $300 per year beginning in 2002, and added benefits for corporate members to be available concurrent with the dues increase.

2005 Conference. The Board unanimously approved Seattle as the site for the 2005 annual meeting, subject to negotiations of the final contract.

Annual Conference. The Board approved a modest discount to the conference registration fee for presenters of educational sessions at the Annual Conference. The plan is to send presenters a check for $50 following the conference as a gesture of appreciation.

ATA-sponsored pro bono work. The Board approved a motion to set up a committee to draft specifications and guidelines for pro bono work.

Proposal to post minutes online. The Board approved a proposal to post the minutes of ATA Board meetings online for members. These minutes would be approved electronically and labeled “Provisionally Approved” until formally approved at the next Board meeting.

Honorary membership. The Board unanimously awarded honorary memberships to ATA Past President Peter Krawutschke and former Slavic Languages Division Administrator Susana Greiss.

Interpretation Committee name change. The Board unanimously approved changing the name of the Interpretation Committee to the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee.

From the Executive Director

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

Nominating Committee Approved

The Board approved the 2001 Nominating Committee. The Committee members are:

Muriel Jérôme-O’Keefe, chair
Kirk Anderson  Frank Mou
Jean Leblon  Mary O’Neil

For more information, please contact ATA Headquarters at (703)683-6100 or ata@atanet.org.
At some mysterious level it seems highly fitting to me that graduations, weddings, and celebrations of all sorts take place in May. Our Western culture is replete with poems and songs celebrating May (Kalenda Maya, Ben venga maggio, Now is the month of Maying, Im wunderschönen Monat Mai...). May was a warmer month before they changed the calendar in the 18th century, but even here in Seattle it brings promise of longer days and pleasant ease. I always enjoy having a bouquet of flowers on the first of May, though in my neighborhood, alas, people don’t go from door to door with little baskets or dance about a maypole.

In that May tradition, I have the pleasure this month of announcing the election of our two newest honorary members. According to the ATA Bylaws, honorary membership may be conferred upon individuals who have distinguished themselves in the translation or interpretation professions. The total number of living honorary members shall not exceed 15 at any one time. Honorary members pay no dues for membership in the ATA, but enjoy all rights and privileges of the membership class for which they are qualified.

At our meeting last March, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to confer honorary membership upon Peter Krawutschke and Susana Greiss. It was a particular personal pleasure for me to recommend these candidates, since I owe a great deal to both of them. Susana Greiss, the founder and first administrator of the Slavic Languages Division, was willing to take a chance on an unknown volunteer when I stepped forward to serve as her assistant administrator in 1994. And Peter Krawutschke endorsed heartily the set of proposals I offered the Board of Directors in 1996, which created the Divisions Committee and started us on the road to the greatly expanded role for divisions in the association today. In addition, both are remarkable people who have made sterling contributions to our profession. I am delighted to include the citations for their election with this month’s column.

Peter Krawutschke has given long and faithful service to the association and to our professions over the last decade. As president-elect and president he brought healing to the ATA, calming passions and offering inclusive solutions to problems facing us. As the driving force behind the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, he has taken a step that will have long-term benefits for the future of our professions. As the current Secretary-General of the Federation Internationale des Traducteurs, he is continuing to serve the professions of translation and interpretation on a global scale. He has supported individuals, associations, creative initiatives, and long-standing programs committed to the language professions in all their various manifestations. He well deserves to become an honorary member of the ATA for his distinguished service.

Susana Greiss has been an inspiration and a mentor to translators and interpreters for many years. As a founder of the Portuguese Language Division and the founder of the Russian Language Division, now the Slavic Languages Division, she has helped establish a “home within the ATA” for many. She has been untiring in her support of individuals new to the profession, and of the organizations to which she belongs. Her touch is known within the New York Circle of Translators, of which she is a lifetime honorary member, within the divisions to which she has given so much, and in the accreditation program, to which she has contributed time, energy, and expertise. This year of her 80th birthday is a fitting moment in which to award her honorary membership in the association she has served so faithfully.
ATA Activities

Accreditation
- An exam sitting has been added in Austin, Texas.
- Exam sittings were held in Monterey, San Francisco, and Ontario, California; Boston, Massachusetts; Raleigh, North Carolina; Houston, Texas; Seattle, Washington; Washington, DC; and Madison, Wisconsin.

Board
- The next Board meeting is set for June 29 and July 1 in Seattle, Washington.
- The Call for Nominations was announced for president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and three directors’ positions. For information and for a Nomination Form, please go to the Members Only section on the ATA Website and click on “Nominations.”

Conference
- The ATA 42nd Annual Conference, Los Angeles, October 31-November 3, is taking shape. For general information and the conference fees, please see page 66 or go to the ATA Website (www.atanet.org).
- Conference Program advertising, exhibit space, and sponsorship opportunities are now being marketed. For more information, please contact Megan Gallagher or Bob LePage at the McNeill Group, (215) 321-9662 or mgallagher@mcneill-group.com or blepage@mcneill-group.com.

Membership
- ATA membership is running 9.1 percent ahead of last year at this time.

Membership Services
- The Job Bank is online. For more information, please see “From the Executive Director” in this issue and go to the Members Only section of the ATA Website (www.atanet.org/membersonly).

Professional Development
- The ATA Financial Translation Conference, New York City, May 18-20, 2001 is set. As of mid-April, nearly 300 people have registered. For more information or to register, please see the ATA Website (www.atanet.org).
- The new ATA Mentoring Program is up and currently seeking mentors and mentees. For more information, please go to the ATA Website (www.atanet.org) and click on Mentoring Program listed under the heading “Learn More About…”

Public Relations
- ATA Executive Director Walter Bacak worked with reporters/editors from The New York Times, the Association Press, Vero Beach (Florida) Press Journal, American Society of Association Executive’s Association Management, an upcoming publication of the International Association for Exhibition Management, and in the TranslationZone.
- ATA was featured in The Miami Herald, Far Eastern Economic Review, and the TranslationZone.
- 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 Localization Industry Standards Association.

Order Today!

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.
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.

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 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.rssss06.gouv.qc.ca/english/colloque/index2.html.

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 (Nouveau-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.

First Call for Papers Institute of Translation & Interpreting/IALB Conference on Language and Business
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E-mail: zuzana007@hotmail.com

Binghamton Offers “Gift” Conference to Translators June 13-14

In recognition of the gift of translation, and in recognition of the support ATA translators have given Binghamton University over the past three decades, the university will host a registration-free conference in its Public Programs Conference Center, June 13-14. The conference will begin with a recital of readings at 8:15 p.m., featuring ATA and American Literary Translators Association members and an “open mike” for translators in the audience. The following day will be devoted to presentations and panels, themed as “The Voice of Experience.” There will be no charge for those enrolled in Summer Session I, May 28-June 28; only a lunch subvention of $15 for other translators attending. For information on the conference or Summer Session I, contact the Translation Research and Instruction Program, Binghamton University, P.O. Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000 (607-777-6763; trip@binghamton.edu).
Recently, while dining at a restaurant, there was an unexpected suspension of elegance and decorum. A television set was suddenly turned on and diners and waiters paused to stare at the screen.

Mesmerized by the excited broadcaster, everyone watched while Duke and Maryland vied for a place in the NCAA National Championship. With less than 10 seconds to go and Duke leading by three points, Maryland University’s Steve Blake sank a three-pointer to tie the score. Grabbing the inbound pass, Jason Williams drove the length of the court and missed the lay-up, but Duhan followed with a tip-in to sink Maryland’s hopes.

For about five minutes, excitement captured the entire restaurant and the magic of the moment made friends of strangers, and basketball fans of everyone. When Maryland lost by one point, March Madness was put on hold and normalcy returned. Plates were served, people paid their bills, and other diners left.

Before the excitement, I had been thinking about writing the introduction for this article on quality. Specifically, I wanted an example that would allow me to capture the importance of quality in translation. The infectiousness of March Madness gave me what I was looking for.

In translation, quality is the ability to bring the excitement of March Madness to people who have never been to the U.S., do not speak English, do not play basketball, and have very little interest in sports. Quality in translation is the ability to retain the message across languages, cultures, and borders.

The Process of Quality

Translation is judged not by the greater part of a text that is correct, but by those parts that are incorrect, regardless of the relative ratio. In that sense, quality is like a black ink spot on a white outfit. Regardless of how pristine the outfit may be otherwise, nobody can get beyond the unsightly black spot. So it is with translation.

After living with that reality for almost 25 years, M Limited has defined a quality control process that makes quality a result of the cooperative effort of independent translators, reviewers, clients, client reviewers, original authors, technical support staff, and project managers. The process consists of the following:

- A company-wide project management system.
- A method for recruiting, testing, and selecting qualified translators.
- A procedure for analyzing a translation and solving the problems BEFORE sending it out to the translators.
- Computerized tools developed in-house to help monitor the quality of certain elements of the translation, such as consistency and terminology usage.
- Commercial applications that provide a framework for creating translation memories and leveraging previous translations.
- A series of forms to capture and report translation questions and answers for the convenience of all participants.
- A way of documenting the results of the translation reviews.
- The requirement that all final products be approved by a language person prior to shipping.

...quality is the ability to bring the excitement of March Madness to people who have never been to the U.S., do not speak English, do not play basketball, and have very little interest in sports...

Quality from the Beginning

The starting point of that process is the independent translator. As Dr. W. Edwards Deming states in his 14 Points for Management: “Stop dependence on inspection to achieve quality. Eliminate the need for inspection...by building quality into the product in the first place.”

At M Limited, selecting the person who will build the initial quality into a translation, the independent translator, is a three-step procedure:

- Establishing qualification requirements, which take into consideration education, experience, and technical capability.
- Testing according to those requirements and recording the results in a database. The test consists of the translation of a passage, handled as a normal job. The evaluation is made

Continued on p. 12
on accuracy and completeness of the translation, responsiveness, timeliness, and technical ability in the transfer of files.

- Forming a working partnership with those who meet the requirements. This includes addressing the concerns of the independent translators, communicating with them through a newsletter, and selecting an outstanding translator every year.

The Pre-translation Check
After experimenting with various approaches, M² Limited has found one element that is a good predictor of the ultimate quality of a translation. That is the preliminary analysis of the source text. Called the “pre-translation check,” it is conducted by the in-house staff. Their objective is to identify the purpose of the translated text, define client- or industry-specific terms, expand acronyms, identify questions for the client, and determine the needs of the end-user.

Since the pre-translation checks are conducted by language people who may not be native English speakers, these individuals have access to an in-house e-mail group where they can refer questions or doubts. The e-mail group consists of a cross section of management, experienced employees, technical staff, and English “experts.”

The results of the pre-translation analysis are captured on a form that is shared with the client, the in-house project manager, the independent translators, and the reviewers. The preliminary analysis also yields the terms that will be included in the project glossary.

Doing a Quality Translation
What constitutes quality in translation is a favorite topic of discussion any time there is a gathering of translators. However, I believe that Shuckran Kamal, ATA’s former chair of the Accreditation Committee, gave a succinct and fitting definition of quality as part of the American Society for Testing and Materials standard-setting process. She proposed the following definition of a quality translation:

A high quality translation is a document that effectively, completely, and idiomatically communicates in one language the message conveyed by a related document written in another language.

Achieving that objective requires the individual translator to do the following:

- Understand the source text.
- Write a draft of the translation.
- Compare that draft to the source text in order to identify missing sections, misunderstandings, or major errors.
- Review the draft to make the necessary corrections.
- Edit the corrected draft to make sure that it complies with the rules of the target language.
- Electronically check the spelling of the translation.
- Read the final translation.

Review: The Final Step
If qualified translators have been selected and a good preliminary analysis has been done, the review process should be relatively painless. The M² Limited in-house review begins with some computerized checks to identify major problems with a translation: running a spell check, preparing a consistency report, and analyzing terminology usage. The information from these “electronic” checks is summarized for the reviewer, who also receives a copy of the pre-translation check.

After the translation has been reviewed and corrected, it is sent to the client for review. It is at this stage that a translation ceases to be a question of accuracy and completeness and becomes a matter of customer service. During the client’s review phase, it may become necessary for the language staff or the independent translator to act as a consultant to the client’s reviewer. To ensure a cooperative working environment, the M² Limited language staff is encouraged to communicate directly with the client reviewers throughout the translation process.

At M² Limited, the constantly stated objective of a translation is end-user effectiveness. The ultimate goal of a competent review is to produce a translation that is as effective as the original text.

Pre-shipping Approval
Even when all precautions have been taken, a translation can be “injured” on its path to final form. At times, fonts
can be mysteriously substituted and diacritical marks can disappear. Call-outs may be eliminated from a graphic or a user interface graphic may cut off the translated text. To make sure that the final product will be error-free, all translated material is reviewed prior to sending it to the client. At first, the pre-shipping approval consisted of reviewing the text or final document. When it became clear that gremlins could do their mischief between final approval and file preparation, the approval process was changed to include technical considerations.

The shipping approval is recorded on a form that includes date, signature, and the statement “This is approved for shipping.” By including the name of the checker, the responsibility for quality becomes a highly personal issue.

Integrating these various quality steps into a translation requires a long-term vision and a commitment. They are not easy to design and implement and the initial impact on the bottom line may be sobering, particularly since the implementation of quality requires training at all levels. However, in time, the results will justify the time, cost, and effort required—in a greater number of clients, a good reputation, and recognition of value added.

Training = Quality

Few of us know all that we wish or need to know. Translation agencies or localization companies can ensure the quality of their translation by training their staffs and independent translators. At M2 Limited, we have forged long-standing relationships with many translators who have worked with us during good times and bad times. By extending our training to the independent translators, we are committing to work with them for the long-term. They respond by providing us with quality service.

Quality translations come from translators who continually improve their skills through reading and training. Quality happens when people are given the tools to do their best and the motivation to BE the best.

In Conclusion…

Creating quality is difficult. It is impossible to achieve without an orderly process that is continuously monitored, analyzed, and improved.

In translation, quality gives others the ability to share the wild excitement of a group of people doing their best to achieve a unified goal. It is holding one’s breath while watching a basketball player making the basket; it is the excitement generated by a group rooting for the home team; it is the joy of shared achievement.
At the time this article is being written, the media is filled with stories about the 2000 Census revealing that the number of Latinos living in the U.S. is now equal to, if not more than, African Americans, making them the largest minority group in this country. Census figures also show that Latino communities are no longer isolated to the East and West coasts and the Southwest. Indeed, immigrant communities are being established throughout the U.S.—in the Midwest, in large urban areas like Chicago, and in countless small towns and rural counties.

I work as a community interpreter and translator in a rural county in eastern California which has undergone just such a transformation. This county has experienced explosive growth in the number of Latino immigrants in all of its communities over the last 15 years. What was a relatively small group of young men, working on a seasonal basis during the heavy tourism months and then leaving for home or other jobs, has transformed into a full-fledged year-round community of men, women, and children. Latinos now make up 15 to 20 percent of the county population, with some schools looking at a 50 percent Latino enrollment in the early elementary grades within the next few years. This kind of change requires tremendous adjustment from all community members. Local schools, courts, businesses, and medical and social service providers struggle to keep pace with the changing needs of their clients and to stay compliant with state and federal regulations requiring standards of service to minority populations.

This article will examine how the emergence of a new immigrant community has impacted one sector of the social service system—early intervention services—and the pivotal role community interpreters have come to play in service delivery. It will look at the challenges families face obtaining services, the changes agencies must make to provide services, and the skills a competent community interpreter must develop to interface between the two. In response to federal mandates, every state in America has had to develop its own early intervention system. Whereas this article focuses on one county in California and its specific early intervention system, the observations drawn from its experiences are relevant to rural areas in general and to the community interpretation branch of the translation and interpretation profession across the country.

Early intervention services refer to the wide range of programs serving children ages 0-3 with disabilities and their families. In California, these services are grouped under the Early Start Program. “The Early Start Program is California’s response to federal legislation ensuring that early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families are provided in a coordinated, family-centered manner. The Early Start Program is a multi-agency effort by the Department of Developmental Services and the California Department of Education that encourages partnerships between families and professionals, family support, and coordination of services.”

The range of services a single family can interact with is daunting. Services may include:

- Assistive technology
- Audiology or hearing services
- Counseling, home visits, and training for the family
- Health services necessary for the child to benefit from other early intervention services
- Medical services for diagnosis and evaluation only
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Respite care
- Service coordination
- Social work services
- Special instruction
- Speech and language services
- Transportation and related costs necessary for eligible infants and toddlers to receive services
- Vision services

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Emerging Realities of Community Interpretation in Rural Settings: Focusing on Early Intervention Services

By Katharine Allen © 2001

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In addition to mandating which services disabled children are eligible for, the federal law outlines detailed rights of families under the Early Start Program. Families have the right to fully participate in the process, to confidentiality, to evaluation and assessment, to a detailed service plan, to assistance and support, to disagree with and formally challenge the decisions of Early Start teams, and, most importantly for newly arrived immigrants, the right to information and services in their native language.

Under the California Early Intervention Services Act of 1993: "Parents have the right to understandable information about the early intervention system and the services provided to their child. Parents have the right to have information about their child’s evaluation and assessment results and to examine or obtain a copy of all records concerning early intervention services available to them or their child. Information must be provided in their primary language or primary mode of communication whenever possible." [Emphasis added]

Under these circumstances, community interpreters play an absolutely pivotal role for Latino families with children with disabilities. They are the family’s critical link to information, to service providers, and to understanding everything from their child’s diagnosis to taking the bus, from physical therapy to making a complaint if they feel the services they are receiving are not adequate. The role the community interpreter plays is complex, multi-layered, and requires a broad range of skills to be successful.

When a child is referred to early intervention services, the Early Start Program has 45 days to accomplish the following steps. First, intervention services must make the initial contact with the family and inform them that they have been referred to early intervention services. A meeting is then set up to explain the program further. At the initial meeting, the local Office of Education nurse interviews the family, filling out a long questionnaire that serves as an intake form for all the agencies involved in providing Early Start Services. Usually a resource parent—someone who has received early intervention services for his or her own child and who now acts as a support person for new families—attends this meeting. At the second meeting, a team of evaluators evaluates the child to determine eligibility. At the third meeting, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is created. The family is given the results of the evaluation and offered services based on those results. The IFSP details an exact service plan with measurable goals and outcomes for a specific timeframe. The IFSP will be revisited every six months and revised every year. This IFSP, once signed, is a binding legal agreement between the family and the service providers listed. Once this is done, service provision begins.

For any family, this process is difficult. Their infant or toddler has been diagnosed with a disability. They have been contacted and interviewed by as many as six or seven service professionals representing a variety of county agencies which they may have never heard of before. Their child has been put through a battery of evaluations and assessments. They have been given concrete evidence of the exact nature of his or her developmental delay or problem, which can be devastating. They have been given a multitude of brochures and handouts explaining a complicated federal law and their rights under it. They may have to travel out of the area repeatedly to receive specialized medical care unavailable in a rural setting. Caring for a child with a disability is a life-altering reality that affects the entire family emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

In our county, the newly arrived Latino immigrant family faces linguistic and cultural barriers that only make the process more confusing and painful. They usually come from poor rural ranch areas in Mexico and Central America, countries with very limited social service infrastructures. They often have limited formal education, are undocumented, may not read or write well in their native language, and are living in poverty. The plethora of services provided in California and the complicated collaboration between agencies can be baffling, even for English-speaking families. Immigrant families are fearful of possible connections to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, of the possibility of deportation, and of how accepting services might affect their chances of establishing legal residency.

