American Translators Association
Forty-Third Annual Conference

Hyatt Regency Hotel

November 6 – 9, 2002
Atlanta, Georgia

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American Translators Association
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E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org
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...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.
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Mark your calendar!
The 2002 Annual Meeting of the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association
Saturday, October 19, 2002 • Minneapolis, Minnesota

Why attend?
• Help shape the translation and interpreting industry in the upper Midwest.
• Meet local colleagues and agencies.
• Learn about the exciting new initiatives underway.

...And much more! Watch for complete details coming soon.
Contact: uppermidwestata@yahoo.com.

Attention Exhibitors!
ATA’s 43rd Annual Conference
Atlanta, Georgia • Hyatt Regency Hotel • November 6–9, 2002

Plan now to exhibit at the American Translators Association’s 43rd Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, November 6–9, 2002. Exhibiting at the ATA Annual Conference offers the best opportunity to market your products and services face-to-face to more than 1,500 translators in one location. Translators are consumers of computer hardware and software, technical publications and reference books, office products, and much more. Face-to-face selling, as you know, is the most effective and successful method of marketing. The ATA Annual Conference is the perfect venue, and you are assured of excellent visibility. Exhibit space is limited, so please reserve your space today.

For additional information, please contact Brian Wallace, McNell Group Inc., at bwallace@mcnell-group.com or by phone at (215) 321-9662, ext. 38.
About Our Authors...

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Maria Cornelio is the director of the Hispanic Research and Recruitment Center at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, where she oversees recruitment and language support programs for Spanish-speaking participants in clinical studies. She also serves as Spanish-language consultant to the New York State Psychiatric Institute and teaches English–Spanish “Translation in Healthcare,” a course at New York University's Center for Foreign Languages and Translation. She has a master’s degree in international studies from the University of Denver and a Diplôme d'Études Françaises from the University of Pottiers, France. She studied at the University of Seville, Spain, and has a B.A. in Spanish and French from Hunter College of the City University of New York. Contact: mac90@columbia.edu.

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David B. Sawyer (Dr. phil., Diplom-Dolmetscher, Diplom-Übersetzer) is an associate professor and German program head in the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. A conference interpreter (AIIC—International Association of Conference Interpreters) and language mediation consultant, he has extensive experience in private industry and government. He steered the development work of the committee on language interpreting of the American Society of Testing and Materials. A graduate of the University of Mainz in Germersheim, he also taught conference interpretation and translation at his alma mater. His research interests include curriculum and assessment issues in interpreter education. Contact: dsawyer@miis.edu.

Lee Seaman has been specializing in medical and pharmaceutical translation since 1986, working primarily in the translation of materials for FDA submission, articles and books for publication (including Valvular Heart Disease, in collaboration with Steven M. Sherman, M.D., and ABO Incompatible Kidney Transplantation, in collaboration with Noriko Hill), and regulatory materials from Japanese–English. Contact: iseaman@seamannmedical.com.

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Resources ...

Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services and Directory of Language Services Companies
(www.atanet.org)
From the President  
Thomas L. West III  
president@atanet.org

ATA and Commercial Disputes Among Members

Cash flow problems, missed deadlines, unethical owners, poor quality translations… these are just a few of the many commercial dispute issues involving ATA members that I have heard as ATA president. While the association tries to do what it can for its members, getting involved in commercial disputes is not one of them.

I understand that ATA’s Ethics Committee used to get involved in such matters, but that ended nearly a decade ago. From what I can surmise, a number of factors got us out of this business, including, number one, the fact that the world is more litigious than ever. In addition, ATA was driven out by the he-said/she-said nature of these disputes, the no-win likelihood that ATA members were involved on both sides, and that the disputes were too time and energy intensive for a shrinking pool of volunteers and a growing membership.

However, in 1996, in an effort to help ATA members, the Board approved offering the services of Dun & Bradstreet for receivables management and collections. D&B’s steeply discounted services for ATA members have helped both freelancers and company owners alike.

More recently, at the March 2002 meeting, the ATA Board of Directors approved the Policy of Non-Intervention in Commercial Disputes. (The policy appears on page 8 of this issue.) This policy codifies what has been in effect for the past seven to eight years.

The Board is very much aware that this policy may draw some criticism. In fact, the issue was discussed again at the June meeting in terms of getting consensus on how to disseminate the policy. (It will be posted on the ATA website and published each year in the ATA Membership Directory.) ATA will continue to educate both buyers and sellers of language services as to the best practices: check references, get a commitment in writing, provide quality work, etc.