These families are unfamiliar with the dance most social service agencies require of their clients: the many forms and papers that need filling out, the need to make and keep multiple appointments, the need to maintain

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files of their records and to bring that information to meetings, and so on. They are ignorant of their rights to receive certain services, to appeal decisions that go against them, and to demand interpretation and translation services in their native language. They often feel that they have no right to ask for more because they are already receiving more than they were expecting. They hold service providers up as experts and authority figures, which can prevent them from recognizing when a service provider is not competent. They experience racism, classism, and are sometimes dismissed as stupid or incompetent because they do not speak English. Some also cope with cultural attitudes within the Latino community that stigmatize people with disabilities, making them reluctant to seek services or acknowledge the depth of the problems their children have.

Furthermore, in my county, because the Latino immigrant community is so new, few immigrants can count on help from family or friends who are bilingual, from community-based Latino organizations, from print and broadcast media in Spanish, or from sufficient competent bilingual agency employees. The nearest immigration assistance agency or lawyer is five to seven hours away, depending on how much snow covers the mountain passes.

Agencies trying to meet the needs of a new, unfamiliar population are also struggling to adapt and change, and understandably so. Right now they are playing catch-up with the actual needs families have. For the agencies involved in the Early Start Program in my county, recognizing the need for, and then hiring and training, competent bilingual staff is a crucial first step. Many programs are still in the “recognizing” stage. Others hire bilingual employees, but have not implemented formal hiring criteria to test bilingual candidates for their actual language abilities. The level of skill required to provide quality translation of documents is rarely understood. Indeed, some agencies are seriously out of compliance with state and federal statutes requiring the translation of documents into a client’s native language. None of the agencies have adopted protocols formally defining the interpreter’s role or outlining the ethical standards to be followed. Only a handful of agencies are attempting to train staff in cultural competency issues or create program rules that effectively address cultural differences of Latino clients. Even if agencies were to suddenly make all these changes, there are not enough qualified language and cultural professionals in this area to implement them.

For the past five years I have worked as an independent community interpreter with families in early intervention. As the number of Latino families has grown in the county, so has the number of referrals for Latino infants and toddlers needing intervention services. I have experienced firsthand the growing pains of agencies and providers as they have struggled to meet the needs of families who do not speak English and who have very different cultural experiences and expectations than most Anglo families receiving services. I have also witnessed first hand, sometimes in heart-wrenching detail, all that a family goes through when their child has a disability.

The families I work with have a wide array of needs. Some have children with mild and even correctable developmental delays while others cope with severe medical and developmental disorders. Some of the children may not live. One of the families I work with has a severely disabled infant who has received 16 of the 18 mandated services under early intervention, in addition to help from hospitals, clinics, and state medical programs that are not part of the early intervention system. Providing interpretation services for this family is so complicated that the Early Start Program has designated me as the sole interpreter, and is paying me to provide services for agencies that already have bilingual employees in order to try and minimize the number of people managing information for this family. I have been authorized for 20 hours a week just to meet this one family’s needs.

As is evident, working as a community interpreter for early intervention programs requires constant learning and stretching. I have had to acquire some level of competency in diverse skill areas, many unrelated to language, in order to provide quality interpretation and advocacy for my clients.

Beyond interpretation, the most important role I play is that of educator. The learning curve for newly arrived immigrant families receiving Early Start services is very steep. Almost every interaction I have requires teaching and training on how the system works, who they are receiving services from, how to access medical care, insurance, transportation, and so on. I have had to acquire a detailed working knowledge of both the...
federal law that mandates early intervention services and the specific make-up of local agencies that provide those services. I have to understand each agency’s service mandate, how the agencies are collaborating, and how the family can interact with them. I also work to empower families so that once they are comfortable with their understanding of the system, they can start to do some of what I initially have done, which can include making phone calls, working out schedules with pharmacies for prescriptions, and filling out forms.

It is critical that families be provided with the same information over and over again until it begins to make sense. A one-time interpretation accompanied by a handful of brochures is not enough. Cultural differences, unfamiliarity with the social service system, as well as the emotional strain of caring for a child with disabilities, are very real barriers that inhibit full comprehension of the early intervention system. The federal law mandating early intervention services is explicitly designed so that families are the engines driving the service plan for their children. If families are not equipped with “understandable information” of the laws that govern early intervention and the services they are entitled to, they cannot fully protect and advocate for their children. In rural areas especially, when the families may have only one or two bilingual people working with them, the community interpreter is the primary purveyor of “understandable information” and must have the full range of skills and knowledge necessary for the task.

For agencies, my role is to educate about culture and translation and interpretation issues. I act as a cultural broker to service providers, helping to explain attitudes and behavior that are culturally based. I act as an advocate for the family, relaying their wishes and needs to agency personnel. I also advocate for better language services and policies and for the professional translation of key evaluations and reports.

I also must constantly educate myself. I need a working knowledge of medical, educational, and legal Spanish as it relates to my families’ needs. I have become thoroughly acquainted with the language needed for the evaluation of gross and fine motor development, speech and language development, and hearing and vision issues. I interpret at medical clinics and act as the go-between for medical equipment companies. I have had to advocate for parents in the courts and sound credible when discussing my clients’ needs with cardiologists. I need to update my linguistic skills on an ongoing basis to keep up with the varied needs of my clients.

Furthermore, many of the duties I perform amount to case management. Normally, the official case coordinator would handle many of these tasks, but they fall to me instead because of language barriers. As any case manager must, I need to have good boundaries, know the limits of my role, maintain good ethics and confidentiality, and avoid conflict of interest issues to the best of my ability. This is especially difficult in rural areas where everyone wears multiple hats.

In fact, in recognition of the case coordination aspect of the work I do with early intervention families, the interagency collaborative team overseeing the Early Start Program in my county recently designated me family case coordinator for three of the more complicated cases I carry. This title has helped me enormously, giving me clout and credibility when I must interact with the multitude of different agencies that serve my families. I view this change as progress in the evolution of agency understanding of the complex role I play as interpreter and of the effectiveness of service provision to Latino families.

In my role as primary interpreter for multiple agencies, I am also challenged by many thorny ethical issues, which I imagine many community interpreters face, especially in rural areas with limited resources. The most critical issue that I’d like to explore here is how to respond to the awareness that Latino families are not receiving equivalent services of the same caliber as English-speaking families. In rural areas with emerging immigrant communities, the service infrastructure for non-English-speaking immigrants has to be created from scratch. One consequence is that even though federal law may mandate fully accessible and comparable services to non-English-speaking families, some simply don’t exist.

For example, a crucial aspect of the federal mandate is the creation of family resource centers and the training of resource parents to provide emotional support, information and referral services, and to act as experienced guides for families to help them suc-

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cessfully navigate through early intervention services. Resource parents must have a child with a disability and have already gone through early intervention services. Their support can include advocating for parents at meetings and with doctors and hospitals, helping them find detailed information about their child’s diagnosis, keeping them fully informed of their legal rights as parents in the early intervention system, or simply being with families who are going through what they themselves have experienced. Resource parents play a very important role in providing parents with information about their child’s situation that comes from outside of the service provision system. They also help empower parents to learn what is needed to effectively advocate for their children’s need within that system.

In my county, while we have a family resource center staffed by dedicated resource parents, no one is bilingual. Despite various efforts to create some kind of connection, in reality, the Latino population does not have access to their services. In several cases I have been the family’s only source of information about everything to do with the Early Start Program. This has put me in the untenable position, at times, of having critical information, which I felt the families needed, but which the agencies were not ready to divulge.

For example, because I work with all of the agencies involved in early intervention, I also know when agencies are out of compliance with state and federal mandates to provide equivalent services to Latino families. I know the steps families could take to make formal complaints or to initiate a hearing or investigation. Because families do not have access to resource parents, if I do not share the information with the family, they have no other way to access it. The questions then become: How far does my role as family advocate extend? How much can I act as my own agent? How beholden am I to agency policies because they contract with me to provide services? I have become so uncomfortable with this position that I have chosen to advocate for more access to information for my Latino families through sources other than myself.

This article has touched upon just some of the challenges and issues inherent to community interpreting for emergent immigrant populations in rural areas. Like most community interpreters, I came to my profession sideways. I am fully self-taught, self-trained, and self-educated about the whole wide array of cultural and linguistic issues that confront me. I am fascinated to witness the establishment of a new immigrant community, to catch a glimpse into the universal experience of wave after wave of immigrants that has so profoundly shaped this country and which surely shaped my ancestors’ lives when they first arrived. I am also privileged to work with a group of dedicated, intelligent, and creative professionals who are determined that this new community receive the same quality and breadth of services that nonimmigrant members receive.

I am grateful for the increasing discussion and visibility of issues facing community interpreters in the translation and interpretation field. I benefit from the work of others who are struggling to set professional standards, create training programs, and to define the scope of issues. I look forward to the day when I have a concrete set of professional standards to help guide me in the ever-changing nature of my work, and which I can use to help social service agencies better understand the nature of translation and interpretation issues. It is my sincere wish that this article will take us one step closer in this process.

Notes:
2. Ibid.
The increasing importance of subject-matter specialization, a steadily expanding base of highly specialized terminology, and a growing focus on translation quality are creating new challenges and opportunities both for translators and for the editors who work with them. For technical editors in all areas of specialization, well-developed editing skills and high levels of experience in the subject matter and its terminology are key requirements.

This article emphasizes three things:

1. The importance of quality in translation, and the role of meticulous editing in achieving this. By meticulous editing, I mean very thorough attention to detail combined with a focus on those defects that, if not corrected, would create serious difficulty for the reader or translator.

2. The value of editing both before and after translation.

3. The growing importance of online (or on-screen) editing, and strategies for dealing with it.

To understand the benefits, first understand the problems

Technical documentation all too often includes information that, although technically accurate, is hard to read and understand, even by those with a good knowledge of the subject matter. Excessive wordiness, lack of clarity and precision, the use of vague or ambiguous words, undefined technical terms, and the overuse of passive voice (which obscures who or what is performing the action) are among the main reasons why editing is essential. Omit the editing process and the task of the reader, or translator, will be harder, more time-consuming, and more prone to error.

The need for editing is not so much a reflection on the skill of the writer but on many factors, including the nature and priorities of the writing job. Frequently very involved in low-level details, writers may be unable to perceive their work—and its deficiencies—in the way their intended readers do. That is one reason why writers should proofread their work but not attempt to edit it, at least not in a substantive way. This article reviews the ways in which the meticulous editor can protect the reader or the translator from some of the most time-consuming, frustrating, and costly consequences of unclear and confusing writing.

Some essential activities of the meticulous editor

Editing has long been recognized as an essential step in publishing, especially when dealing with complex, highly technical subjects.

To provide real value, editing should go far beyond grammar, punctuation, and the multitude of errors that spell checkers let past. In the search for quality, nothing should ever be taken for granted. The editor should review the information critically from several different angles, focusing on the meaning behind the words. Ideally, this review should involve several passes through the information, time and cost permitting. That is why the frequently heard request, “Correct the English but be careful not to change the meaning” cannot possibly be respected if the meaning is totally unclear in the first place.

The editor should also ensure that the specialized terminology is both consistent and correct. Without carefully controlled terminology, not only will accuracy be difficult to achieve, but there will be no perception of accuracy by the user and confidence will quickly be eroded. The reader (or translator) is justified in assuming that if two different terms are used, then a different meaning is intended. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and the result can be wasted time or, even worse, inaccuracy in the message being conveyed or an error in the translated text.

Some editors refer to all these activities as substantive editing to...
The Meticulous Editor as a Translation Quality Resource

Continued

distinguish them from production editing, which focuses principally on format, typography, and appearance, or literary editing, which focuses principally on the correctness of language. My own experience as an editor has convinced me that editing of highly specialized, technical information should always be substantive if it is to provide real value.

Proofreading, on the other hand, should focus on defects such as obvious inconsistencies, typos, punctuation and, if necessary, formatting. This activity does not require an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, but it does require a sharp eye for detail and, preferably, familiarity with the terminology. Editors can, of course, proofread their own work.

The editor should be helpful, not destructive

Even editors with many years of specialization cannot always be experts in every aspect of their subject matter, but they should know when and how to ask the right questions. And, based on the answers, obtained either from the writer or the writer’s sources, they should be able to clarify any problems that are likely to cause difficulties for the reader or translator. That is why the editor who is working on information before it is translated should always remain in communication with the writer and, if necessary, with the writer’s information sources. During this activity, it is crucial for the writer to perceive the editor as a partner and helpful resource, not as someone who is trying to destroy his or her work.

For the same reasons, an editor doing substantive editing of translated information should edit it against the source-language document, an activity that obviously requires the necessary language and translation skills and experience. This should be offered as an insurance against possible human error and as a helpful resource for the translator. For example, information might be accidentally omitted from the translated text, or the translator might value a second opinion on an unclear passage or topic in the source document. Remember that the editor should be highly skilled in the subject matter.

For translated information, the objectives for substantive editing should also include making sure that the text reads as though it was written in the target language. And, just as the need for editing implies no shortcomings in a writer’s skill, it should not imply any lack of professionalism on the part of a translator. The simple fact is that an editor always has the advantage of approaching a text with fresh eyes, just as the ultimate reader does. As already recommended, the editor should check the original (source language) text as an insurance against human error.

Now, what about things that you should not do if you are an editor? Here are three of my recommendations:

1. Do not change the way something is written just because you would not have written it that way. In other words, always be sure that you can provide a good reason why your rewrite or correction was needed, and implement only necessary improvements, not personal preferences. There is probably no surer way to annoy the writer (or translator) and destroy his or her confidence in the benefits of your editing than by making changes that are not necessary.

2. Do not try to impose a change if the writer (or translator) disagrees with it. Explain your reasons for making the change and listen to the reasons why the writer disagrees. If you undertook your editing carefully and checked your facts, the writer will usually agree and will value your help.

3. If a passage is unclear or ambiguous, never try to clarify it by guessing. Always verify the facts before attempting a rewrite. Otherwise, you risk replacing a passage that is unclear by one that is incorrect, and it will be your error.

A closer look at what editors mean by quality

Here are some of the most important quality criteria that apply to technical editing in general:

- Accuracy (no technical errors)
- Clarity of expression (short, simple sentences, no undefined terms or abbreviations)
- No ambiguity
- Correct and consistent terminology
- Consistent writing style
- Conciseness (no unnecessary words)
- Suitability for audience and purpose
• If necessary, compliance with organization-specific requirements or appropriate international standards (for style, terminology, and so on)
• Good organization (logical and easy to understand)
• Visual effectiveness

Of these, probably the first five are especially relevant to the needs of editing before and after translation.

By never taking anything for granted, the meticulous editor can often find and correct many technical errors. Examples include technical inconsistencies between different passages in the same document, incorrect conversions between different units of measure, and so on.

As a typical example of ambiguity, consider this sentence from a manual on network computing:

“Flow queues may be scheduled with guaranteed bandwidth.”

Who or what is scheduling the flow queues? Are they being scheduled by the program or as the result of a user action? Is the word “may” being used to denote probability or permission?

Now consider another example, also from a manual on network computing:

“Hubs which provide active ports can increase the total cable length of the network.”

Is the clause “which provide active ports” restrictive or non-restrictive? In other words, do all hubs provide active ports and increase the total cable length, or do only specific hubs that have active ports increase the total cable length? In technical communication it is essential to know which interpretation is correct, and it is unreasonable to assume that even an informed reader or specialized translator will know. The meticulous editor’s job is to get answers to such questions and reword the text so that there is no possibility of misinterpretation.

If the information is going to be translated, then the objective should be to make the translator’s task easier and faster, with less risk of error. Any improvements that contribute to this will reduce the cost of translation and improve the quality of the finished job. Above all, the pre-translation editor should avoid the need for the translator to ask for clarification, an undesirable situation when the translator is faced with a tight deadline.

The essential tasks needed to accomplish this are much the same as those that editors have always used to improve reader satisfaction with technical documentation:

• Ensure maximum clarity
• Remove all ambiguity, if necessary by getting answers to the questions the writer failed to ask

• If required, compile a glossary of specialized terms, each with its context or definition. Terminology extraction tools play an increasingly important role here

Online editing—disadvantages, advantages, and strategies

A lot has been said and written about the disadvantages of online (or on-screen) editing, mainly by editors themselves, and early resistance was based on a number of concerns. For example, many editors found it harder to achieve the same accuracy with online editing as they did when editing on the printed page. Early studies did, in fact, confirm that editors missed more errors when working online than when working with printed copy. This was in part due to the higher resolution available with printing. There was also a concern by some editors that reading speeds would be slower with online editing. In addition, some editors felt that online editing would result in editors substituting themselves for the writer, and that without a method of recording the editing changes like a hard copy (printed) markup does, there would be no trace of the editing corrections and little accountability.

Although accuracy remains a concern, it has to a great extent been improved by high-resolution displays. Also, most editors who are experienced in this editing mode set the font to a larger size for editing and reset it before transmitting the edited file. To meet the need for recording the editing changes, most word processors provide a markup mode (for example, “Markup Edits” mode in Lotus® Word Pro® or “Track Changes” mode in Microsoft Word).

With the growing prevalence of e-business and electronic file exchange, however, the advantages of online

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... editing have become compelling. Probably the most important advantage, which is especially relevant to situations where time is short and quality is critical, is that when the editor’s work is completed, the corrections have already been typed into the file. Theoretically, no further typing or proofreading are required, saving time and, above all, avoiding the risk of additional errors.

Another important advantage of working online is that the softcopy (electronic files) is available. That means the editor can use terminology extraction tools to create a list of specialized terms (if this is not already available) and then edit the list into terms that need to be translated and those that do not (for example, product names or command names).

However, these advantages all depend on the accuracy and skill of the editor and on the strategies that he or she uses to undertake the online editing task. Most editors who spend a lot of time editing online have developed their own preferred strategies for dealing with the problems that are unique to this mode of working. No matter what those strategies are, if the quality of your edited information is critical, I strongly recommend that you always carefully proofread a printed copy of the edited file with all changes accepted. Quality is critical if the edited document is likely to be published or sent to the client with little or no further checking.

Although a detailed discussion of online editing techniques is beyond the scope of this article, I can offer these key elements of a procedure that works well for many meticulous editors when working with highly technical subject matter.

First, make all the minor corrections that do not need to appear in a Track Changes (or equivalent) file, such as spelling, hyphenation, and punctuation. Then, edit the file in Track Changes mode, save it, accept all edits, and save it again under a different file name. You should now have two files—a Track Changes file and a file with all corrections accepted. Carefully proofread the file with all changes accepted (preferably using a printed copy), correct both files, and send them both to the writer or translator. Make it clear that the purpose of the Track Changes file is to enable the writer to review the editing changes, if desired, and that he or she should discuss any disagreement with you. The objective is to avoid the writer having to review the Track Changes file one correction at a time and decide whether to accept or reject each correction. This is not only very time-consuming, because Track Changes files are difficult to read, but it also invites the writer to reject, without consultation, some of the editing changes that you might have made for very good reasons.

File exchange is obviously a prerequisite to online editing, and although a detailed review of file exchange considerations is not appropriate here, it is worth briefly mentioning some of the potential problems. File exchange rarely poses a problem when it takes place within the same organization, because everyone will usually be using the same text editor and operating system, and any file size restrictions imposed by the organization’s intranet will probably not pose a problem.

When files are exchanged over the Internet with remote clients, however, potential incompatibilities (for example, between Macintosh and Windows platforms) as well as file size restrictions imposed by Internet service providers (ISPs) can become very important concerns. File format conversion necessitated by incompatible software is obviously a major concern for the meticulous editor, because it has the potential to wreak havoc with a carefully proofread file. The editor should check what problems are likely to occur and decide ahead of time how to deal with them, and not be taken by surprise.

File size limitations may necessitate compression using tools such as WinZip, splitting the job into separate files for transmission, or even mailing diskettes. An alternative way to get around file size limitations is to ask the ISP to set up a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) directory and transfer files using FTP, which is not subject to the same file size limitations as e-mail.

In conclusion, it is probably fair to say that the benefits of online editing far outweigh the problems, including the need to work around any incompatibilities and file size limitations.

The growing importance of terminology extraction tools

Rigorous terminology management is an increasingly crucial requirement in all specialized information, and editors are key players in this activity. But, although terminology extraction tools that can extract specialized terms, along with the context of each term, and interface with terminology manage-
ment software are playing an increasingly important role, terminology management is not an activity that is ready to dispense with human intervention. If the information is going to be translated, it is necessary to decide whether each specialized term extracted by the tool has to be translated or not. Product names, names of components, program names, and program commands might not be translated, but, unless they are in the term extractor’s dictionary, they will still be included in the extracted terms list.

Before files are run through the terminology extractor, they should be run through a spell checker and then edited to correct all potential problems. These include inconsistent hyphenation or capitalization of the same term, and other minor variations that can cause multiple occurrences of the same term in the extracted terms file. After files are run through the terminology extractor, the extracted terms list should be edited to remove all terms that do not need to be included in the specialized glossary or, depending on the situation, translated.

What about editing and machine translation?

This article does not attempt to express any opinion about the controversial topic of machine translation, although it is probably safe to say that the increasing use of machine translation for certain purposes is making controlled terminology and simple grammatical constructions, especially active voice, vital necessities. Editors play an essential role in this. And again, this is substantive editing. I know of no writing or proofing tools that can, for example, rewrite passive voice—a major contributor to the “fog index” in much of today’s technical documentation—into active voice, or rewrite an ambiguous passage.

Provided that editing remains totally consistent with the needs of those readers who will use the information in its source language, then the planned use of machine translation simply provides an additional argument in favor of editing. But if it goes beyond the needs of the source-language readers by deliberately manipulating the language so that it can be processed by machine translation, then it is probably more appropriate to call it “rejigging.” This is certainly not editing as defined in this article.

And in conclusion...

In a business environment that increasingly requires the best possible quality at the lowest possible cost, editing can make an important contribution by focusing on those factors that have the most influence on the difficulty and cost of understanding, using, or translating information. Important benefits are available when editing is undertaken both before and after translation. But to provide real value, this editing must go far beyond the popular notion of editing as “wordsmithing” and grammar correction. It must be meticulous editing that focuses on precision and clarity.

References


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One of the broadest questions is: What is the role of translation? This role cannot be underestimated—neither in a narrowly defined linguistic sense, nor in a broadly understood cultural sense. First, in the Western cultures, translation from one European language into another European one has contributed to a common Western canon, although there also have been some non-Western influences (a number of Western writers were interested in the Japanese haiku, for example). Therefore, a literary history of a national literature needs to include a history of translations, as well as the direct interactions between another literature and an author who speaks the language in question.

Second, in a broader cultural sense, every interaction takes on language but into another medium. By the same token, any transmission of ideas from one culture to another is a type of translation, which often falls squarely within a given social and political context because such cultural encounters involve issues of authority/hegemony. Political and linguistic history is full of examples: Christianization (when, in Old High German times, *der wiho atum*, the Alemannic translation of the Latin *spiritus sanctus*, lost out against the East Frankish *heilag geist* [Sonderegger, 256]); the Norman Conquest (when William brought French culture and language to England and changed the English language); and the influence of the U.S. on German culture (which was a fad during the 1920s, a political force in terms of re-education after the Second World War, and now is reinforced by the economic power of multinational corporations).

The issues discussed above center on theoretical considerations. However, this theoretical approach to literature and literary translation describes precisely how literature becomes available; therefore, it is of utmost practical value. After all, it raises straightforward questions, such as “How do we get literary translations published?” and “What is the role of the translator in this process?” Or even more to the point may be the question: “What does a translator want to know before publishing a translation?”

It is this last question that I will ponder here because, from time to time, I have stood at the sidelines of commercial literary translation, which is so clearly part of literature as a social institution that to make such an observation about its nature is to state the obvious. After all, it involves publishers who try to determine which texts in translation could be sold to paying customers. I will focus on one aspect of this process—the university presses who were already interested in publishing a translation. Indeed, what they wanted was an evaluation of a manuscript that had been submitted to them.

In this scenario, the critic is the intermediary not between published books and a wider, interested public, but between a text and the potential publisher of the text’s translation. In my...
thought during the 1980s. In a similar way, multicultural texts—written by authors who are between two cultures, for example, because they were raised in Germany but born to parents from a different country and culture—give expression to literary voices in the contemporary discourses concerning the status of foreigners in Germany, including the issues of citizenship and the right to vote.

Does the original travel?

The assumption is that a translation is likely to be successful if it touches upon issues that are central to the target culture’s identity. In this sense, a translation can be seen as a text that projects the target culture’s Other. The translation may express a shared value between source and target cultures, a different response to the same or similar conflicts, or a different experience altogether. In all cases, it is possible for members of the target audience to increase their understanding of both their own culture and the other culture (keeping in mind that the translation constructs a literary image of that culture).

On the practical level, the original text needs to be described. What are the main themes, literary devices, and their interactions? For stories told in fiction and plays, plot summaries are essential. It boils down to the question of what a text’s achievement is that makes it special in comparison to others. What does it have to offer that merits publication in translation? Are the text’s plot, theme, style, and tone likely to appeal to an audience of the target culture?

The answer to such questions depends on a number of attitudes. One attitude concerns how translation itself is viewed. In the book market in the U.S., it seems as though translations are not...
The general American audience seems, at best, to be oblivious of translation; at worst, it is reluctant to accept translations. Perhaps the reasons are embedded in a lack of trust that a translation can do justice to the original or can read in an equally engaging way. The history of this attitude can be traced in the attention given to the translator’s name on the cover. That name often used to be absent from the cover, relegated to the blurb on the inside of the dust jacket or some other inconspicuous place in the book. Such a negative attitude is far from self-evident. On the German book market, the fact that a book was written in a foreign language is often a badge of honor. It seems safe to say that all literary publishers—with the exception of smaller, specialized presses—feature translations as a major component in their programs. Some even have imprints that exclusively or predominantly publish translations. For example, in its 2001 catalogue, Manhattan (an imprint of the publishing house and media giant Bertelsmann) features only translations of American and British novels. As a result, the social institution of literary translation looks different in Germany than it does in the United States.

Another attitude involves preferences about what material is considered worthy of translations. Depending on these preferences, some plots, themes, styles, or tones seem to be more appropriate for translation than others—a judgment that may be correct, but that should be questioned. In other articles in the ATA Chronicle, I have written about how vital and diverse contemporary German fiction (May, 1998) and poetry (May, 2000) are, as well as about what both have to offer to an American audience. I have argued that there are themes that are specific to the German experience, which may be intriguing just for that reason, and there are themes that German-language writing shares with writings from other countries, especially the United States.

Some of these texts may be considered as being part of the above-mentioned process of learning about one’s own culture as well as about another. But literature goes beyond this goal of educating readers. Literature has always been considered entertaining to the reader as well. After all, if a writer cannot command readers’ attention, how will that writer be able to educate them? Literature written just to entertain, however, is not bad either. Yet there is the attitude that there is no good German literature that does just that, while American literature excels at good entertainment. This is predominantly the attitude of critics. German literature still suffers from the prejudice that all entertaining writing is Trivialliteratur, literature written for mass consumption, where the adjective trivial suggests that these texts are at the level of escape literature or formula fiction, as it is often called in English. However, there is a difference between mass literature and popular literature.

And contemporary German literature has much to offer in the category of popular fiction. Still, German literature has to contend with the prejudice that, because classic examples of the detective, horror, or fantasy stories on the scale of world literature were written in English, it would be impossible to publish an English translation of a German detective or horror story, regardless of how good it might be. The following three examples, arbitrarily and subjectively chosen, represent the great number of high-quality German popular literature that still await translation and publication in English: Nikola Hahn’s Die Detektivin (Miss Detective, 1998) for the detective genre; Kai Meyer’s Die Geisterseher (The Necromancers, 1995), a literary historical novel that combines the mystery and horror genres; and Susanne Kaiser’s Von Mädchens und Drachen (Maidens and Dragons, 1994) for the fantasy story.

German popular literature, as well as serious German writing, has the potential of finding an interested American audience, but popular literature especially has to deal with much competition from English-speaking authors. Pragmatically, this situation suggests one possible answer to the next
question about the quality of translations: a good translation is a translation that does not have competition.

**Is the translation good?**

The assumption is that the quality of a translation can be easily ascertained, but this is a difficult matter because such a judgment seems to be largely subjective. One of the goals of translation studies should be to establish criteria that are simultaneously objective and flexible—flexible because demands on translations change over time. In a lecture at an ATA conference, I proposed the following definition of translation that may be helpful in evaluating translations: “Translation is primarily the creation of an imaginary world that corresponds as closely as possible to the one in the source [text] by means of, secondly, following as closely as possible the source text’s formal characteristics without violating the rules of the target language” (“From the Translator’s Desk...” 91). This definition was fine-tuned to translations between German and English, two languages that not only share a close linguistic relationship, but that are also embedded in cultures with close ties to each other—at times cherished as the Western tradition, at other times derided as “McWorld.” The German-English relationship is distinctly different from the literary relationship between a Western and non-Western language and their respective cultural contexts, because the latter more clearly than the first involves issues of cultural authority.

At this point, it becomes evident that the study of translation intersects with other disciplines: literary theory and linguistics. The former teaches us, among many things, the different modes of hermeneutics, which “starts with texts and asks what they mean,” and poetics, which “starts with attested meanings or effects and asks how they are achieved” (Culler, 61). The latter can help to describe and explain the linguistic and mental processes involved in translation. For example, in several ATA lectures, I suggested a system of modular pragmatics for the purposes of description and explanation.

In a nutshell, the proposed model of modular pragmatics means that, as a reader of the translated text, I want to be able to see the same scenario with the same objects involved in the same interaction that the reader of the original text sees. For example, one translation draft mentioned “splatterings of lead” that came from “bouncing shells.” The image that emerged in my mind involved drops of liquid lead coming down in splats from shells that are rebounding into the air after they hit the ground. The original German, however, involved fragments of lead flying from detonating shells.

This example raises another issue that has to do with translation as a social institution: many translations are produced in a hurry. Such rush translations may, for instance, leave out sentences or parts of sentences (distorting the information communicated), change the original division into paragraphs or sections (altering the rhythm with which the text flows), or simply misread (“17” instead of “70”).

So, it comes down to this, after all—the quality of a translation matters, and it has to be assessed in the context of what is the current agreement on what constitutes a good translation. Any marks of a rush job have to be eradicated, I am so adamant about this because I feel that bad translations in the past have, in part, been responsible for the present dismal lack of interest in German-language literature in translation (a lack that might just be waning a little, though). A publisher should not publish a translation that would make it difficult for the publisher to sell books.

Evaluating the quality of a translation, of course, depends on a consensus on what is translation in general and what constitutes a good, or appropriate, translation. Translation studies, then, walks a tight rope between being descriptive and prescriptive. Is it the goal of a translation to read like an original or like the original text? What is a variation of a theme and what it a “faithful” translation? Joyce Carol Oates’s *The Lady with the Pet Dog* seems to qualify as a variation of a theme of Anton Chekhov’s story of the same or similar title (depending on the specific translation), although the relationship of Oates’s and Chekhov’s stories can be described in terms of “translation.” Oates’s story is an original story and reads like one, but it does not read like Chekhov’s original. This influx of the creative process complicates the understanding of translation as a social institution.
By Gertrud Graubart Champe

In the heart of the Midwest, six hours on the interstate does not represent an overwhelming distance, but it can be enough to change the environment significantly; going westward one sees the country open out, the land roll in a different pattern. The more perceptible reminder of how hard it once was to strike roots here is blended with a feeling that now things are batten down, secure, and flourishing. It was my experience that the University of Nebraska Press and its operation are shaped by a generous response to this atmosphere.

The editorial offices of the Press are located in a vast restored warehouse building in the Haymarket section of Lincoln. The interior space is interrupted by various groupings and dividers. Light streams in and there is still a faint smell of fresh wood. Posters, paintings, and objects from the glory days of the Great Plains draw the eye. The overall impression, however, is dominated by the sense of competent, orderly work.

The University of Nebraska Press is, next to the University of California Press, the second largest state university press, as measured by its catalogue, and in the top 10 from the point of view of sales. Its Website, www.nebraskapress.unl.edu, is well worth a visit, presenting the image of an organization deeply rooted in its state, shaped by its academic environment, and well aware of its position on the Great Plains, standing between Chicago and California. The areas of Press interests are varied and organized into categories. In addition to native studies, the Civil War, and baseball, there are categories like literary criticism, anthropology, and linguistics/sociology. The list of offerings is rounded out by several scholarly journals.

Another point of interest on the Website is the section of advice to authors. In sober, detailed paragraphs, one is taught how to choose a publisher, prepare a proposal, and then approach the publisher. It is as though the Minotaur had posted a map! The Press takes itself seriously, but in the best possible way; humor is definitely allowed. Staring at the Fall and Winter 2000 catalogue with its handsome blue cover, it took me several heartbeats to realize that the arresting pattern of crosses and bars I was gazing at was the imprint of a hiking boot in the snow.

Now to the translations. The Press was founded in 1941, and 20 years later, a program of publishing translations began. At first, the titles were re-publications of unavailable translations of classics. The works were chosen with no apparent design in mind; the first two to be published were an 18th-century speculative novel and an edition of Hippolytus. Then came Ovid and the Don Juan cycle of Spanish drama. Editions of Zola, Zweig, Wagner, Hegel, and Tolstoy were published, either as part of a larger initiative or because the opportunity presented itself.

Publication of new and original nonfiction began in earnest in the 1990s, as a supplement to the contemporary European fiction list. The 1999 catalog of in-print translations contains...
well over 100 titles. Most of the nonfiction books are 20th-century social history or memoirs. Works on French culture by Finkielkraut, Benichou, Blanchot, Aragon, Cendrars, Max Jacob, and Lucie Aubrac have been published, as well as German titles by such authors as Gesine Schwan, Wolfgang Gerlach, Jürgen Habermas, and York von Wartenberg. A most interesting and out of the way work of ethnography on the list is the Argentine classic *A Visit to the Ranquel Indians* by Lucio Mansilla. Older European authors are represented as well—Tolstoy, Nietzsche, and Giordano Bruno. This cumulative catalog of translations also seems to demonstrate the fact that the Press does not pulp its back stock. The oldest title listed is from 1964, a translation of the autobiography of Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, a moving book that bears re-reading.

Programmatic publication of contemporary fiction was begun in the mid-1980s under the directorship of the then editor-in-chief, Willis Regier. He began to express his interest in modern fiction with a list of about 12 titles, which were warmly received by the critics and less than eagerly snapped up by the public. Scandinavian literature was chosen for this experiment in response to the rich Scandinavian heritage of the Great Plains, and the project was supported in part by the Scandinavian American Foundation. Outside editors were found to identify works and encourage translators to undertake the English versions.

Other developments have been somewhat more reactive. In the late 1980s, a number of scholars and translators began urging the Press to publish translations of contemporary fiction. This was the impetus for two series: *European Women Writers* and *Latin American Women Writers*. French has always been the most successful language in the European series, followed by German, Spanish, and Italian, in that order. In all of the works in the Latin American series, only one has been in Portuguese. Apparently no other languages have been offered in these two series.

The Press tends to publish four or five translations a season. Titles offered since the publication of the most recent catalog of translations include both works by living authors in French, Spanish, and German, and classics like Bernanos. Genres range from novels to short stories, and memoirs to historical accounts. The languages represented, in addition to French, German, and Spanish, are Russian and the language of the Quileute people. An interesting new direction, growing in momentum, is the publication of translations of Francophone literature from Africa and the Caribbean. This is the next important direction the editors of the Press are looking forward to pursuing. The director of the Press is also interested in increasing the number of works by Mexican women, whose style presents a contrast to works from other Latin American countries.

The article by André Schiffrin chosen to be the straw man here has very few good things to say about the publication of translations in this country. In the first place, it claims, not enough is happening. That is true enough. It is a complaint to be made not only by translators, who would like to be providing the manuscripts, but also by thoughtful readers who would like access to the thoughts, serious as well as entertaining, of countries whose language is a mystery. The scarcity of translations results from the fact that we live in a market economy; finding correctives to market forces is a large part of the contribution of a press like Nebraska. American publishing needs to be coaxed and educated into giving translation a try. It is not enough that, occasionally, there is an anomalous peak of translations from little-known languages, as, for example, when Jovanovich was a partner in Harcourt Brace and we had a spate of Yugoslav fiction for a while or, as Schiffrin points out, when there is an occasional money-making superstar like *The Reader*. We can all acknowledge the rightness of the article’s position here.

What is less justifiable is the apparent phenomenon Schiffrin seeks to highlight with his title, “Missing Out on a World of Scholarship.” The presses that do publish translations are reproached for concentrating on fiction. Why do that, asks Schiffrin, instead of publishing the current thinkers and critics that all the rest of the world is reading and we can’t read here? Two answers to this question can be readily given, using the University of Nebraska Press as an example, without engaging in a polemic. It is true that in the combined lists of translation, the backlist and the current one, nonfiction titles are very much in the minority. But if one is concerned that readers are being deprived of a knowledge of the world outside our borders, Continued on p. 30
one need only have a look at the nature of the translated fiction. It takes the reader deep into history and far out of the first world. Current social and cultural problems are explored, historical events are relived, today’s psyche is examined. The carefully chosen works on a good list of translated fiction function as primary texts of our day in a way that discursive literature cannot. Both kinds of writing are necessary to reflect and to shape our culture.

A second response to the reproach that we do not see enough translated nonfiction is to suggest that this is, at least in part, the result of how the presses have chosen to work, rather than of a pusillanimous fear that the list will not make any money. That can never be claimed about a press that is generous enough to publish translations at all, if one keeps in mind that as a rule of thumb, bringing one translation to publication takes up as many resources as are required for two untranslated books.

It is the university presses and nonprofits, already publishing translations, that are reproached for neglecting nonfiction. If one considers Nebraska for a moment as representative, the explanation is fairly clear. This press has chosen not to take the initiative in obtaining foreign books to translate. It has not proven advantageous to commission translations because fees paid by a university press are not high enough to be attractive for translators who are required to work up a large section of a project before going into a contract and being paid. This means that the Press makes its choice of manuscripts to publish in a reactive fashion, accepting or rejecting what is brought in. Editors are able to put the word out that they are interested in certain kinds of texts, but they will not shop one around to translators. That kind of exchange takes place, at least for French and German, in the U.S. offices of publishers’ groups from France and Germany, whose task it is to interest American publishers in translation and publication rights. All of this is rather interesting news for translators. If it is we who must bring translations to a press and make a case for publication, then we also have it in our power to influence the translation landscape by choosing the texts we will work with. And from everything I have learned about the University of Nebraska Press, it is the kind of place where people will listen attentively to the knowledgeable suggestions we bring. Translation is in good hands at Nebraska.

References


In 1999, Mainz professor and literary historian, Hermann Kurzke, published a new biography of Thomas Mann (1885-1955) that became an instant bestseller. Kurzke is, without doubt, the ideal biographer of this author. He has spent 25 years studying and publishing scholarly articles on Mann, and is now editing a six-volume collection of Mann’s essays.