Candidates Announced

ATA Elections • 2002 ATA Annual Conference • Atlanta Georgia

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2002 ATA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, to fill three directors’ positions. The candidates’ statements will be published in the September ATA Chronicle.

Further nominations, supported by acceptance statements in writing by each additional nominee and a written petition signed by no less than 35 voting members, must be received by the Nominating Committee within 30 days of publication by the ATA Board of Directors of the names of nominees proposed by the Nominating Committee. Acceptance statements and petitions may be faxed to the chair of the Nominating Committee, Ann Macfarlane, in care of ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6122.

Official ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters prior to the conference. Votes may be cast: 1) in person at the conference; 2) by proxy given to a voting member attending the conference; or 3) by proxy sent to ATA Headquarters by the date indicated in the instructions enclosed with the ballots.

The candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee are:

Director (three positions, three-year terms)
- Kirk Anderson
- Kathy Hall Foster
- Alexandra Russell-Bitting
- Madeleine Velguth
- Laura Wolfson
- Timothy Yuan
The American Translators Association and Commercial Disputes Between Members

All members of the American Translators Association (ATA), by the act of joining the association, agree to abide by the ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices.

In addition to the principles outlined in the Code, ATA encourages all its members to follow established business practices. Such practices include exercising due diligence and good business judgment before accepting or offering work by verifying that the prospective client or vendor has a satisfactory business record and qualifications with a reasonable expectation of satisfactory future performance.

ATA recognizes that, even with due diligence, commercial disputes between members will sometimes arise. It is the policy of ATA not to undertake to resolve or publicize such disputes for the following reasons:

1. Publicizing alleged cases of non-payment by members would not only require ATA to review such cases and make a finding of improper action, which is not feasible for lack of expertise and resources, but could also open ATA up to potentially expensive and damaging litigation if such cases were publicized on incorrect or insufficient grounds of evidence.

2. The Board of Directors is obligated to allocate ATA resources in a way that maximizes the return to members on the investment they make in joining. Pursuing a policy of intervention in commercial disputes would require us to set aside financial resources to cover the potential legal costs, and to curtail other programs of established benefit to members.

3. If ATA were to adjudicate commercial disputes involving claims of non-performance on the part of translation companies, fairness would dictate that it also adjudicate disputes involving claims of non-performance by individual translators and interpreters. To do so, ATA would have to determine whether a translator’s or interpreter’s work for pay meets professional standards, a function ATA is not prepared to undertake.

The ATA Ethics Committee is ready to consider cases in which a member has been convicted of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude in a court of law, cases of alleged impropriety in the conduct of association business, and other cases properly brought before it under Article III, Section 6 of the ATA Bylaws. The ATA Ethics Committee will decline to consider disputes of any other type.

ATA Committees, Chapters, and Divisions shall not publicize alleged cases of non-payment by members or nonmembers in their newsletters, websites, electronic listservs, or other publications. All ATA members are free, of course, to share among themselves views on commercial or other matters, provided that ATA channels are not used for communications covered by this policy.

ATA wishes to encourage good business practices and to foster a culture of prompt payment among its members. To this end, ATA has made the collection and receivables management services of Dun & Bradstreet available to members at reduced rates. This commercial service, while not always able to resolve a dispute to member satisfaction, nevertheless offers a useful and economical membership benefit. ATA has also made available on its website a Model Contract for Translation Services. The Board welcomes the initiative by the Translation Company Division to establish a voluntary code of business practices and quality standards for corporate members. ATA members who wish to suggest other ways to help ATA foster good business practices are invited to do so. All suggestions will be carefully reviewed and, if deemed appropriate and feasible, implemented.

March 2002
From the President-elect  

Scott Brennan  
president-elect@atanet.org

Conference Update: Looking Ahead to Atlanta

ATA’s next Annual Conference will be held November 6-9, 2002, in Atlanta, Georgia. Read on for a sneak preview.

Educational Sessions
ATA members and invited speakers will share their expertise through a strong lineup of educational sessions and preconference seminars this year. In addition to solid offerings in the language pairs traditionally well represented at the conference, I was pleased to see a substantial number of Dutch and Hebrew proposals. Financial, legal, medical and technical terminology, interpreting, and literary translation are also well represented across languages. See for yourself when the Preliminary Program arrives in your mailbox this month.

The “Translation Support Tools Forum” will invite a spectrum of software vendors to present their products to conference attendees in a panel/Q&A format designed to spotlight the relative strengths of each. Alan Melby, who chairs ATA’s Translation and Computers Committee, will moderate.