Kurzke’s Thomas Mann/Das Leben als Kunstwerk/Eine Biographie, published by C. H. Beck in Munich, recounts the life and works of a titan of world literature in the 20th century (Mann received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929). In an original and revealing way, Kurzke chronicles the events in the life of this extraordinary man by linking them (as did Mann himself through his structure of artistic creation) to the author’s novels, stories, and essays. Kurzke also makes abundant use of the thousands of letters from Mann’s lifelong correspondence with family, friends, fellow writers, and adamant critics. The result is a 600-page tome that has appeared at the crest of a revival of interest in Mann and his work. New translations of Thomas Mann’s major works have been published in the past two or three years by Random House. These were primarily done by John E. Woods, an admired translator who first gained recognition in 1981 with a tour de force translation of Arno Schmidt’s Evening Edged in Gold, for which he won the American Book Award for translation and the PEN Translation Prize.

The Mann renaissance in Germany and the U.S. caught the eye of an editor at Princeton University Press, Brigitta van Rheinberg, who acquired the rights for Kurzke’s biography of Mann. In September of 2000, she asked me if I would translate the volume. As a long-time fan of Mann who had not picked up any of his books in years (it had been 30 or more years since I last read him), I could not resist the opportunity to immerse myself in Mann once again. I had reveled in Mann’s unique command of the German language and was fascinated with his characters. I had written my master’s thesis on Mann’s use of Gerhart Hauptmann as a model for Mynheer Peeperkorn in The Magic Mountain. I even wrote a study of his novella, The Transposed Heads. Now I could spend time with Mann once again and get acquainted with the most recent retranslations of his major works.

I knew that Mann is not an easy author to translate (are there any?). He is captivating to read, but his translators have always been criticized. Helen Lowe-Porter, a valiant translator, was faulted for her translations from the start, and was particularly accused of not understanding the essence of the leitmotif, a device used generously by Mann, and consequently of destroying it. She did not repeat the leitmotif phrases literally, but “improved Mann’s vocabulary” by translating them with various different word choices. I have the impression that the leitmotif is misunderstood by many, not only by translators but also by reviewers and popular critics, whereas in reality the intent of the leitmotif is simple. Most people associate it with Wagner, who used a musical version in his great Ring cycle and elsewhere in his musical works. But the leitmotif has a long literary history that precedes its adoption by Wagner in music. It can be a subtle device. It was used by Goethe, by the Swiss author Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, and by a host of other European writers. In essence, it is a kind of shorthand, a single word or a phrase that is used to recall a character or an incident to the mind of the reader of a narrative. Used appropriately, the leitmotif can excite a reader with various emotions connected with the character or the event without the author having to recount the event or even mention the character by name.

Mann also presents particular problems to a translator in terms of his vocabulary. An inveterate and intuitive observer of language and a skilled wordsmith, he makes frequent and repeated use of one of the innate characteristics of all languages—the ability to let themselves be molded and enriched by great authors. He creates new words—neologisms that are found in no dictionary. The intuitive reader of German has no problem with this penchant of Mann, but the translator is immediately faced with making the verbal segue easy for readers of English without resorting to a stylistic distortion...
English. And that is how I proceeded at first—until, in a short quotation from a passage in *Buddenbrooks*, I encountered a translation that was the exact opposite of what was in the German. A minor slip, and every translator slips, which is why a detailed and expert copyediting procedure must take place with every translation. Such a procedure must involve checking the translation against the original work. Still, an existing translation must be taken as whole cloth. So, after consultation with the Princeton editor, I decided to translate all the quotations myself. Any mistakes would be my own. Believe me, I am vetted thoroughly, meticulously, and knowledgeably by another translator—my wife.

That safeguard is simply one step, a vital and necessary one, in producing a reputable translation, even though best intentions do not assure perfection. As for the neologisms and moments of insecurity, I have the advantage of being able to consult directly (i.e., via e-mail and fax) with an author willing to respond to my queries; namely, Professor Kurzke himself. Other pesky words that I have to chase around, not neologisms, are usually related to foodstuffs and articles of clothing, as well as local and dialectical words and phrases, with the occasional archaism thrown in to make my platter full.

The net result of all this: I’m having the time of my life! And my wife is fully occupied (in her opinion, more than fully) keeping me on the right track. Exultation on every side—so far.
On Translating Paul Verlaine

By Norman R. Shapiro

I’ve been hearing a radio commercial recently for what can best be described as a super-fast speed-reading system. To hear those hawking it, we would have to believe that one can learn to read and, presumably, perfectly understand as fast as one can turn pages. I haven’t been tempted to investigate the program, because, with the exception of newspapers, magazines, and academic committee minutes, I can’t imagine why I would want to be able to read that quickly.

The advertisers assure us that adepts of the system can read the unbelievable figure of about 100,000 words a minute, and they go on to say that this ability might especially be of use in reading informational texts. They don’t, mercifully, imply that anyone would be able to tackle literary ones—say, War and Peace, Proust, or Dante—in this fashion. And, I might add, I’m happy that, by its absence at least, such a grotesque possibility is not set forth as even remotely desirable. Grotesque, because it negates the very essence of literature; to wit, its grounding in speech and, ideally, its need to be heard, even if only in the reader’s head and on one’s personal soundtrack, and not simply seen (or fleetingly glimpsed). When scribes devised methods for writing down the oral offerings of ancient bards and when priests learned to preserve the sacred prayers and legends, they were not, I daresay, expecting the wax tablet, papyrus, parchment, or whatever, to be the substitute for the human voice that our less remote ancestors have made of the printed page.

No. For me, all literature is still basically oral, or should be. If we read only “for the plot,” we could make do with Cliff Notes or, several cuts above, the likes of Lamb’s Tales from Shakespeare: the “message” without the sound or the style, the bare bones without the flesh. Now, a case can, of course, be made these days, and in fact can have been for several centuries, that much of literature primarily serves a worthwhile nonartistic purpose—social, philosophical, historical, what have you—and that, as a vehicle for ideas, it need not be experienced viva voce. We have all read works of fiction, and even theater—some 18th-century French theater is a good example—whose principal raison d’être is not aesthetic. But even such didactic texts have been artistically embellished so as not to be mere prosaic tracts. To some extent, sound, form, and style have been wedded to meaning, and to that extent the results deserve to be listened to and viscerally experienced, not merely seen and cerebrally absorbed.

All of which is my somewhat long-winded attempt to explain and defend my stance as a literary translator: especially of poetry, and, here, specifically of the eminent French poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896). What earthly purpose would be served by being able to read 100,000 words of his in a minute? Or of any poet’s, except the most blatantly didactic? And even then…. We read poems to experience a totality of emotion, one from which the arrangement of sounds and rhythms cannot be casually excluded in favor of the simple “message.” As is often said, the translator’s job is to transmit both—or at least to attempt to do so. Seamus Heaney once paid me what I consider the supreme compliment by saying that my translations of La Fontaine’s fables, “get the tune right and the tone right.” The content/tune without the sound/tone is only half the battle. Not that it should really be a “battle.” The translator should collaborate with, not fight against, the text; however, the struggle-image is not wholly inappropriate, even though the finished product must make the process look easy and unlabored. It is that collaboration, with whatever measure of struggle it entails, that explains the translator’s craft.

People often ask me why I translate, to which I almost as often answer that it is certainly not for the material rewards, or even for the professional recognition that, long denied, translators have only recently begun to receive, thanks to the relatively new academic field of translation studies. I usually continue with the somewhat, but not entirely, facetious take-off on Descartes, “Je traduis, donc je suis.” In other words, though I do not believe that I would go up in a puff of smoke if I stopped translating, I know that, if I did stop, my creative existence would be compromised. We all find ways to struggle...
validate our existence, as it were. To produce something or to affect in some manner the world around us, and see ourselves thereby reflected, tangibly or intangibly, convinced that we do, indeed, “exist”; that we count for something, minute and evanescent though we are. From the infant, aware, unconsciously and nonverbally, of its incontrovertible existence when confronted with the product of its own digestion (“If not for me, that wouldn’t be there... They wouldn’t be smiling wanly and running for the Pampers...”), to the composer of a symphony who sees it published or hears it played for the first time, everyone, I think, finds something—good, bad, or indifferent, from the banal and even the loathsome to the lofty and idealistic—to “prove” his or her individuality. Mass murderers murder. Translators translate. (Some would say that translators can be guilty of murder as well, but that’s another matter.)

“So,” I am asked, “why not just write?” Why not be an author and find my self-validation by composing my own poems, plays, novels, whatever? The two pursuits, original writing and translating, are not, after all, mutually exclusive, as any number of prominent and not-so-prominent examples attest. But the satisfaction that comes with translating is a very special one. While the translation of every text represents a potential challenge, poetry offers some very special ones. Not only must one confront and cope with the fundamental problem of an often obscure, and even obscurantist, message and the differing semantic fields of even simple-appearing correspondences between source and target languages, but one must also respect the periodicity of the original, avoiding glaring anachronisms, and respect as well the original author’s idiosyncrasies of style, attempting to carry all this over as well as possible. This does not mean that one—I, at least—would want to translate, say, an Old French love poem into the English of Chaucer, even if I could. But, unless aiming for the specific effect that a modernized version can certainly produce, neither would one—I, again—translate it into Bob-Dylanese or hip-hop. Such updating has its place, but it is more appropriately “adaptation” than translation per se. Added to these demands are the problems of rhyme and meter. For instance, if one is dealing with formal verse, and with French verse in particular, conventions are imposed on the traditional poet: frequent use of fixed forms, lines of a specific syllable-count, and so forth. Should one forget that a sonnet has 14 lines and opt for some less rigid arrangement? Should the translator be slavishly faithful to the 12-syllable alexandrine, the backbone of French poetry, long ingrained in the French reader’s psyche?

One can, of course, avoid such dilemmas by deciding to scrap formalism altogether and to say: “Damn the rhyme, form, and meter, and full speed ahead!” Without rehashing the history and arguments of an often acrimonious debate, let me say simply that there are pro-formalism and anti-formalism translators, both sides with their strongly held convictions, and that I
count myself among the former. I take it as an article of faith that, if a poet presents us with a rhymed, metrically fashioned poem in a recognizable form, it follows that formal constraints are an integral part of the work and should somehow be carried over in translation if what Seamus Heaney has called “tone” is to be preserved. Not at the expense of the “tune,” to be sure, but combining with it to offer a total, not partial, effect.

The controversy stems, I think, from the mistaken notion of what a translation purports to be, especially the translation of a poem. It is not an exact duplicate—an obvious impossibility—or a carbon copy scrupulously transformed by some alchemy into the vocabulary and syntax of another language. Nor is it in competition with the original or intended to replace it. Rather it is, as I have said elsewhere and repeat at the drop of a hat, “a work that could stand artistically on its own; one that is intimately related to the original—would not exist without it, to be sure—but that does not attempt slavishly to reproduce it in a line-for-line equal; and one that, if the original makes use of rhyme and metrical form as part of its ‘essence,’ will attempt to do so as well...” (ATA Source, Summer/Fall 2000, p. 2). To deprive a formal poem of form, even if not necessarily the same form in every minute detail, is to falsify the poet’s concept and to truncate it.

It will be clear from the preceding observations that literary translation is, for me, a source of creative satisfaction. I could pretend with high seriousness to be driven by motives of altruism: by the desire to acquaint those poor benighted souls who know little or no, say, French, for example, with at least a simulacrum of works otherwise denied to them. Or even by the desire to spread the artistic glories of this or that writer to a wider audience. The truth is more selfish: I do it for the satisfaction it gives me to meet the challenge(s) presented, in a manner that fulfills my own artistic demands and pleases my aesthetic taste. I do not even do it primarily for the approval of others, though, of course, that helps. No translator, any more than any author, composer, painter, or what-have-you, can count on pleasing everyone.

The recent selection of my Paul Verlaine volume as recipient of the Modern Language Association’s Scaglione Prize for an outstanding literary translation does not blind me to the fact that at least three critics (I could name two Britons and one wannabee) Brit, a professional naysayer who has built a career reveling in snide negativity) have raked my work over their personal coals. Their complaints, other than such flaws as my choosing to render cigale as “cricket” instead of “cicada,” seem to center on the old controversy and on my insistence on using formal rhyme and meter. (One of them also takes issue with my lack of enthusiasm for Verlaine’s religious poetry.) To give a specific example, one of them cites my translation of these lines from the poem “Voix de Gabriel”:

My version:

Nature, animaux
Eaux, plantes et pierres,
Vos simples travaux
Sont d’humbles prières.
Vous obéissez:
Pour Dieu, c’est assez.

God’s are the beasts, and His,
You plants, rocks, rivers too;
All your existence is
A humble prayer; you do
His every wish and whim:
And that’s enough for Him.

The critic finds that “Shapiro’s God is bossy, tyrannical, snide, a slander on Verlaine’s God of simple natural demands,” and, among other complaints, reviles the “manic inversion” of my opening line. He goes on to offer his own suggested improvement (“How simple it could all have been without the rhyming and the six-syllable rules...”), more faithful, he claims, to Verlaine’s simplicity of tone:

Nature—animals,
Waters, plants and stones—
Your simple work
Is humble prayer.
You obey:
For God, that’s all he asks.

Faithful? Yes, to a fault. But, whatever shortcomings my lines may have, they do not, at least, give the mistaken impression that Verlaine was writing free verse—rather like maintaining the “message” of a Shakespeare play while putting it into rhyming French octosyllabic couplets. For all Verlaine’s winkingly stated objections to rhyme in his famous “Art poétique” (“O qui dira les torts de la Rime? / Quel enfant sourd ou quel nègre fou / Nous a forgé ce bijou d’un sou / Qui sonne creux et faux sous tone,”)

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"la lime?") the fact remains that they must be taken with many a grain of salt. All of his verse, after this dictum as well as before, employs rhyme, though at its best and most typical it is often tucked away in the folds of enjambments, and never tends to hit the reader over the head. But use rhyme he does, and cavalierly to eliminate it, and to do the same with recognizable and regular meter, is to play it false. A foolish case of “Do as I say, not as I do…”

But pleasing the eventual critics, as I have said, was not my major problem. As with any translation, I faced a number of more pressing ones when setting out to do my One Hundred and One Poems. (The number, by the way, was an allusive tip of the cap to Verlaine’s celebrated recommendation in the “Art poétique,” in a very different context—that of syllable-count—to prefer the odd to the even.) The first was in the choice of its contents. Verlaine was a prolific poet and an immensely complex human being. In undertaking my collection, it was my feeling that I should choose a representative sampling from his many collections, and one that would bear witness to the intricacies of his psyche and their artistic manifestations. For example, his ill-fated attempt at marital happiness, his explosive liaison with Rimbaud and other homosexual amours, his short-lived conversion and its pathetic recurrences, his descent into debauchery, his efforts to cope with his continuous physical decline, and so on. At the same time, I admit to letting my personal preference for his early work, a preference shared by many, get in the way of a perhaps more well-rounded sampling. Our negative critic to the contrary notwithstanding, much of Verlaine’s religious verse is rather turgid and, as said critic reproached me for thinking, preachy. I feel certain that if all we had from his pen were the religious poems of Sagesse, Bonheur, et al., and/or the odes and laments inspired by the two earthy muses of his declining years (Philomène Boudin and Eugénie Krantz), he would not, despite his touching sincerity, sure-handed technique, and occasional flashes of wit, be counted among the greats. For me, as well as for many others, the “real” Verlaine is the early poet of the Poèmes saturniens, the Fêtes galantes, La Bonne Chanson, and many of the Romances sans paroles.

Still, I tried to be fair and representative in my choices, and even included a goodly number of his later works that virtually no readers—not even the French—usually remember, and that have probably never before been translated into English. Because of their prototypical stature, many of Verlaine’s early poems are especially well known and frequently anthologized. To translate the likes of “Chanson d’automne” (“Les sanglots longs / Des violons / De l’automne...”), “Il pleure dans mon cœur comme il pleut sur la ville...” “Le Ciel est, par-dessus le toit...” and other favorites, was virtually asking for the condemnation of those Nabokovites and other literalists who prefer utter precision-cum-glosses to any effort at a rhymed, metrical rewriting. On the other hand, any Verlaine collection would be incomplete without them. I took the risk and am pleased with the results.

A more concrete technical problem, to which I have already referred, is one that faces any (formal) translator of French verse: how to deal with the alexandrine, French poetry’s stock-in-trade. As Pope reminds us, the 12-syllable line in English is ponderous and ungainly. Remaining faithful to the original text does not, it seems to me, imply the need to retain it—on the contrary—and I regularly replace it with iambic pentameter, its canonical analogue. But this also makes for occasional difficulties. First, because the originals may have both alexandrines and decasyllables, a contrast that is lost if the translation is all in pentameter, and one that requires a bit of ad hoc manipulation if the overall effect is to remain faithful. And second, because the translator has only 10 syllables per line to work with, whereas the original poet has 12. A certain amount of deft fitting is necessary if neither the content nor the form is to suffer. (One of my three critics, who apparently would have preferred a nonmetrical rendering, accused me of “shoe-horning” Verlaine’s lines into mine: a delightful image, though I disagree with its message.) With it all, the challenge was to duplicate the flexibility that Verlaine imparted to his best verse, with his characteristic run-on lines, stress shifts, misplaced caesuras, and such. I tried to cope with these difficulties in such a way as not to falsify his unmistakable hallmark: the essential musicality that these strategies produced.

Poet François Coppée was only one of many of Verlaine’s contemporaries and followers to stand in awe of the musicality of his verse. This musicality is the result of both its sonorities

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Weaving in and out of Spanish: A Look at Two Contemporary Bilingual Poetry Collections

By Liliana Valenzuela

When I first started looking at these two books—Sofía, poems by Joan Logghe, translated into Spanish by Claire Joysmith and Arturo Salinas (La Alameda Press, 1999) and Primera Causa/First Cause, by Tino Villanueva, translated by Lisa Horowitz (Cross Cultural Review, 1999)—I thought it might be interesting to compare the translations going into and out of Spanish, the methods or styles used, and to talk to some of the translators, working alone or in pairs, about their process of translation. I was able to converse with the translators and one of the publishers via e-mail and phone, and to consult unpublished seminar notes provided by one of the translators as well as the written answers by all to some of my questions.

Stanley Barkan, poet and publisher of Cross Cultural Review, is committed to publishing poetry in en face editions, and even tri-lingual pieces (for instance, Sicilian-Italian/English, Cajun-French/English, with a four-page sequence, Art/Photo-English, Sicilian-Italian—see Love Song for Sicily, by Rolando Certa, translated by Nat and Nina Scammacca). He says that he only publishes single-language poetry when compelled by circumstances (e.g., a large Korean anthology which the grantors require in English only—in process: Voices in Diversity: Poets from Postwar Korea, translated by Ko Won). According to Barkan, only university presses have published Spanish/English poetry extensively, and other small presses publish it occasionally in a bilingual format, although they’ve been publishing translations for a number of years (20-30 years each). Some of the publishers Barkan considers colleagues in cross-cultural publishing are Greenfield Review Press, edited by Joseph Bruchac; Curbside Press, edited by Alexander Taylor; New Rivers Press, edited by Bill Truesdale; Unicorn Press, edited by Alan Brilliant; and Visions International/Black Buzzard Press, edited by Brad Strahan. Some of the major presses have been publishing in bilingual formats in a limited way, and only Penguin, which is based in London, has done so extensively.

Let’s take a look now at the first poetry collection. In Sofía, we meet the fictional character of an Hispanic Catholic woman with Sephardic Jewish roots. These poems draw on the true stories of many women, including the author. Joan Logghe states that these poems came to her “shyly, with a poem or two a year for fifteen years.” The poems are rooted in the New Mexico landscape and its agricultural lifestyle; they are redolent of organic, wet earth, chicken feathers, and strong winds. The earthy, primal images take us on a chronological journey through life’s cycles and women’s cycles. These narrative poems are as tender as they are harsh, and mirror the good and bad times on the high mesa.

The translation of these poems is made harder by the fact that Logghe envisioned the character of the title as a woman with Spanish roots. The words arroyo, Lupita, nicho, manzanilla, la Marcha, mi’jita, vieja, chile, and ay are sprinkled over the poems, giving them a credible local flavor. This presented a challenge in translation, as some of the New Mexican words used in the original have a slightly different meaning in New Mexico than in Mexico. The translators argue that, for instance, the word “arroyo,” which is locally understood as a dry river bed, implies a running creek elsewhere in Spanish. “In one case, we added the word ‘seco’ (Sofía construye un altar) and in another case (Sofía le escribe a una amiga que se ha ido) we left it as ‘arroyo’ since it was clear from the context that there was a ‘flash flood.’”

On the other hand, to leave a trace of the original English words in the Spanish version, they purposefully left words such as “jitterbug” and “troca” for truck, “because the term is widely used in New Mexico and added a taste of locality without overdoing it.” This ethnicity is also present in the names of places: Española, Albuquerque, Los Alamos, Black Mesa, and Santa Fe. The tone of the original poems is colloquial, down-to-earth, and deceptively simple.

An interesting feature of this book is that this collection of poems was awarded a prize for translation into Spanish—the Money for Women/...I found out that this book “was originally intended to be translated, in other words, as if the translation were intrinsic to the poems themselves, to Sofía’s voice, rather than a secondary issue”...

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Barbara Deming Memorial Fund grant. In talking to the translator duo of Claire Joysmith (Anglo-Mexican) and Arturo Salinas (Mexican), I found out that this book “was originally intended to be translated, in other words, as if the translation were intrinsic to the poems themselves, to Sofia’s voice, rather than a secondary issue.” The choice of publishing the translations en face was an obvious one in this case. And, even more interesting is the rather idiosyncratic choice of having the Spanish translation precede the English originals. The idea, according to Joysmith and Salinas, was to have Sofia’s “voice” in Spanish come first.

I must say I was a bit perplexed by this choice during my first reading and prior to learning of their intentions. I insisted on reading the English first—old habits die hard for this reviewer. The translators remark on how there was little mention by the reviewers of the translations themselves, let alone the fact that the Spanish preceded the English. It is an interesting consideration, as we have been trained to read the source language first and then the translation, if we are lucky enough to be bilingual, but this book turns the tables on us. English being arguably the dominant language in the world today, this arrangement has some interesting ideological underpinnings, “deconstructing” our usual expectations of the flow of languages. For instance, deciding which is the source and which is the target language, and whether a character’s fictional voice can be the determining factor in deciding which language should be presented to the reader first.

As far as the process itself, this was the first time Joysmith and Salinas have translated together as a team. They are both based in Tepoztlán, an hour’s drive from Mexico City, where Joysmith teaches. In their own words: “We decided to divide the poems into two sets and each did a rough first draft of our set. We then proceeded to revise and improve them, working together on each poem. We would read them to each other out loud, change and polish them, leave them for a while, and then return to them for further work. We did up to six drafts on some poems. The entire process took six to seven months, although there were intervals between our work periods. Then, we still made some changes here and there to the whole over the next few months.”

Another technique that I found particularly interesting was that the translators “requested that the author make a special tape with her reading of the poems, since rhythm was a special concern of our translation.” We asked Joan what she considered a priority when the choice had to be made between rhythm and veracity, and she unhesitantly replied that rhythm was of utmost importance, which we then followed as a rule throughout the translation process.” This is something perhaps all translators should consider doing, even in technical translations, as it is easier to catch mistakes when you have a second person checking against the source language for omissions and errors while the first person reads the translation out loud. This is even more crucial when dealing with literary translation, and especially with poetry. Sound and rhythm are to poetry what notes and lyrics are to composers, so it should come as no surprise that Salinas is also a composer and insists on respecting the sound of poems above anything else. When I asked them about their relationship with the publisher, La Alameda Press, they mentioned that in one instance the publisher wanted to change a term and the translators objected, “on the grounds that it would greatly affect the specific rhythm of the verse. We had spent a great deal of time working on the rhythmic precision and fluency, and although there was a written agreement not to change our translation, regrettably, their version prevailed in the printed book.” Such is life for all translators, from time to time, but it is particularly vexing when the difference between one sound or another can make all the difference in the ears of the translators who are recreating a poem in a different language.

The translation gracefully succeeds in keeping with the tone of “casual informality” and “apparent simplicity” of many of the poems. I must say that, as a reader, it is refreshing to read poetry in Spanish that uses common, everyday language, evocative yet down-to-earth, as in the poem “Sofía Builds a Shrine”: “During her middle years/when the children looked/all glowing and strong/like pups, like colts/she and her husband stood/frayed and tattered/at the back of the photographs./They looked older then/than at retirement.” (Translated as: Ya entrados los años/cuando los niños se veían/relucientes/como cachorros, como potros/ella y su marido aparecían/hasta atrás en las fotografías/descosidos, desgas-tados./Se veían más viejos entonces/que cuando se jubilaron.)

As far as which variety of Spanish to use, Joysmith and Salinas had the option to: “reconstruct [the language] in a way...
that would resemble the language spoken by a Hispanic native from New Mexico, at the risk of the translation sounding very awkward. Since we did not consider our readership to be solely New Mexican, and neither of us are native New Mexicans, we opted for a less regionalized Spanish. We had an external advisor living in Santa Fe (María Cristina López), who is well acquainted with both kinds of Spanish, go through the poems and make sure it was locally comprehensible and not out of keeping.”

Although the translators tried to keep the Spanish “less regionalized,” I must admit I found quite a few Mexican regionalisms. It is perhaps impossible to think of a character in a Mexican rural landscape and not get carried away with the use of diminutives, such as “tomar un tecito” as opposed to “tomar un té,” “Diosito,” “cabecitas,” “viejitas,” “cerrito,” “puentecito,” as well as the use of the local term for corn “elote,” etc. To my ear, this gives a tender and affectionate tone to the description of places, people, and even their relationship with their God. As a fellow Mexican, I don’t mind it, I rather enjoy our little idiosyncrasies, but I wonder whether other Spanish readers would. There are also lots of colloquial Mexican expressions that place some of the characters squarely in a Mexican market, as in the poem “Oranges”: “Les daba una probadita a los que se paraban: tenga, prueba una/ora, por su vitamina C. Regálale a sus hijos una sonrisa/A doce el costal, fresquitas y maduras. Hágase un juguito/para los de la boca/ (She’d give them a sample of an orange/to everyone who stood/Here, taste this./get vitamin C. Put smiles on your children./Twelve a bushel, fresh and ripe./Squeeze them for juice or eat them/right out of the skin/). I beg to differ on the translation of the very last line. Shouldn’t it be “eating them in segments” rather than “squeezing them directly into the mouth!”

We find an entirely different mood in the poems by Tino Villanueva in Primera Causa/First Cause. This slim volume contains 10 poems united by the theme of memory and the poet’s definition of self, regarding the construction of the past in the present. While the poems are more abstract and deal with big concepts, their musicality and cadences echo the voice of the interior life contemplating the world. In the title poem, it could be said that “the poet writes, therefore he is.” He is keenly aware of the importance of introspection: “Escribo porque escribo y pasan minutos./pasa nubes./Y luego y ya es tarde./todo se oscurece/y se empieza a dibujar el cielo constelado./Entretanto, me dejo llevar/por la condición de la memoria/—primera causa que me nombra/—que me persuade a escribir sobre lo escrito./Soy un poeta/o y estar es un placer/escrito./Y seguir siendo/soy el que sólo existe más/si está escribiendo./ (I write because I write and time passes./clouds pass./And now, with the advent of evening./things turn to dusk and stars get drawn out across a darkening sky./I, meantime, trail off/into a state of memory/—first cause to name me—to move me to write upon things that are written./To be and to continue to be:/a man, making more of life/only in writing.)

This fine translation by Lisa Horowitz is the product of a long friendship and good communication between author and translator. Horowitz remarks how “Villanueva made himself available to answer questions, mostly via e-mail and phone, but he didn’t offer suggestions or make choices. Quite to the contrary, he always deferred to me. He insisted that, as the translator, I had a better feel than he did for the texture of the work as a whole in English. He also liked to say that he had already ‘quarreled with words’ in Spanish to compose these poems; he had no desire to do so again in English. In fact, he scrupulously refused to interfere with my process.” In her seminar notes, Horowitz remarks further on how difficult it is “to translate the work of a poet who is not only present, but is watching…a poet who is genuinely bilingual and writes his poetry in Spanish and some in English…Because of this unusual circumstance, it is particularly important to me that he like the translations, or at the very least, that he not be embarrassed by them. He has to be able to recognize his own poetry, albeit in a different language, and to feel like he is still reading from his own work. At the same time, though, he needs to be able to hear the poem’s rhythm in English—a rhythm created by someone else; at least hear it clearly enough to speak it himself. These and other considerations turned the translation process into a whole new experience for me.” So, although sometimes it may seem preferable to translate the work of “dead” authors, in this case the friendship and a mutual understanding at all levels of the process clearly argues for an active involvement with the poet, with pleasant results.

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According to Horowitz, one of the linguistic difficulties she encountered in the translation of these poems was the repeated use of the term “lo que,” loosely translated as “what” or “that which.” I agree that in Spanish it sounds quite natural, and before reading her notes I had not noticed that in one particular poem Villanueva uses this construction four times. She solved this by translating it into ‘‘what,’ as in ‘lo que perdura’—‘what endures’…but there were times I translated it as ‘thing,’ for example, ‘Consigo para mi lo que es memoria’—‘I make it mine, this thing called memory’…and ‘lo que sólo las palabras sabrían resolver’—‘things only words could find a way to resolve.’” In other poems she approached it in several other ways.

Another example of a linguistic translation problem Horowitz had to solve is the use of “Lo”+adjective and “Lo”+past participle. Again, this sounds quite natural to a native Spanish speaker, and I was only made aware of it by her comments: “Sometimes I got around it by using the word ‘things,’ as in ‘lo escrito’—‘things that are written’… ‘Lo mejor’ on the other hand, ended up translated as ‘the best part.’”

In Primera Causa/First Cause there is no use of regionalisms and only one narrative poem, “And Thus He Spoke,” where the author draws on an actual memory of growing up in Texas in the 1950s. The translator succeeds in adapting the voice of the English-speaking principal who is admonishing the “Latin American” students not to speak Spanish: “I’ve been hearing too much Spanish lately./Let me remind you, this is the U.S. of A. you’re living in—that’s a fact/you people best speak American on the premises.’/And thus he spoke, in his high and mighty way, as if really meaning to say/Spanish is bad for you.” (“Chicos, he venido escuchando/ demasiado español últimamente./Les recuerdo que vivimos en los Estados Unidos;/por lo tanto,/hablen en americano en estos recintos’/Así dijo el señor con ese tono alto que tenía./Como diciéndonos que el español/nos perjudicaba.”). Horowitz also does an excellent job of adapting something that would be untranslatable if taken literally. In that same poem, Horowitz changes the Spanish names for the accentuation of words into “the four words describing the metrical structure of English poetry—literary terms with which the English reader would be familiar—and to order these words in accordance with the rhythm and sound of this poem. In the end, ‘esdrújulos y graves./sobresdrújulos y agudos’ became ‘dactyl and trochee./iamb and anapest.’” Villanueva does succeed in conquering memory and recreating the past in the present, as stated in the closing stanza of that poem: “And if then, it wasn’t in me to answer./now I stand ready with a quorum of words,/all coming out on behalf of this republic/where Spanish is the language they speak./ (Y si antes no supe dar un contracanto/ahora conmigo traigo esta asamblea de palabras/a favor de esta república/donde se habla en español/.) I must say that “contracanto” in the original is far superior to “it wasn’t in me to answer,” where the literal meaning of “counter-singing” is lost in the translation.

Stanley Barkan, the publisher of this book, remarked that working with Horowitz was really an ideal situation. “The poet [Tino Villanueva] was delighted with her translations, and she was most cooperative with the publication process. She was always willing to meet and modify and transmit whatever was necessary to the author. Also, she helped to coordinate reading, picking up and dropping off the author. I can’t think of a more ideal situation with a translator.”

Barkan is dedicated to reaching out and allowing poets and audiences to listen to each other across languages and cultures. He remarks that: “as a publisher who is interested in exploring the world view of different cultures, I find the experience of bilingual publishing most rewarding. It has helped me to cross bridges so many times and places, without which, I would only have been a tourist skating over the surface of the rare and rich variety of the human family.”

While the subject matter, the styles, and the translation approaches used vary greatly in these two poetry collections, one thing is clear—the side-by-side translation of Spanish-English poetry collections is alive and well. There might even be an increasing demand for it in the future as Latinos in the U.S. become a force to be reckoned with in this new millennium. Both presses, Cross-Cultural Communications and La Alameda Press, as well as all the translators mentioned above (Joysmith, Salinas, and Horowitz), are doing a fine job of delighting readers with simultaneous offerings of poems in two melodic and vital languages. These two books should be required reading in high schools and universities.
The ATA Spanish Language Division is moving along at a good clip. We are building on the great foundation set by our first administrator, Alicia Marshall, and her able assistants, Harvey Jordan and Andre Moskowitz, during her four-year tenure. Thanks must also be given to the organizers of the “Foro de Español” at the past ATA conferences, as well as the members of the Tech Committees, the Elections Committees, the editor of Intercambios, and last, but not least, our Webmasters.

In Orlando, a new board of SPD officers was installed after our “nonelection." I am pleased to announce that the following people are assisting me on this board: assistant administrator, Virginia Pérez-Santalla; secretary, Marshall Morris; and treasurer, Milly Suazo-Martínez. Under Virginia’s leadership, a committee has been formed to do the legwork for our all-division conference, which we are hoping will take place early in 2002. Dan MacDougall, Marian Greenfield, Gerardo König, Morris Marshall, Milly Suazo-Martínez, and Mati Vargas are working hard at making this event a success. By the time you read this, you will have received lots of information about this great event. Please join us!

Intercambios, our division’s newsletter, has taken a big step forward into the 21st century. With Volume 5, Number 1, the March 2001 issue, we began saving a huge amount of money by making this quarterly magazine available for download as a PDF file from our Website (www.americantranslators.org/divisions/SPD). The PDF file can be downloaded or read on-screen, where you can take advantage of the table of contents containing links to each story. You can also print it, either in color or in black and white (gray scale will make it look nicer). We recognize that this is a change…but think of all the trees we are saving and keep in mind that in the year 2000, 55 percent of our budget was expended in printing and postage. This figure has been reduced significantly by our new presentation. People without Internet access are still receiving their issue in the traditional way. We are pleased with this, our first venture into an electronic issue, and promise that subsequent issues will have other enhancements.

At press time, our Web page is being updated under the able tutelage of Rosalie Wells. After giving her heart and soul to the creation of the first incarnation of our home on the World Wide Web, Cristina Márquez Arroyo has moved on to do battle with other windmills. De todo corazón, y a nombre de todos, gracias, Cristina.

This report to the membership would not be complete without mention of Espalista. At the time this article goes to print, there are close to 900 members signed up on this Yahoo!Groups forum. Of that number, a good 200 participate actively, generating an average of 1,500 messages a month. Espalista has become a wonderful resource for terminology, grammar, syntax, and business. Literally thousands of links of great value to translators and interpreters have been mentioned. It is very gratifying to see how so many people give of themselves unconditionally to help fellow SPD members.

...It is very gratifying to see how so many people give of themselves unconditionally to help fellow SPD members...

how so many people give of themselves unconditionally to help fellow SPD members. A great round of applause to our current moderators, Virginia Pérez-Santalla and Olga Lucía Mutis de Serna. By the way, their term will be up shortly, so I’m ready to receive volunteers for this very rewarding task. Please e-mail me.

At present, the Technical Commission (Rosalie Wells, Virginia Pérez-Santalla, Olga Lucía Mutis, and Pimpi Coggins) is hard at work compiling the information generated by Espalista, which we plan to have up on the SPD Website as a searchable glossary of terms.

Lastly, we are preparing a great slate of speakers for the ATA Annual Conference, to be held October 31 through November 3, 2001. I encourage you to sign up now for what promises to be a super event for the SPD membership.

Please do not hesitate to e-mail me if you have any ideas for the SPD. I can be reached at Rudy@SpanishEnglishServices.com.
Communication without Borders

There are facts that are so clear they obviate the need for bibliographical references. Currently, this is the case with world integration, in what has been called—following McLuhan—the global village, a term I would prefer to replace with the expression world village, so as to have in the mind’s eye not the theory of the global system, but the people here on Earth. Within that sense, the message broadcast by mass media neither acknowledges borders nor requires any visa to have ready access to any country or, indeed, to any home. In contrast with the business world, where an agreement, contract, or an exchange of stocks would be required, the media needs only to establish a connection. This is exactly the area where the media has excelled. Thus, a space has been created in which political and geographic limits have lost their meaning because they simply do not exist in the world of television, radio, or the Internet.

In this world village, the predominance of English also imposes English-language culture. As stated in a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization declaration, such a predominant influence carries with it a risk of hegemony of anglophone countries with its subsequent monolingual focus. Concern for what is happening now, and for future consequences of the predominance of English, was clearly foreseen during the 1995 meeting of the International Institute of Communications. The need to maintain one’s cultural identity and respect for ethnic and religious differences was addressed during that meeting. Concerns expressed even by the prevailing culture and language pointed to the limitations and losses that the international community would suffer if English were to become the only language.

The identity of a nation—understood as an ethnic group—has this fundamental attribute: indubitably, the language that its people learn at home during their first years of life. It is possible to change one’s habits (what one wears, eats, and thinks), but the language one learns as a child lives on. It even emerges as a support when one acquires a new language. Linguistic identity fosters solidarity among its speakers, and thus, possibilities and planning for a shared future. The importance language holds has propelled national states to promote the use of only one throughout their entire territory as a means of solidifying their statehood. To cite geographic extremes, examples range from Italy to China. That is why, for many countries, it is politically incorrect to say that several languages are spoken. There are reasons to support this attitude. A language represents another Weltanschauung, or view of the world, a different way of thinking and of organizing real and mental objects. Whilst seeking to integrate their ethnic minorities, national states have fostered, explicitly or implicitly, the elimination of linguistic differences.

Mass media (radio and especially television) share the same interests as national states, and they broadcast solely in one language within their territories. Currently, the media has gone beyond political boundaries in order to extend its influence throughout international linguistic communities or, as in the case of English, the entire world. The antagonism that has emerged in those spheres requires a more in-depth analysis than this. Notwithstanding, I offer below a more detailed vision of the situation in Spanish-speaking countries, in the hope of showing how they face both their external and internal challenges as they relate to mass communication.

The Hispanic Community

There is no doubt that the media plays an essential role in the preservation and diffusion of a language. Máximo Meuwé, a Chilean who conducts several Spanish programs on Nederland Radio, reports that “it is no longer a secret that, in about five years, the world media will be in the hands of five or six huge conglomerates.” Faced with this situation, he asks himself:

...a space has been created in which political and geographic limits have lost their meaning because they simply do not exist in the world of television, radio, or the Internet...
The influence of English has certainly crossed geographic borders, such as that separating Mexico and the United States. Television and the Internet have converted this and the other languages broadcast into a virtual stratum in all the regions where they are received. According to Cebrián Herreros, this situation “is something entirely new and is spreading given the fast and increasing changes in television.” Consequently, these new circumstances will require new ways to address and evaluate linguistic influences and interactions.