At “Translation, Publicity, and Public Relations: Why Grassroots Activism Can Make a Difference to Your Bottom Line,” members of ATA’s Public Relations Committee will discuss how we can all locally work with the media, raise the public profile of translators and interpreters, and enhance our image.

Also of special interest to chapter, committee, and division officers and volunteers is “Jurassic Parliament,” a preconference seminar on running productive meetings, offered free of charge by ATA’s immediate past president, Ann Macfarlane.

For prospective T&I mentees and mentors, Courtney Searls-Ridge, ATA Secretary and head of ATA’s Mentoring Program Task Force, will offer free preconference seminars on making the most of your mentoring relationship.

Special Events
Veteran conference-goers William Skinner and Anne Vincent have agreed to host a Thursday morning orientation session for first-time attendees, offering strategies for making the most of the ATA conference: session-picking, making the scene of your choice, working the halls... and what's up with those colored dots?

The truth is, I have always thought that what goes on outside the educational sessions at the conference is just as important as what goes on inside. Relationships and referrals drive our business. As a catalyst, we hope to offer a networking skills development seminar immediately before the Thursday evening Networking Session.

On Friday evening, an issues forum on “Translation and National Security” will examine the vital role of T&I with knowledgeable speakers and panelists from inside and outside the professions.

Extracurricular Activities
ATA’s division administrators are already planning extracurricular activities and outings. In addition to the Book Splash, After-Hours Café, and ATA-folia world dance party, the Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Nordic, Portuguese, Slavic, Spanish, Interpreters, and Translation Company divisions are all planning social gatherings.

For the athletically inclined, ATA Board member Rob Croese has put together a round-robin tennis tournament. Rob organized a similar event three years ago in Hilton Head.

Jack Nowicki, Rita McGrath, Sandra Bravo, and other members of our host chapter, the Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT), have volunteered to staff a welcome table in the registration area so we can all get our bearings and the most out of our stay in Atlanta. AAIT is also helping us identify a pro bono project that will benefit a worthy cause in the Atlanta area.

Barbara Bell is organizing a high school outreach program to bring ATA members into Atlanta-area schools for talks and interpreting demonstrations aimed at our next generation of colleagues.

Hotel
Our conference space is a near perfect fit this year, with session and exhibit halls centrally located on three levels under a 23-story atrium. The Hyatt Regency on Peachtree Street downtown offers a range of dining options, including an attached food court and restaurants within walking distance. A subway stop is right next door; the cost from airport bag claim to hotel is $1.75. For updates, ride/roommate match boards, and to browse the Preliminary Program, visit the conference website at www.atanet.org (click on “Conference”).

One of my favorite things about ATA has always been the generosity and sharing among colleagues, and this group effort is the best example. For me, the Annual Conference is what ATA is all about. See you in Atlanta!
Accreditation and membership issues topped the agenda for the ATA Board of Directors meeting, held June 29-30 in New Orleans. Here are some of the highlights from the meeting.

Accreditation. The Board had lengthy discussions over the reports given by the Eligibility Requirements Ad-hoc Committee and the Continuing Education Ad-hoc Committee. These two committees were established by ATA President Thomas L. West III, working in conjunction with Accreditation Committee Chair Lilian Novas Van Vranken and Deputy Chair Celia Bohannon. The Eligibility Requirements Ad-hoc Committee, chaired by ATA Treasurer Jiri Stejskal, offered its initial look at the areas where ATA should establish eligibility requirements before a candidate may sit for the exam, including levels of education and years of experience. The Continuing Education Ad-hoc Committee, chaired by ATA Director Marian Greenfield, presented its preliminary look at how much continuing education a “certified” translator should have, what constitutes continuing education (attending ATA conferences and seminars as well as non-ATA educational seminars, membership in organizations, giving presentations, etc.), and how often someone should have to be recertified. Both these committees are also looking at what other professions are requiring. These committees will report on their continuing efforts at the next Board meeting. In addition, the ATA treasurer gave an in-depth presentation on his research into the break-even analysis of the accreditation program, including where we are now and where we can project to be once the proposed changes are made to the accreditation program.

Membership. The Board voted to increase membership dues. This is the first increase since 1996. (For more information, please see The Treasurer’s Report on page 13.) The Board also approved offering joint individual/corporate membership. This move will allow individuals to also have corporate membership, with the dues discounted to show some appreciation for supporting ATA through holding dual membership. In addition, the Board approved placing a proposed bylaws amendment on the ballot for November to broaden the eligibility for student membership. More information on this will appear in the September ATA Chronicle.

Surveys. The Board reviewed and discussed the drafts of two surveys that ATA will be conducting this month. The first one is the Translation and Interpreting Services Survey, which will be similar to the survey ATA conducted in 1999. It will be sent to all ATA members. In addition, the survey will be sent to nonmembers in an effort to make the survey as comprehensive as possible. This survey will be conducted online. The second survey is the ATA Industry Profile/Financial Survey. This survey will be sent to language services company owners, both ATA members and non-members alike. This survey will be more in-depth due to the nature of there being more financial and operating areas to address. This survey will be mailed. Of course, these surveys will be conducted by an outside party, with all information held in complete confidence and in accordance with government regulations. The ATA attorney will also review the surveys and the results.

Finances. The Board approved a motion by ATA Treasurer Jiri Stejskal to change the ATA fiscal year from the calendar year to July 1 to June 30. The change will take place in 2003. (For more information, please see The Treasurer’s Report on page 13.) In addition, the Board approved placing a proposed bylaws amendment on the ballot to change the name of the Budget Committee to the Finance Committee, which more accurately describes the committee’s domain—overseeing the association’s finances and investments while Headquarters and the treasurer take care of the budget.

The minutes of the meeting are posted in the Members Only section of the ATA website (www.atanet.org/membersonly). Past meeting minutes are also posted on the site. The next Board meeting is set for November 9–10 in Atlanta, Georgia. As always, the meeting is open to the membership.
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One way to beat your competition in the international arena is simply to arrive before they do. UPS can help. Ship with us, and you’ll get earlier delivery to more cities around the globe than with any other carrier. We guarantee it. Take UPS Worldwide Express Plus." It’s the only two-day service that delivers to 150 cities in Europe by 8:30 a.m. (That’s hours before any of our competitors.) Or there’s UPS Worldwide Express, with 10:30 a.m. delivery the second business day to the most cities across Europe and North America." Whichever UPS international express service you choose, you’ll always know the status of your package with our global tracking network. And as soon as you enroll in the program, your shipments will go abroad for 20% less, thanks to your ATA discount." So the next time you ship to Kloten or Köln, call 1-800-PICK-UPS. Or visit us online at www.ups.com. We’ll make sure your package arrives bright and early — their time. Call 1-800-325-7000 to enroll today.

*Call 1-800-PICK-UPS for guarantee and time-in-transit details. **Discounts only apply to published transportation rates on UPS Worldwide Express shipments sent from the U.S. Discounts do not apply to additional charges. Offer cannot be combined with any other UPS discount. © 1998 United Parcel Service of America, Inc.
ATA’s Fax on Demand

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

The call is toll-free and user-friendly...simply follow the voice prompts and have the ATA documents you need faxed to you.

Here’s the current list of documents that are available and their document numbers:

1 Menu
20 Membership Brochure
21 Membership Application
22 Alternative Routes to Active or Corresponding Membership
30 A Guide to ATA Accreditation
31 ATA Accreditation Practice Test Request Form
32 ATA Accreditation Examination Registration Form
33 Request for Accreditation Review
40 List of Publications & Order Form
50 Chronicle Editorial Guidelines
51 Chronicle Advertising Rates
52 1994 Chronicle Index
53 1995 Chronicle Index
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56 1998 Chronicle Index
57 1999 Chronicle Index
58 2000 Chronicle Index
59 2001 Chronicle Index
60 ATA Code of Professional Conduct
61 ATAware Order Form
70 Chapters, Affiliated Groups & Other Groups
80 ATA Annual Conference Information
90 Model Contract for Translators

Italian Language Services

Global Multilingual Translations
Via Cavour, 15
50129 Firenze (FI)
Tel. +39 055 2658133
Fax +39 055 2654102
http://www.gmt-ils.it

e-mail 1: giovannim@gmt-ils.it
e-mail 2: info@gmt-ils.it

Italian translations
made in Italy
by Italians for Italians
Technical/Non technical
Quality, Speed, Accuracy

Lima, Peru
International Congress for Translators and Interpreters
The Colegio de Traductores del Perú
October 1-4, 2002
For more information, e-mail coletraductores@terra.com.pe.