Within these new considerations resides the need for the media to use a stable and homogeneous language. Recent research has shown that, inasmuch as Spanish is concerned, television uses a standardized form which is neutral and understandable to most Spanish-speaking peoples. The immense geographical expanse covered by its viewers requires the use of that linguistic model. Hence the reason why television has sought to promote, as radio did in earlier years, a unified Spanish at national and international levels since the 1950s, and has achieved this objective to a great extent. Thanks to this, the concern that prevailed in the last century about the possible breakup of Spanish, as befell Latin, because it was used in such a vast territory where connections were difficult, has disappeared.

Undoubtedly, the reasons for promoting linguistic unity are not academic. Rather, they are market related. Once a friend of the old empire, the Spanish language has now become the bedfellow of the new empire—the realm of international television and its commercial interests. Cebrián Herreros says business “is not born from cultural identity so [its] interest is not in culture but in profit-making. It employs the language common to the greatest possible number of viewers as a springboard for selling programs and attracting more commercials.”

**The Sleeping Waves**

In the Americas—indeed, a continent belonging to all Americans, not just some—more than one thousand Indian languages are spoken. According to commercial television companies, none of these groups hold any market interest. Therefore, those languages are not used and television companies see no conflict in addressing those communities, as well as the rural areas in Hispanic America, in Spanish.

The attitude of institutions within the Hispanic community vis-à-vis the indigenous communities is shown in the book *Las ondas dormidas (The Sleeping Waves)* by Ana María Peppino. Peppino deals with the radio in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. She considers that, in contrast with television, radio offers a “social service from the moment it becomes a relevant channel to broadcast public interest announcements among different organizations and the community, or among individual people, for the purpose of responding to group and individual needs.” She later adds that “the radio is the media that has best broken the communication hierarchy. Day after day, we see how monopoly of the word is constantly interrupted by phone calls, letters, and even by the physical presence in the studio of those who, until recently, were passive listeners.”

Now, what social service does radio provide? In what sense has the radio broken the communication hierarchy? According to Peppino, the Patrimonio Indígena del Valle del Mezquital has used radio station XHD-FM “as an effective instrument for the promotion of literacy among indigenous groups in the area.” For Peppino, there is not even a need to mention the language in which literacy is being achieved. It is an obvious fact for her that it is in Spanish, and it is not questioned in her book. In any case, if the reader has any doubts, they are later resolved: the main objective of radio is “to work towards promoting literacy and the use of Spanish among indigenous populations in the region.”

As one may see, the communication hierarchy is not broken, but exacerbated. Proof of this can be found in the examples Peppino offers during interviews she conducted with various individuals. During one such interview, the head of a radio station explains that they have created a program in Spanish about the Náhuatl language, adding that only “other messages directed to the indigenous populations who do not yet speak or understand Spanish a little” are translated into Náhuatl.

*Continued on p. 44*
Language, Media, and National Identity Continued

messages are, of course, those of interest to the authorities who are supposedly trying to help these groups recapture their native language and culture. As Peppino states: “I believe it is very important for them to listen to their own language on the radio, because that would prove to them that: it cannot be such a bad thing to speak it if it is used on the radio.”

Social service, on the other hand, seems to be related to the advantage that radio offers for conveying messages from the authorities via “public interest announcements.” According to one interviewee, four or five days were once needed to establish communications with remote communities. Thanks to radio, communication is now instantaneous. As the mayor of the city of Jacala says: “When we convene communities to a meeting with assistant delegates, people show up thanks to the radio.” Obviously, the idea is that the indigenous population attends the meeting in order to listen to government officials.

Regarding the monopoly of the word, which, supposedly, has been broken, what happens is that townspeople use the radio only to send personal messages to their friends and family. Years ago, telephone broke that monopoly as we know it. That is why the city radio stations do not offer this type of service. Sending messages, in any case, is a service that is convenient to radio stations, as it helps maintain the interest and attention of its listeners. On the other hand, the possibility for the indigenous population to use radio to discuss their problems and opinions is not an option. In spite of Peppino’s good wishes and intentions, the monopoly of the word and communication hierarchy, apparently, have not been broken.

The Living Waves

Fortunately, in communities large and small, other positions—the living waves—have emerged to counteract the previous attitudes described above. One of the main concerns expressed during the Spanish Language Congress in Zacatecas was the use of Spanish in the mass media. According to León Gross, the legacy of a language is essential for preserving our identity in the shared home of new global technologies. And this should encourage us to be more attentive to our language, to guard and to preserve it, for it has the ability to become the guarantor of a community’s identity and in so doing, that community’s power to establish a realm of solidarity.

Naturally, Spanish speakers are bent on defending their language and culture. On the other hand, concern for other languages and cultures is almost nonexistent among them. At the Zacatecas Congress, at least at the television discussion table in which I participated, only the cases of the Catalan and Basque languages were mentioned. In those autonomous regions of Spain, which enjoy economic power and influence, media communication outlets that use the regional languages as well as Spanish have emerged. Thus, they keep and promote the culture and identity of the local people. This seems to be, or should be, the shape of mass media’s future.

However, in the Americas, the media proposal is always external in relation to ethnic groups. Of course, this situation is not surprising to us. It has been the same since colonial times throughout the Hispanic cultural and linguistic influence. However, a fact that merits highlighting is how some indigenous groups have given back to their communities an awareness and reaffirmation of their own identity through media, especially radio.

In the case of Mexico, the radio station of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, or INI, “La voz de la montaña” (XEZV), in the State of Guerrero, is an example of a more shared proposal. This radio station broadcasts in Spanish and three native languages—Mixteco, Tlapaneco, and Náhuatl—and is, as Alain Derbez says, “the first radio that serves the indigenous population and 90 percent under their own responsibility.” In the agreement that established it, the need to promote the development of the native languages of the region is explicitly stated. So, through “La voz de la montaña” listeners can hear not only the messages exchanged between people who wish to keep in communication with each other, but even complaints against Spanish-speaking officials.

As stated in a document from the INI, radio broadcasting, because of its low cost and limited coverage, is very appropriate for supporting a preliterate rural community. Accordingly, through XEZV, efforts are being made to recapture oral traditions and to support the unity, cohesion, and cultural identity of the communities. They seek to reinforce “local cultural values, which frequently are being threatened by independent centers that produce goods, services, education,
and culture.” The promotion of literacy and the use of the Spanish language are also included in its purpose, although Spanish is not considered the sole alternative, but as a second language. The idea is to start from the interests of the communities, and not “to educate the people following the model of a consumer society.”

Conclusion

Globalization of communications, as I have shown, generates conflicts in different areas. The Spanish-speaking community seeks its own cohesion in order to be able to face the challenge that English presents as the lingua franca in the international arena. It would be necessary for that community to realize now that one cannot apply policies that reject and oust ethnic groups of the Americas. Therefore, it must not try to impose one language and one culture within itself. If the goal is to be consistent, the Spanish model should not be imposed among minority groups. Such ethnic communities are, precisely, an alternative to facing the supposed end of cultural identities.

Fortunately, new movements have emerged within these ethnic groups that strive to preserve their language and culture, and insist upon changing policies that aim at dissolving indigenous populations in order to assimilate them into the dominant culture for policies that are based on their indigenous roots. These movements—that have sustained themselves for more than half a century—have been renewed and, as seen, their members have become aware of the importance of the media for pursuing their own purposes, and of their right to have a way of thinking and a language of their own.

Supremacy of a language does not seem to be justified at the present time to serve the coincidental needs of a nation and a state. Even the economic interests of the use of one language by the mass media may be overcome. The media offers a very important possibility for the establishment and development of languages. Television and, especially, radio reach the most remote regions. This has allowed for the standardization of one or several languages in different countries in all the continents, or even in groups of countries, such as the Hispanic or Arab nations. That is why, as in the Spanish community, the indigenous peoples of the Americas must continue to insist on owning their own space in the media. This way, the two communities will be able to take their place in the dialectics that confront the regional to the national, or the national to the international, both enriching and becoming richer in the process. Thus, within the world village, they will keep their identity: their culture, their language, and their own thinking.
Context means circumstances or facts surrounding a particular situation, event, or, as is the case in our domain, a given term. As translators, we are usually well aware of the significance of context for a proper target-language rendering. “How do you translate this word?” is a very frequent question we are asked. Our immediate response: “Can you be a bit more specific about context?” or “I need more context.” However, we may also tend to get overconfident, or even lazy, and miss the context, thus rendering an improper equivalent of a polysemantic term or phrase and causing concept drift.

In financial translations, context is paramount for key terms like equity, management, performance, principal, and capital. Let me use some examples to show what renditions are possible (target-language equivalents), when to use them (context), and why (meaning).

**Equity**

Equity is a beneficial interest in an asset. For example, a person who has a house worth $100,000 with a mortgage of $60,000 may be said to have $40,000 worth of equity in the house. It is equivalent to the Spanish terms capital invertido, fondos propios, or capital propio o líquido.

This Act protects homeowners with substantial equity in their property from fraudulent financing practices that could result in the loss of their homes.

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*Esta Ley protege a los propietarios de viviendas, que tengan un considerable capital invertido en ellas, contra las prácticas financieras fraudulentas que pudieran llevarlos a perder sus viviendas.*

However, in margin buying, equity (valor neto o residual) is the present market value of a customer’s securities less the debit balance in his account (that is, the amount borrowed from the broker to make the purchase).

Equity is also the net assets of a company, discounting all amounts owed to creditors. That is, net ownership, or patrimonio neto, fondos propios, and capital contable in Spanish. The shareholder’s equity, or the net worth, of an organization is its total assets less all liabilities and all capital charges. It is also called net asset value (NAV).

Translation gains and losses on foreign operations are accumulated and reported as other comprehensive income in shareholders’ equity.

*Las ganancias y pérdidas por conversión de moneda de las operaciones extranjeras se acumulan y se incluyen como otros ingresos globales en el patrimonio neto.*

Equity is the common share capital of a company. Such common shares of a company, especially those of a public company, are called equities (acciones ordinarias, renta variable). This is the only instance where equity is used in the plural.

A sizable portion of huge January bonus payments will move into equities.

*Una cantidad considerable de las grandes bonificaciones que se pagan en enero se invertirá en valores de renta variable.*

*Una cantidad considerable de las grandes bonificaciones que se pagan en enero se invertirá en acciones.*

**Management**

Management has been defined as “the art of getting things done through people” (Mary Parker Follett). But there is more to it than that.

First and foremost, management means the “process by which human efforts are coordinated and combined with other resources to accomplish organizational goals and objectives” (Woelfel, 1994). It is what the Spanish terms gestión, administración, gerencia, and dirección o dirección empresarial encompass.

The Advisory Group supports clients with financial analysis, international capital market transactions, investment...
management, banking, financial strategies, and other issues. El Grupo de Asesoramiento presta apoyo a los clientes en materia de análisis financiero, transacciones en los mercados de capital internacionales, gestión de inversiones, operaciones bancarias, estrategias financieras y otros aspectos afines.

Management may also refer to the people who control or direct a business or any other organization—the so-called managers who perform five basic functions: planning, organizing, directing, leading, and controlling. Therefore, we translate it as empresarios, gestores, gerentes, administradores, personal directivo, and gerencial o ejecutivo.

The consultant met with the appropriate management decision-makers.

El asesor se reunió con el personal directivo encargado de tomar decisiones al respecto.

The responsibility of fulfilling this commitment rests with every member of management.

Todos los gerentes tienen la responsabilidad de cumplir con este compromiso.

When we talk about management development, we are referring to management training (perfeccionamiento o formación del personal administrativo o de la función de gestión). Within the same semantic range, we speak of a management buy-out (MBO) to mean oferta pública de adquisición (OPA) presentada por la gerencia, adquisición de una empresa por los ejecutivos.

Management accounting, for example, deals specifically with how accounting data and other financial information is used to manage businesses. In Spanish, it is rendered as contabilidad de gestión o administración o contabilidad analítica o de costos (also cost accounting in English).

A management consulting firm (empresa asesora en dirección o administración de empresas) provides advice and technical assistance to help clients improve their operations.

Performance

Performance basically means the act of carrying out something, as well as something accomplished or carried out. As a financial term, performance is usually translated as resultado o resultados conseguidos o rendimiento o rentabilidad. For example:

Our performance increasingly demonstrates the benefits of our strategic investments in new products and sales coverage.

Los resultados demuestran cada vez más los beneficios de nuestras inversiones estratégicas en productos nuevos y mayor alcance de las ventas.

Keep in mind that past stock performance is never a guarantee of future results.

Tenga en cuenta que el rendimiento anterior de las acciones no es garantía alguna de los resultados futuros.

In mutual funds, there is usually a performance fee (comisión de ejecución; comisión por desempeño) charged by fund managers when their purchasing and selling help the fund to outperform certain market averages over a given period of time. It is also called an incentive fee.

A performance fund (fondo de rendimiento o rentabilidad) is a mutual fund that has more speculative investments (such as common stocks) than conservative ones (such as bonds). It is also called a go-go fund.

An equity investment—the ownership interest of common and preferred stockholders in a company—is inversiones en bolsa, en acciones o en capital social.

The English term principal and the Spanish word principal share only the idea of “main, important” as adjectives. In financial terms, principal is a sum of money on which interest is earned or a sum of money owed as a debt, upon which interest is calculated. Its Spanish equivalent is capital.

Interest shall be due at the rate of 8% per annum on the principal balance of the loan outstanding from time to time.

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Se pagará un interés del 8% anual sobre el saldo del capital del préstamo que esté pendiente en su momento.

Principal is also a person on whose behalf an agent or broker acts. This is translated as mandante, poderdante, cedente, or comitente in Spanish.

XYZ will acquire securities as agent for me or sell as principal to me.

XYZ adquirirá títulos valores en calidad de mi agente o me los venderá con carácter de mandante.

Furthermore, we may yet encounter another use of the term principal in reference to someone’s title or higher-rank position within an organization or to a main participant in a situation (a person having a leading or starring role).

John Smith is a principal and senior portfolio manager in the fixed-income portfolio management group for NY Trust Private Banking.

John Smith es un socio principal y administrador de cartera principal en el grupo de administración de carteras de renta fija de NY Trust Private Banking.

There will be a meeting among all the principals in the transaction.

Habrá una reunión entre todos los protagonistas de la operación.

Capital

As for the English term capital (the total value of the assets of a person minus liabilities, as well as the money contributed by the principals to an organization to enable it to function), it is usually equivalent to its Spanish cognate capital.

Any income earned by the investments should be entirely incidental to the objectives of capital growth.

However, there are many instances where there is no need to render it as such in the target language, or even to mention it at all. Other terms are used to render the meaning. For example, capital-debt ratio is coeficiente de endeudamiento; capital resources is recursos propios o patrimonio; and capital asset pricing model is modelo de valoración de activos financieros.

To sum up, in financial translations, as in any other domain, we always need to be aware of the circumstances or facts surrounding a particular term to be faithful to the original text, render a successful translation, and enjoy a financially profitable career.

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When the translator reads a foreign text, a reality other than his own is imposed upon him. Another voice speaks to him. Another spirit invades him. But when he attempts to convey what he has understood from that voice, he is left alone with his own voice. Then, after capturing the foreign text and prior to expressing his own, the text ceases to be foreign to him and he finds himself in a state of conception.

This state of conception is a peculiar circumstance in which he feels alone and yet connected to the entire human race by the congenial companionship of his/her/my words. To paraphrase Paul Valéry, one could say that “between the void and the pure unborn event,” the translator “awaits the echo of his inner greatness.”

Imprisoned within that well of solitude, he will endeavor to give birth through two opposite processes:

1. To procreate a text in which the voice of the author may be heard without relinquishing his own voice.

2. To procreate a text in which his own voice may be heard without ignoring the voice of the author.

A naïve optimist might think that the translator is capable of reproducing another person’s reality. A pessimistic solipsist would contend that the translator is condemned to his solitude, that he can only express what is his and only his.

Ignoring naïveté and skeptical of solipsism, the translator strives to re-produce. He is confident that he will succeed because he knows, as Walt Whitman knew, that each atom of the author also belongs to him.

“Aye your word and let your mind explode,” Nietzsche whispers to him. He believes that this outburst would be gratifying, not traumatic. Something like propagation. Or birth. Precisely because it is a kind of division. The translator is divided or split by the experience, with one eye on the author and the other on his pen or on the keyboard of his PC. He struggles between the letter and the spirit of what he is translating, between the style of the author and the norms and usage of his own mother tongue, between literalness and naturalness… Perhaps between being faithful or being free? No! If he manages to escape the confinement of the univocal reality which the original text supposedly imposes on him and the snares of his own subjectivity, he will make his contribution as an inter-locutor with faithful freedom. Perhaps obscurely, perhaps with clarity?

“The darkness of the shadows of the pines depends on the brightness of the moon” (Kodo Sawaki, Zen Master).

The translator will direct his efforts toward being faithful without sacrificing naturalness, and being natural without sacrificing faithfulness. To achieve this, he must be as flexible in molding himself to the reality of the discourse as water flowing in a stream must conform to the shape of the boulders it must pass through.

...The translator will direct his efforts toward being faithful without sacrificing naturalness, and being natural without sacrificing faithfulness...

Now, what is there then between reality and solitude, between the forces that tug at us from outside and those which urge us to express ourselves, between the well-adapted Ego and the Self? There is play, the transitional space (Donald W. Winnicott). Between reality and solitude there is creation, the process that begins with a reshuffling of previously established forms (Hector J. Fiorini). That is exactly what happens to the translator when he passes from capturing to conception.

The translator is a re-creator, a writer circumscribed by the idea that he must re-create. The act of creation incites him like a beam of light that sneaks in through the tiny barred window of a cell. (The antonym of creator is “prisoner.”) Even though his ultimate goal is to fade away, leaving behind him a single, ideally unscathed voice (that of the author), it is well known that the equivalence of two discourses is only an ideal. He may strive to attain it asymptotically and yet never reach it. It is a utopian task, and

Continued on p. 50
the most unbiased innocence that he is capable of, as a man of letters, not as a linguist. He is like a musician who, while playing an instrument, is not at that very moment a musicologist.

The grace one enjoys when translating is intimately linked to the sense of truth that a precise re-creation produces. In translation, science and art are combined as if they were two roads that "if traveled upon without fear, with the proper insight, commitment, and thirst for adventure lead us into the same mystery" (Enrique Pichon Rivière). The translator is a thirsty adventurer who fluctuates, just like fantasy, between what is real and what is imagined, and who, like all storytellers, places himself in a critical vantage point to take thorough possession of reality, remodeling it (Gianni Rodari).

Of all literary genres, translation is the most subjected to the categories established by logic, to the rigors of veracity. This is why it may be considered both an art and a science. It is a regular job where one cannot take an indefinite leave of absence. The translator cannot go for a walk or go fishing at his whim with the Idea that he must communicate, as casually as if he were on vacation. Besides, that Idea is not only a thought, it is also an emotion, a fantasy, a desire…. That is the reason why, at the moment of conception, the translator is an artist, not a scientist. His experience comes into play, but he should proceed with the most unbiased innocence that he is capable of, as a man of letters, not as a linguist. He is like a musician who, while playing an instrument, is not at that very moment a musicologist.

The grace one enjoys when translating is intimately linked to the sense of truth that a precise re-creation produces. In translation, science and art are combined as if they were two roads that “if traveled upon without fear, with the proper insight, commitment, and thirst for adventure lead us into the same mystery” (Enrique Pichon Rivière). The translator is a thirsty adventurer who fluctuates, just like fantasy, between what is real and what is imagined, and who, like all storytellers, places himself in a critical vantage point to take thorough possession of reality, remodeling it (Gianni Rodari).

The remodeling of reality through the word, and the release of one’s own creativity, are the everyday tasks of writers and translators, their housekeeping chores in that common home where they recognize each other as members of the same family.

In the end, for both writers and translators, it is an act of unveiling, pulling back the curtain that separates us from the Word—our own and that of other human beings, the Word of our parole and our langue, the Word of our own individual speech and that of the people, the Word that forges who we are without our awareness, the Word that lies hidden within us and strives to be discovered...that feels our feelings...that lurks within our lurking...that captures our own capture... ...because the hunter becomes the target of the prey.

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**ATA Japanese Language Division Publications Available**

| **An Introduction to the Professions of Translation and Interpretation** |
| --- | --- |
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It has been said that the British and the Americans are divided by a common tongue. So are the people of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In view of this rich linguistic mosaic, it is not surprising that everyday words differ between Spanish-speaking countries. Popcorn, for instance, is known as *poporopo* in Guatemala, *crispetas* in Colombia, *cotufas* in Venezuela, *millo* in Panama, *pochoelo* or *pororo* in Argentina, *esquitas* or *palomitas* in Mexico, *rosetas de maíz* in various countries, and, in a roasted form, as *cancha* in Peru.

All these popcorn-loving people speak the same language, but the variety of words they use in reference to the same object stems from the fact that they communicate using different Spanish dialects. Viewed from this perspective, the Spanish language is an abstraction consisting of the sum total of its dialects.

To complicate matters even further, not only do the various dialectal forms of Spanish use different words for the same object, but the same word can also have multiple meanings from one Spanish dialect to another and refer to a variety of diverse concepts. A woman testifying in a court setting, for instance, might state at the witness stand “*Esperaba la guagua.*” If she hails from Chile, she just informed the court that she is pregnant, as “*la guagua*” in Chilean Spanish means “baby.” However, were the woman to come from Cuba, far from being pregnant, she would have simply stated that she was waiting for the bus, which is a “*guagua*” in Cuba. The two women said the same thing, in the same language, but not in the same dialect.

Furthermore, language evolves and changes all the time in a dialectics fueled by cultural and social factors and the human imagination. Thus, in present-day Cuba, “*la niña de los ojos verdes*” is not “the green-eyed girl” we would expect in other Spanish-speaking countries, but a police car, as police cars in Castro’s police force now have green lights on their roofs that have given rise to their new and somewhat misleading name.¹

There are numerous sources available relating to the dialectal forms of Spanish, such as the *Diccionario de la lengua salvadoreña* or the *Diccionario de Cubanismos*, which are very helpful to the translator and interpreter.² Still, as stated previously, language changes and evolves constantly, and all too often these secondary sources are woefully outdated. Thus, any reference work dealing with a specific English/Spanish lexicon, in order to be valid, must make use of numerous native informants. This is the methodology I used, combining secondary sources and native informants, for two books I wrote some 10 years ago which I have updated several times: *Articles of Clothing and Adornment Terminology Including Accessories, Textiles, Jewelry, Cosmetics, and Colors* (English-Spanish and Spanish-English) and the *Glossary of Insults and Invective* (English-Spanish and Spanish-English).³

...All these people speak the same language, but the variety of words they use in reference to the same object stems from the fact that they communicate using different Spanish dialects...

I teach translation and interpretation courses both at California State University at Long Beach and at UCLA/UNEX. Year after year I have had students in my classes from every major Spanish-speaking country. Starting with a list of English terms relating to articles of clothing and adornment and a list of insults, I researched the equivalent terminology in numerous secondary sources. These lists were then studied in my classes with my students. Many of the students had recently come to the U.S. from their native countries. Terms that each new group of students came up with year after year were preserved. Terms that came up only once were discarded. I also have given seminars on terminology for clothing and insults at the annual conferences of both the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators and the California Court Interpreters Association. In each case, over 100 members participated in a spirited exchange of information. As the members who contributed to these seminars came from every major Spanish-speaking country, are translators and interpreters themselves, and consequently excellent
Dialectal Dialectics and Diatribes Continued

native informants, my terminology was both enriched and updated (the last seminar was given at the NAJIT 2000 Annual Conference in Miami).4

Terminology for articles of clothing and adornment and insults was chosen because of its importance to the translator and interpreter in general and to the forensic interpreter in particular. It was also chosen for its rich dialectal lexical variety.

Clothing and articles of adornment terminology is of crucial importance to the forensic interpreter. Such terms come up in many court cases involving identification of suspects, petty theft, burglary, or rape. The terms one might have to translate can range from “chapstick” or “rosewood compact” to “star sapphire” or “signet ring,” and from “tank” or “halter top” to “plaid overcoat.” In cases of rape or petty theft, for instance, the term “bra” has been known to come up frequently. A bra is tallador in Costa Rica, corpíño in Costa Rica and Argentina, talle in El Salvador, sujetador in Spain, soutièn in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, brasier and portabusto in Mexico, and ajustador in Cuba. Colloquial words for bra are also used, such as chichero and paracaídas in Mexico. However, corpíño is a bodice in Colombia and a camisole in Mexico. Cartera is generally a wallet, except in Cuba where it means purse. Purse is, in most Spanish-speaking countries, bolsa, or bolsó, which can also mean pocket, which is normally bolsillo, and so on.

Other words that differ greatly between Spanish-speaking countries are bathing suit, overalls, panties, slip, and earrings under the jewelry heading. For instance:

### Bathing suit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traje de baño, bañador, trusa (Cuba)</td>
<td>Bathing suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calzoneta (Guatemala)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chingue (Colombia)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malla, pantalón de baño (Ecuador)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calzón de baño (Argentina, Puerto Rico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vestido de baño (Colombia, Peru)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pantalona, ropa de baño (Peru)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overalls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overol (everywhere)</td>
<td>Bra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bragas (Venezuela)</td>
<td>Bragas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buzo (Chile)</td>
<td>Busto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chango (Mexico)</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enterizo, mono, pantalones de zahones, pantalones de peto (Spain)</td>
<td>Overalls worn by children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jardíneros (Argentina, Colombia)</td>
<td>For overalls worn by children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mameluco (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unión (jumpsuit in Northern Mexico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Panties (Underpants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blumers (Cuba, Venezuela, El Salvador, Costa Rica)</td>
<td>Panty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bombacha (Argentina, Uruguay,)</td>
<td>Bombacha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bragas (Spain)</td>
<td>Bragas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calzones (Guatemala, Colombia, El Salvador, Costa Rica)</td>
<td>Underpants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pantaletas (Venezuela, Mexico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pantalones (Colombia)</td>
<td>Pantalones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chones (Mexico)</td>
<td>Chones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calzoncillos (Mexico, Peru—male underwear)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Slip (Petticoat)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combinación (Argentina, Spain, Chile—old-fashioned)</td>
<td>Slip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crinolina, enagua (half slip: Chile, Mexico, Peru)</td>
<td>Crinolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enaguas (Mexico)</td>
<td>Enaguas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faldilla (Mexico)</td>
<td>Faldilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forro (Venezuela)</td>
<td>Forro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fondo (Mexico, Colombia, Argentina)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fustán, media falda, medio fondo, peticote (Panama)</td>
<td>Fustán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refajo (Cuba, Spain)</td>
<td>Refajo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sayuela (half-slip: Spain)</td>
<td>Sayuela</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Earrings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aretes, pendientes (everywhere)</td>
<td>Earring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zarcillos, aros (Argentina, Chile)</td>
<td>Aretes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pantallas (Puerto Rico)</td>
<td>Pantalles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caravanas (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapas (Nicaragua, Honduras)</td>
<td>Chapas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>argollas (Venezuela—round hoops)</td>
<td>Argollas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>candongas (round—Colombia)</td>
<td>Candongas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some words, such as bra or earrings, also have compound forms which include dialectal variations:

**Bra:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strapless</td>
<td>Sin tirantes, sin breteles (Arg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long-line</td>
<td>De peto largo, de talle larga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bra clasp**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corchete de sostén, abrochadura, gancho de sostén, cierre, prendadura</td>
<td>Bra clasp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bra strap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tirantes, breteles (Argentina)</td>
<td>Bra strap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bra (cup)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taza (Argentina)</td>
<td>Taza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copa (Mexico, Venezuela, Chile)</td>
<td>Copa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Note that, not only the term for this article of clothing changes from one Spanish dialect to another, but so do its various parts [cup, strap], which affects its compound forms.

Earrings:

**Earrings, clip-on**

*Aretes sobrepuestos, “clips”* (Argentina)

**Earrings, drop**

*Arracadas, pendientes, aretes largos*

**Earrings, gold post**

*Aretes con poste de oro*

**Earrings, hoop**

*Arracadas, aros, argollas* (Peru, Mexico, Costa Rica)

**Earrings, pendant**

*Aretes pendientes*

**Earrings, pierced**

*Aretes agujerados*

**Ear stud**

*Dormilona, arete pegado o corto* (Central America)

Insults are just as important to the translator and interpreter as the articles of clothing and adornment mentioned above. Their dialectal variations are even more plentiful. Many of the criminal cases that end up before the courts are the direct result of invective. Not only are there many crimes triggered by insults, but abusive language is also an integral part of reprehensible behavior in general, ranging from drugs and prostitution to rape and child abuse. Consequently, it is not surprising that insults do come up in court time and time again, mainly in the form of testimony.

Italo Calvino, in *Il cavaliere inesistente* (*The Non-Existing Knight*), the first volume of his trilogy *I nostri antenati* (*Our Ancestors*), had already underscored, in epic terms, the importance to be given to an accurate translation of insults. Calvino, in the first volume of the trilogy, unfolds the vast canvas of a battlefield where Moors and Christians hurl invectives at one another, and where each side must know the degree of the insult received in order to retaliate at the right level. This proves difficult, as both sides speak a variety of languages and dialects, and thus cannot understand one another. This might result in tarnished honor and a lasting blemish on the otherwise spotless coat of arms one transmits to one’s descendants. To avoid this unutterable and unendurable catastrophe, Calvino postulates a roving corps of interpreters, mounted on light and swift steeds, who catch insults on the wing, and translate them on the hoof, so to speak. By common accord, and as an indication of the essential role carried out by said dragomans: “Questi interpreti, da una parte e dall’altra s’era tacitamente convenuto che non bisognava ammazzarli.” (“These interpreters, by tacit agreement on both sides, were not to be killed.”).

With abusive or taboo language, as with everything else in Spanish, meaning varies from dialect to dialect. The word *papaya* might mean, for instance, a delicious fruit in Mexico and a woman’s sexual organs in Cuba, where the delicious fruit is a *fruta bomba*.

As with clothing, I have chosen words here that are the most richly representative of dialectal variations in insults: male sexual organ, female sexual organ, homosexual, pimp, snitch, stupid, and whore:

**Male Sexual Organ**

*Banano, bicho, birote, broca, cabezón, camote, caoba, carajo, carallo, cosita, chafalote* (Mexico); *chaíra, chiflo, chile, choncha, chora, chorrito, chorro, chucho* (Cuba); *chuffle* (El Salvador); *daga* (Puerto Rico); *diablito, elbi, elote, explorador, galleta* (Costa Rica); *garrote, hierro, hueso, inga* (Cuba), *juanito, lechero, longaniza, macana, machaca, machete, meadero, mecasale* (El Salvador); *mirasol, mitra* (Puerto Rico); *mocongó* (Puerto Rico); *moña* (El Salvador); *morronga* (Central America); *morongo* (Central America); *morsilla, nabo, la negra, nene, orejas, pacaya* (El Salvador); *paja, pájaro, palo, paloma, partes nobles, pelona, pesquesuda, pico, picha, pichicuaca* (El Salvador); *pichón, pichula* (Chile); *pija, pinco* (Puerto Rico); *pinga* (Cuba); *pirinola* (little boy’s penis, birdie), *pirula, pistola, pita, pito, pizarrín, pláterano, popeta, poya, prieta, reata, rifle, rodillo, salame* (Argentina); *tolete* (Cuba); *tornillo, tranca, tronco, vara, velga, verga, vergallito, víbora, vivora, yuca* (Puerto Rico)

Continued on p. 54
Dialectal Dialectics and Diatribes Continued

Female Sexual Organ

Araña, bizcocho, bollo, boyo (Cuba); braquena (Puerto Rico); cajeta (Argentina); casita de paja (Puerto Rico); cocho (El Salvador, Mexico); concha, coño, cuca (Venezuela, El Salvador); cucharacha (Puerto Rico); cuevita, culo, chango, chocha, chocho, chuca, dona, finquita (Puerto Rico); gata, gatacua-cua (Puerto Rico); nalgas, nena (Puerto Rico); nido, paloma, pan, panocha, papaya, papayoñon, pashpa, pepa, pepita, pinche, pitaya, pupusa, raja, rajada, tamal, torta, yoyo (El Salvador)

Homosexual

Aceite (Cuba); biñirita (Cuba); bugarrón (Puerto Rico); ciendago (Cuba); cochón (Nicaragua), cua-cua (Puerto Rico); cuarenta y uno (Mexico); culastrón, culero, cundango (Cuba); champe, chuparosa, de los otros, flor, fresco, joto, loca, mamplora, marica, maricón, mariposa, nena (Puerto Rico); pájaro, pargo, pato, piruja, pirujo, pirul, plumero, puto, triangulo, volteado, yiyi (Cuba)

Pimp

Alcahuete, alcaucil, cabrón (Peru); cafiche (Chile); caficio (Argentina); cortejo (Puerto Rico); chivo (El Salvador); cholo, chulo, fundillero, gancho, jebo, padrote (Puerto Rico)

Snitch

Alcahuete (Argentina, Chile); alcaucil (Argentina); apuntador (Argentina); cotorra, chirrión, choreja (El Salvador); dedo, oreja, perico, rata, sacón, soplón (El Salvador)

Stupid

Adoquin (Cuba); aguacate (El Salvador); baboso, bereco (El Salvador); bobo, bruto, buey, burro, cebollín (Cuba); cebollón (Cuba); cretino, estúpido, fresa, gago (Venezuela); guaje (El Salvador, Mexico); lirio, maje, menso, necio, papo (El Salvador); payo, pelotudo, pendejo, poca luz, sañado, socotroco (Cuba); soroce, suato, tapado, tarado, tonto, totoreco (El Salvador)

Whore

Araña, ardilla (Puerto Rico); bortin (Puerto Rico); bruja, brusca (El Salvador); callejera, congalería, cuero, cusca, golfa, gorrón, gorrorna, guerillera (Puerto Rico); hijera, jaina, jeba, josiadera (Puerto Rico); maleta, paheula, pepereneche (El Salvador); piruja, pluma, púchica, puta, ramera, talonera (El Salvador—mostly exclamative)

Almost every so-called bad word has many dialectal variations in Spanish. The ones listed above have more than most, and have a higher frequency level than most. Keeping up with lexical evolution in one dialect is hard enough. However, with three or four, such as British-English, American-English, and Australian-English, or the French spoken in Belgium, Canada, France, and Switzerland, the difficulty increases exponentially. In Spanish, with 20 major dialects, the task is even more daunting—but, what fun.

Notes


On Translating Paul Verlaine  Continued from p. 36

(rhymes, inner and outer, conscious contrapuntal sound-play, alliteration, and the like) and of those flexible rhythms that, while virtually never violating the formal constraints, observe them with an almost whimsical respect, as if flippantly accepting their challenge. As he says in the preface to a collection of Verlaine’s poems a generation after the poet’s death: “Oui, Verlaine a créé une poésie . . . où les rythmes, libres et brisés, gardent une harmonie délicieuse, où les strophes tournent et chantent, comme une ronde enfantine, où les vers, qui restent des vers—et parmi les plus exquis—sont déjà de la musique” (Choix de poésies de Paul Verlaine [Paris, Charpentier, 1926], pp. ii-iii). A music, I might add, that lilts through all his best verse and even much of his not-so-great, and that loses irreparably, as one might guess, when it is not read aloud.

A poet-translator acquaintance of mine recently told me that my versions “beg to be read aloud, too, like Verlaine’s.” I thanked her and told her that I felt one should be able to say that about all poetry—all literature, in fact. But that’s where we came in....
Dear colleagues:

I feel very honored and fortunate to have the opportunity to work with all of you in this new phase of our association.

Like everybody else, I lead a hectic life, so this was a decision that required careful thought. What really prompted me to accept the position as chair was that we are about to make important changes that will help the ATA accreditation program reach a new level of professional recognition and excellence.

I am very committed to the implementation of the Hamm Report recommendations because I truly believe that they will streamline our program and bring a welcome challenge that we, as professional translators and interpreters, must strive to meet.

Many of you are probably wondering who I am.

I am a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1985 I obtained a degree (B.A. equivalent) in legal translation from the University of Buenos Aires. This is a four-year program taught at the School of Law and Social Sciences to train translators rigorously in legal translation. Legal translators are considered expert witnesses in trials when foreign language documents are introduced as evidence. Our profession is regulated by law and translators are legally liable for their work, having to sign and seal officially each translation submitted to court or any other government agency.

After graduating, I traveled to England to do a one-year postgraduate course in translation at the London School of Translators and Interpreters, which is no longer in existence. It was a great chance to refine my translation skills and live in a different culture.

Upon my return to Argentina, I worked as a bilingual secretary; one of my duties was to translate business and financial documents. A year later I interviewed for an in-house translator position at one of the major law firms in the country and was very fortunate to be accepted. This position provided wonderful on-the-job training. Under the scrutiny of 20 lawyers, the translation department had to work on documents from different areas of the law. Most of our clients were U.S. firms doing business in Argentina.

In 1990 I moved to Houston, Texas, for personal reasons. Eight months later I started working as an in-house translator and project coordinator for a translation bureau where I was also trained as a consecutive and simultaneous interpreter. In 1991 I achieved ATA accreditation for translation from English into Spanish.

After almost two years at the translation agency, I decided to try my luck as a full-time freelance translator and conference interpreter in order to build a client base because relocation from Houston was imminent. As an interpreter, I traveled out of state once a month and soon realized that translation was my true passion.

We moved to Denver, Colorado, in 1993 and shortly thereafter I stopped working as a conference interpreter. For a few years, I evaluated tests given by several translation agencies to screen prospective translators. This was a valuable opportunity to realize that I did enjoy grading and comparing translation styles.

In 1995 I was asked to become an ATA grader, which proved to be a very rewarding and challenging job. The most positive aspect is that it forces me to review my own skills, to keep informed of changes and updates in the language, and to be in contact with other colleagues who also have a profound commitment and love for our profession. This is a unique opportunity that is similar to taking an ongoing training course, where I never cease to learn, and where I am forced to leave aside my ego to accept my faults and capture every opportunity to learn from them.

Our English into Spanish workgroup is a close-knit group of full-time freelance colleagues who represent a varied cross-section from Latin America and Spain, and who relish the opportunity to work together and learn from each other. Since we are practicing translators, we are able to gauge the type of challenges that professionals in this language combination are faced with daily. We are very aware of the market demands and the quality of work that is expected from translators in this group. We voluntarily take turns being language chair and everybody has equal input in the decision-making process. Two years ago, it was my turn to serve as language chair, and it has been a very enriching experience.

One of the goals of our association should be to uphold the highest ideals in translation, and I know we can achieve this through accreditation.