Los Angeles, California
Spanish Legal Translators and Interpreters Seminar
Intermark Language Services
October 18-19, 2002
For more information on this 9-hour seminar, log onto www.intermark-languages.com
In an effort to streamline our operations and to boost the association’s revenues, two significant changes were approved at the ATA Board meeting, which took place in New Orleans on June 29-30, 2002. The one change directly affecting nearly all members is the raising of membership fees. The individual membership fee was last raised in 1996 from $75 to $95. This year’s increase was necessitated by inflation of the dollar, as well as the introduction of new programs which do not generate revenues, but are vital to our association, such as enhanced electronic services and public relations efforts. As of January 2003, the dues will be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Membership</td>
<td>$120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Membership</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-in-One Household</td>
<td>$190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-Year Membership</td>
<td>$320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Membership: $65
Institutional Membership: $150

The Corporate Membership fee was raised in 2002 and will remain at $300.

A new membership category was also approved at the June Board meeting, namely Joint Individual/Corporate Membership. This new category is modeled after the Two-in-One Household membership, and will allow owners of small businesses to combine corporate and individual memberships in a single package with a reduced rate. The fee for Joint Individual/Corporate Membership will be $365.

Another significant departure from the current practices of the association is the change of our fiscal year. As of July 1, 2003, the fiscal year of the association will be changed to a year starting on July 1 and ending on June 30. The main reason for the change in the fiscal year is the fact that our annual conference, which is the second most significant variable in terms of revenues and the most significant variable in terms of expenditures, occurs at the end of the current fiscal year which coincides with the calendar year. By changing the fiscal year so that it begins on July 1, we will be able to process the actual revenues from the conference and the related expenditures early in the fiscal year and, if necessary, take appropriate measures. In addition, this will enable us to prepare the following year’s budget with all the fiscal data from the most recent conference in hand, which will make for better forecasting. I am indebted to our immediate past president, Ann Macfarlane, for her insights in this area. I will be happy to answer any questions and provide additional information on an individual basis.

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Announcing

**ATA Court Interpreting & Translation Seminar**

The Westin St. Francis  
San Francisco, California • Saturday, September 14, 2002

This seminar will feature a full day of in-depth sessions on court interpreting and translation. All sessions will be in English and will be submitted for Continuing Education Credit for the States of California and Washington. Abstracts and speaker biographies can be found at [www.atanet.org/court/abstracts.htm](http://www.atanet.org/court/abstracts.htm).

Plus, an ATA accreditation exam sitting is scheduled for Sunday morning, September 15, in the hotel. (A separate registration is required for the exam. Please contact ATA Headquarters for more information.)

**Early-Bird Registration Fees:**

- **ATA Members** $165
- **Nonmembers** $255

**After September 6 and On-site:**

- **ATA Members** $235
- **Nonmembers** $330

See page 67 for complete information.
Letters to the Editor

Is there a Place for Pedagogy in the Ivory Tower?
A Response to Marilyn Gaddis Rose

In this age of increasingly rapid information transfer, it should perhaps come as no surprise that a book can be critiqued before it has even made it into galley proofs. Nevertheless, I was somewhat dismayed to read remarks by Marilyn Gaddis Rose in the June 2002 issue of the ATA Chronicle (page 45) directed at a volume I co-edited for the ATA Scholarly Monograph Series entitled “Beyond the Ivory Tower: Re-Thinking Translation Pedagogy” (forthcoming). Assuming from the title of the volume that we were invoking the rather tired and, in many respects, specious opposition of practice versus theory (we hope that the choice facing translator trainers is not, as Doug Robinson has suggested, a choice between tools and rules) and that we were coming out on the side of the former, Gaddis Rose writes: “When we see that the next volume of the ATA Series will have a pedagogical theme, ‘Beyond the Ivory Tower,’ we can confidently anticipate the subtext: getting outside is good for translator training; staying inside may even be harmful. I beg to differ” (39).

As one of the editors of the volume in question, I feel obligated to point out that Gaddis Rose’s assumption is off the mark. In naming our volume “Beyond the Ivory Tower,” we were using “ivory tower” not as a metaphor for the academy—in which all the editors are employed—but as a metonymic reference to the debate over theory versus practice that serves, in many respects, as the organizing principle of the comments made by Gaddis Rose. Despite the eloquent voices that have pointed out the specious nature of the opposition, the theory versus practice debate continues to be waged in translation-related books and journals. I hope that our volume might help translator trainers to see beyond this opposition—that so often pits academics against practitioners—in order to draw new attention to questions of translation pedagogy. To that end, it should be noted that pedagogy has no place in the rather long list of disciplines named by Gaddis Rose as having a connection to translation studies, which raises the question: is there a place for pedagogy in the Ivory Tower?