My sincere thanks to Ann Macfarlane for the opportunity to contribute to the ATA and the accreditation program. I also would like to express my admiration and gratitude to Shuckran Kamal and Celia Bohannon for their outstanding job as leaders of the accreditation program. Their hard work and extraordinary vision have helped our program attain a new level of excellence that marked the standard for this new phase. I intend to continue in their steps under their guidance.

I would also like to thank Terry Hanlen, accreditation program manager, who is usually the face and voice of our program, as well as the Accreditation Committee and all the language chairs and graders, who continue to devote many hours of hard work and dedication to this volunteer task they have graciously undertaken.

I think that, by belonging to the ATA, we all have the same objective: to enhance the level of our profession and gain true recognition for the thorough, dedicated, and invaluable work that we, as professional translators, do. By challenging ourselves daily and making a true commitment to learn and improve our skills and to deliver a good quality product, we will have made an important contribution to our industry.

In the next few years, the ATA Accreditation Committee will introduce a number of significant changes. Our goal is to bring the accreditation program to a new level of maturity and professionalism. I will be addressing these issues in future columns.

We have the opportunity to do things right. Now is our chance to seize it.
The Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS), an ATA chapter for almost a year, was established in April of 1988 as a forum for professional translators and interpreters in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Throughout its 13-year history, NOTIS has served as an outlet for its members to, among other things, educate local business communities about the benefits and importance of working with trained T&I professionals in order to raise awareness and respect for the value of the profession. NOTIS also encourages its members to strive for the highest quality standards in their work.

These ambitious objectives are a testament to NOTIS’ commitment to what it believes is the importance of the T&I profession not only to the international community, but also its essential role within the local community. NOTIS deems activism at the grassroots level as the key factor in achieving its goals. These include providing information to newcomers and seasoned professionals, enhancing professional skills, protecting and safeguarding the rights and interests of professional translators and interpreters, and seeking to influence public policy as it applies to translators and interpreters at the local and national levels. This obligation to enhanced professional development is boldly demonstrated through the actions of NOTIS’ various committees, member benefits, and the future it envisions for the T&I profession.

NOTIS utilizes the expertise and talent of the entire membership through its many working committees. Committee members handle such areas as computers and translation, programs (soon to include ATA accreditation workshops and exams), hospitality, interpreting, membership, and client education. This last committee is of particular significance, since client education is one of the most important and beneficial issues not only to NOTIS, but also to the entire profession.

Other committees diligently coordinate the various member benefits NOTIS offers. The Directory Committee produces and distributes the membership NOTIS Directory of Translators and Interpreters and the electronic NOTIS InfoBase. The NOTIS News and Publications Committees are responsible for the NOTIS News, the chapter’s quarterly newsletter. This committee also handles any NOTIS fliers, promotional brochures, and other materials that may be needed for public relations activities.

In addition to these committees, NOTIS members can also participate in various special interest groups. For example, The Slavic Special Interest Group serves as a home within the chapter. The group strives to encourage the top three activities for building interest, not to mention clientele—networking, networking, and networking. Members can also look forward to the establishment of Japanese and Portuguese special interest groups.

All in all, through activism, networking, committee establishment, member commitment, and programmatic evolution, NOTIS is succeeding exponentially in creating an atmosphere in the community for enlightenment and knowledge and information sharing. Recognizing the profession as an ever-changing entity, future goals include ways to continue educating the public, clients, and persons in related fields about translation and interpretation. Keep an eye on their Website, found at www.notisnet.org, for news, client education pieces, events, and insightful ways of how the industry is growing and evolving.

Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society Seeks Volunteer Advertising Manager

Would you like to undertake a short-term task for NOTIS with big returns to the organization? Can you make telephone calls once in a while? Are you an organized person? If so, please consider volunteering to serve as the advertising manager for the NOTIS 2002 Directory. You will need to send out two letters to companies who might be interested in advertising in NOTIS and follow up with a phone call or two. This is an easy job, since NOTIS advertising sells itself. The main task is to keep track of the sales—between 15 and 20 ads total, so it is quite manageable.

Please consider giving a few hours of your time to help out with this important task. You will receive the grateful thanks of your colleagues and the satisfaction of knowing you’ve made a practical difference. The job runs from May to August and takes about four hours a month. Please write to our Directory Committee chairman, Caitlin Walsh, at cwalsh@nwlink.com if you wish to volunteer or if you have any questions.

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ATA’s 2001 Annual Conference: Los Angeles, California • October 31-November 3, 2001
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. Please make your submissions by the 25th of the month to be included in the next issue.

Yours truly is now into his ninth year as editor of the publication, is this International Standards, the Latin name for the California version of this plant, not given previously in this column: Monardella villosa. Previous queries have concentrated, naturally, on rendering the Latin, but Gianvi Figari added something new when he provided a derivation of the modern English name. It comes from Middle English puliól real, which is in turn the Anglo-Norman “puliol,” meaning thyme.

(E-Sp 1-01/7) (townhouse): Audrey Feldman suggests “condominio horizontal.” Ricky Lacina was willing to get into the specifics of what townhouses are, which we appreciate, for it helps to make an accurate response possible. Her California experience is that with a townhouse, the contents within are owned, but not the walkways, grass, pool, etc. With a condo, the interior contents, such as drapes, appliances, and so forth, do not even include the structure’s roof. Both townhouses and townhouses imply a manager’s association and payment of a fee for that. A condo is like a privately owned apartment in a common owned setting.

In contrast, a townhouse is usually half a duplex in a group of like duplexes, typically with two floors. “Casas en serie” tells one nothing, and sounds like Northern Ireland. Not all townhouses are “lujosas,” and “casa adosada” is a halfway-term because it fails to make the distinction between a plain duplex and a townhouse. Most people in California whose language is Spanish will say “Mi primo tiene un townhouse,” for example, “porque su condominio ya le quedaba chico.”

Marina Lopez notes that the very concept of townhouse, being a recent addition to the landscape of modern cities, will seem alien to most Spanish speakers, and any term used to designate it will not be an everyday word. At a recent course given at the University of Salamanca, a Spanish sociologist spoke of “la urbanización de chalets adosados” as a phenomenon that is now reshaping the culture and lifestyle of Spanish city dwellers. Marina believes “casa adosada” carries the meaning, as does “casas en serie,” even if the term sounds strange to our ears.

(E-F 11-2000/2) (“surveillante d’extérieur”): J. M. Léger says that the colloquial term for this person who keeps an eye on students (“surveiller”) and main-

(E-G 5-01/3) The Chattering Classes, meaning educated or intellectual people considered as a social group given to the expression of liberal opinions, needs a good German equivalent, as requested by a transatlantic colleague.

(F-E 5-01/4) The phrase “premier accident en faute” proved to be a problem for a transatlantic correspondent. Responding to a tight deadline for completion, he initially thought perhaps culpable might be a good rendering in English, but eventually settled for accident for which the driver is responsible.

(G-E 5-01/5) From a transatlantic correspondent comes a query about “Küchenzeile,” a feature found in suites of a very fancy hotel: “...mit ausreichend Schrankraum und voll ausgestatteter Küchenzeile sowie Wirtschaften.”

(F-G 5-01/6) Apparently initially coined to convey the meaning of opening up borders, “Entgrenzung” appeared in a discussion of happenings within a company. If so, how would it be rendered into English in that context?

(It-Sp 5-01/7) The first-ever query in this column involving one Romance language into another is technical in nature: Spanish, please, for one nothing, and sounds like Northern Ireland. Not all townhouses are “lujosas,” and “casa adosada” is a halfway-term because it fails to make the distinction between a plain duplex and a townhouse. Most people in California whose language is Spanish will say “Mi primo tiene un townhouse,” for example, “porque su condominio ya le quedaba chico.”

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(E-E 5-01/8) The phrase лято и дружно struck Cappie as less than perfectly clear in a sentence from an article on Sweden’s Olof Palme. Of him it was said that he was a “памятный борец за равенство и национальную терпимость, лято и дружно. Does the phrase refer to his two quite distinct methods of carrying on the battle?

Replies to Old Queries

(E-L 1-01/5) (Pennyroyal): Sharlee Merner Bradley provides the Latin name for the California version of this plant, not given previously in this column: Monardella villosa. Previous queries have concentrated, naturally, on rendering the Latin, but Gianvi Figari added something new when he provided a derivation of the modern English name. It comes from Middle English puliól real, which is in turn the Anglo-Norman “puliol,” meaning thyme.

(E-F 11-2000/2) (“surveillante d’ex-
tains discipline (including assigning detention hours to wayward students) is “pion.” J.M. recalls having to sweat out the punitive task assigned by one “surveillance d’extérieur” of writing a four-page essay entitled *The Heat of the Refrigerator.* [That’s not hard! Just go around to the back of the machine and you will find plenty of objective reality on which to base such an essay - ed.] The concept of the “surveillance d’extérieur” is unique, says J.M., but maybe monitor or prefect come close. J.M. suggests student monitor.

(F-E 2-01/3) (Algerian sale-of-goods document cluster): Joyce Baghdadi provides *inked stamp* for (3.a) “cachet humilde,” which should read “cachet humide.” This, as opposed to the dry seal notaries use in the United States.(3.b) “C/C”) is “compte courant” = *current account,* which makes the “chez vous” easy enough. (3.c) “paiement sous réserves” is *payment with reservations,* and (3.d) “MT” might be “modification des travaux,” but lack of context poses problems.

(F-E 2-01/4) (“incorporables”): Again, Joyce Baghdadi responds, stating that these are items such as pumps, bolts, concrete, and so forth, that will actually become a part of the construction, as opposed to things which will not. Examples of the latter are heavy equipment tools, scaffolding, etc., which are considered construction equipment. A decent English rendering might be *permanent construction components.*

(G-E 10-2000/4) (“Petisierung”): Anonymous confirms Sean Maher’s assertion that the word is a misspelling of “Peptisierung,” meaning production of a *colloidal solution.* But other acids, he says, would also do the job. The cited nitrification reaction looks plausible on paper, but it won’t happen in the real world.

(G-E 2-01/6) (“BuU-Stoffe”): Noting that a Swiss bias seems to exist for this term, Teresa Reinhardt states that the abbreviation stands for “Bewirtschaftung und Unterhalt” (von Infrastruktur wie Anlagen, Gebäuden, Geräten...). She suggests, roughly, *use and maintenance materials.*

(G-E 2-01/7) (“...8 Uhr p’”: David Goldman believes it might stand for “pünktlich,” i.e., that the patent had to be submitted by eight in the morning and not a minute later. Otherwise, presumably mention would have been made of “20 Uhr,” no?

(R-E 2-01/9) (не по дням, а по часам): Loren Tretyakov, Boris Silverstein, and Denes Marton say that this has nothing to do with the time remaining until completion, but simply indicates that something is happening very fast. Loren likes *happening before your very eyes,* and notes that grandparents often say this about their grandchildren: РАСТУТ не по дням, а по часам. David Goldman reacted to the phrase as a bit of dry humor, perhaps an advertising statement praising the efficiency of those involved in construction.

Liv Bliss looked in the 1978 Фразеологический словарь русского языка and discovered, as did Vadim Klishko, that in Pushkin’s *Tale of Tsar Sultan,* the phrase *растёт ребёнок там не по дням, а по часам* can be found.

(Sp-E 1-01/18) (“Ni los todos que estás...”: The query needs correction in its Spanish version, says Audrey Feldman, and should read “Ni somos todos los que estamos, ni estamos todos los que somos.” Her rendition: *the gang is not all here.*

(Sp-E 2-01/10) (“letrado, procurador“): Elena Arroyo explains that a “letrado” is indeed synonymous with *lawyer,* the one who stands up in court and defends the interests of a client. “Procurador” is the person who assists lawyers and clients in administrative tasks, being paid much less for this than the lawyer. A recent change in Spain made entry requirements for the “procurador” a bit tighter. No longer can any “licenciado” (person with a bachelor’s degree) be a “procurador.” Now, only a “licenciado” who has majored in law at the university is qualified for this position. Sharlee Merner Bradley suggests *prosecuting attorney* for “procurador,” and refers readers to Tom West’s long entry on this word in his Spanish law dictionary.

Mercedes Giudici Fernandez defines “procurador” as someone who represents a person in court, speaking in his name, while “letrado” is a person with a law degree who can defend or accuse in court.

(U-E 2-01/11) (Ny, K, E, D on a compass): Adriana Marton, Gary Deckant, Dan Lufkin, Denes Marton, and Ilke Cohen all agree that the compass is Hungarian, with the cardinal directions being abbreviated: “Nyugat” (west), “Kelet” (east), “észak” (north), and “ dél” (south). Keep them coming!
Translating Nonsense

Nonsense is notoriously difficult to translate. There have been many attempts, with varying degrees of success, at translating the following into different languages:

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

—Lewis Carroll, “Jabberwocky,” in Through the Looking-Glass (1872)

But what if the nonsense is not meant to be funny, or not meant, as sometimes happens in science fiction, to give some idea of the language of an alien race? What if it is meant to subvert a standard language considered to be a tool of oppression? The result may be seen as the author intended, or as inadvertently funny, or as only inflating or veiling an otherwise meaningless text. Whatever the reader’s take on it, translation may seem almost impossible. Consider the following, which I challenge any reader of this column to translate into anything:

The excrementalization of alterity as the site/sight of homelessness, of utter outsideness and unsubiatable dispossession figure(s) in…Hegel’s metanarrational conception of Enlightenment modernity as the teleological process of totalization leading to absolute knowing.


In 1994, physicist Alan Sokal submitted to the editors of Social Text an article on “Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity.” This is a perfect so-called post-modernist title. The article made it past the editors and was duly published in the special Spring-Summer 1996 issue on “Science Wars.” Sokal then published an article in Lingua Franca revealing his Social Text article to be a hoax, a meaningless compendium of scientific nonsense larded with trendy citations of post-modern jargon. The controversy raging since then has made it clear that many of the post-modern mandarins still don’t understand what Sokol was trying to tell them: that one cannot consider a term like “relativity” or “chaos” apart from its specific meaning in a scientific theory, and then use a non-scientific meaning to claim that the very scientific theory supports the view that the theory has no real basis in “truth.” Nor should one refer to a modern physical concept, such as the dual wave-particle nature of matter, without knowing what one is talking about, as did Stanley Aronowitz, one of the founders of Social Text, in an article published in the very same issue of Social Text as the Sokal article. Aronowitz wrote:

Most theoretical physicists, for example, sincerely believe that however partial our collective knowledge may be…of physical reality, one day scientists shall find the necessary correlation between wave and particle; the unified field theory of matter and energy will transcend Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle.


Because this is written, to Aronowitz’s credit, in clear, translatable English, anyone who knows anything about contemporary physics would be aware that physicists do not believe what Aronowitz claims they do, and would consider his article to be just as much a hoax as Sokal’s.

I invite readers who have tried to translate post-modern criticism either as impenetrable as Thomas’s or as confused as Aronowitz’s to share their experiences in this column.

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.
About Our Authors

Norman R. Shapiro, professor of Romance languages and literatures at Wesleyan University, is a widely published translator of French poetry, theater, and fiction. Among his many volumes are *Four Farces of Georges Feydeau* (nominated for a National Book Award), *Fifty Fables of La Fontaine, Fifty More Fables of La Fontaine, The Fabulists French: Verse Fables of Nine Centuries* (named Distinguished Book of the Year by the American Literary Translators Association), *Selected Poems from “Les Fleurs du Mal,”* and the recent *One Hundred and One Poems of Paul Verlaine* (the recipient of the Modern Language Association’s Scaglione Prize for an outstanding literary translation). He can be reached at nshapiro@mail.wesleyan.edu.

Ingo R. Stoehr is currently teaching English at Kilgore College in Texas. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin and, since 1994, has been the editor of *Dimension*. His latest book, *The History of 20th-century German literature*, is scheduled to be published as volume 10 of the *Camden House History of German Literature* in the summer of 2001. He can be reached at IngoStoehr@aol.com.

Liliana Valenzuela is a poet and freelance translator living in Austin, Texas. She has translated Sandra Cisneros’ *Woman Hollering Creek* into Spanish as *El arroyo de la Llorona* (Vintage Español, 1996). She can be reached at liliana@texas.net.

Leslie Willson was born in 1923 and raised in the Panhandle of Texas. A Yale Ph.D. (1954), he is now emeritus professor of Germanic Languages at the University of Texas at Austin. He co-founded the American Literary Translators Association in 1979 and was its first president. He served as president of the ATA from 1991 to 1993. Since his retirement in 1992, he has translated and published 10 novels and has edited four volumes of contemporary prose for Continuum’s *The German Library*. Four novels are currently being considered by publishers, and he is at work translating two more. He can be reached at leslie@innerfar.com.

Leandro Wolfson is an Argentine translator working mainly in the fields of literature, journalism, and social sciences. He is the reviewer for the distance learning Spanish translation/revision course organized and coordinated annually since 1995 by Alicia Marshall from TIP-Lab in Evanston, Illinois. He can be reached at leandrow@arnet.com.ar.
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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 wish to include a link to the directory. NCATA is always interested in comments and suggestions.

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www.nycircletranslators.org
• In Memoriam: Lucia Conti, longtime NYCT member and past president (1988), died in Siena, Italy, on Wednesday, April 4 after an extended illness. Lucia was an Italian interpreter and translator. Her friends and colleagues will miss her.

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• General Meetings (1:00-5:00pm, UC Berkeley Extension, 55 Laguna St., San Francisco): May 19, Sept. 15, Dec. 1.
• 2001 NCTA Membership Directory available on CD-ROM or diskette for $10, printed version for $25. To purchase, mail remittance to the above address, or fax/telephone MasterCard/Visa number and expiration date.
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Note: All announcements must be received by the first of the month prior to the month of publication
(For example, September 1 for October issue).

For more information on chapters or to start a chapter please contact
ATA Headquarters. Send updates to Christie Matlock, ATA Chronicle, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314;
Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; e-mail: Christie@atanet.org
CONGRATULATIONS

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

**Portuguese into English**
- John Chellino
  - Miami, Florida

**Hungarian into English**
- Louis Korda
  - Teaneck, New Jersey

**Russian into English**
- Kevin M. Kelly
  - Waterloo, Illinois

**Upcoming Accreditation Exam Information**

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>August 11, 2001</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>July 27, 2001</td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
<td>June 9, 2001</td>
<td>Portland</td>
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<td>July 21, 2001</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
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<td>August 4, 2001</td>
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<td>New York</td>
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<td>New York City</td>
<td>August 31, 2001</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>July 21, 2001</td>
<td>Austin</td>
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Please direct all inquiries regarding general accreditation information to ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100.

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

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<th>Nonmember</th>
<th>Student Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early-Bird (by October 1)</td>
<td>$245</td>
<td>$335</td>
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<td>One-day</td>
<td>$125</td>
<td>$170</td>
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<td>After October 1</td>
<td>$305</td>
<td>$420</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$220</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-site (after October 26)</td>
<td>$380</td>
<td>$525</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$195</td>
<td>$270</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Hotel Accommodations

The Biltmore Hotel, the host hotel, is conveniently located in downtown Los Angeles at 506 South Grand Avenue. The hotel is 30 minutes from Los Angeles International Airport. Conference attendees can register at the discounted rate of $150 single/double, plus tax ($175 single/double, plus tax, for the Club Floor) per night. This rate is good until October 9, 2001, or until all rooms in the ATA block are reserved, whichever comes first.

To make your hotel reservations, contact the Biltmore at 1-800-245-8673 or 213-624-1011. Be sure to specify that you are attending the ATA Annual Conference.

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