Issues of teaching methodology are clearly the big loser in the debate over theory versus practice, insofar as it is essentially a debate over curricular content (Do we offer workshops on practical skills or courses on translation theory and history?). In fighting over whether to teach “theory” or “practice,” the whole question of how to teach translation skills and concepts most effectively is ignored. Gaddis Rose defends against the narrowing of the opposition of theory to practice, the image of moving beyond the ivory tower also makes reference to specific pedagogical initiatives developed over the last 25 years that seek to move beyond traditional models of classroom instruction symbolized by “the antiquated grammar-translation method of foreign language teaching.” These new initiatives, most widely implemented in foreign language classrooms, have sought to “bring the real world into the classroom” in such a way as to engage higher level cognitive processing in order to increase student motivation, confidence, and overall communicative competence. “Beyond the Ivory Tower” addresses the various pedagogical issues involved in bringing the real world—often synonymous with professional practice—into the classroom. (Of course, one does not always have a choice in whether or not to bring the real world into the classroom, as Gaddis Rose points out. Translator trainers who ignore new computer-related technologies, for example, put their relevance at risk.)

Finally, while I believe that the academy has an important role to play in the training of translators and in the creation of life-long learners, I believe that it is legitimate to ask from time to time that the academy move “beyond the ivory tower” in order to address the question of its relevance to the profession. (I do not, by the way, share Gaddis Rose’s alarm at the fact that students prepared in a professional translation master’s program may not be best prepared to continue in Binghamton’s Translation Ph.D. program, which is housed in a department of comparative literature. Relevance is, after all, relative.) However, I also firmly believe that plunking a practitioner in the classroom does not in any way guarantee that classroom activities will be either relevant or effective. Indeed, as Maria-Luisa Arias-Moreno has noted: “Most translators have had the experience of being asked to teach translation because it is their profession, and many of them have accepted the job although they usually do not have any training in teaching…. But if the translator has had no formal training, the experience is more than chaotic and catastrophic for the students.”

It is our hope that as doctoral programs are developed here in the U.S. to meet the growing need for competent and effective translator trainers, translation pedagogy will find its way into the curriculum. In fact, translation pedagogy can offer a way out of the impasse between theory and practice by forcing us to ask different and, I think, more useful questions. Instead of “How relevant is what I’m teaching to the profession?” we might better ask, “How effectively am I teaching students to think about translation.”

Notes
2. On the debate over theory versus practice, see Pym, Anthony. 2001.
6. Kent State University is in the process of developing such a doctoral program in translation studies.

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Linguistic Subplot?
In the June issue of the ATA Chronicle (page 22), Kim Braithwaite takes issue with a passage in a TV series in which Judas Iscariot says he is “a translator of documents.” Whether the Scriptures (i.e., the New Testament, written a generation after the time of the apostles) back it up, I don’t know. But Braithwaite forgets that Jesus and his followers were all observant Jews. As such, they read and studied the Torah in its original Hebrew.

At the time of Jesus, Hebrew had become an archaic language no longer understood by many Jews living in Judea. The colloquial language was Aramaic, which is closely related. It was the custom at the weekly Torah reading (Torah = the five Books of Moses) for a translator to deliver a running translation from Hebrew into Aramaic, the so-called “Targum.” A person performing that function was known as a “Meturgeman” (translator), a name still found occasionally among old Jewish families. So, it would not be surprising that someone in the circle of Jesus exercised that function. It may be an invention of the screenwriter that Judas Iscariot translated documents, but it would be in keeping with the custom of the times.

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International Certification Study: Denmark

By Jiri Stejskal

With this examination of the situation in Denmark, we will close our discussion of the Nordic countries, initiated in the February 2002 ATA Chronicle with the discussion of certification procedures in Finland and Sweden, and continued in the last issue with the discussion of Norway. Norway and Denmark are closely related (they constituted a single country for nearly half a millennium). Therefore, the historical data presented in this article will apply to our past discussion of Norway as well. Information on selected organizations in Scandinavia is also available in the September 1998 ATA Chronicle. In addition to a well-informed article on the Nordic languages in general, followed by an article on the Danish language in particular, the 1998 issue features articles on organizations for translators and interpreters in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

The historical data in this article is largely based on the information provided by Jørgen Christian Wind Nielsen, state-authorized translator and member of the Danish Association of Business Language Graduates and of the Association of Danish-Authorized Translators. Information on the associations described here was found on their respective websites. More detailed reports were generously provided by Birgitte Jensen, president of the Danish Association of Business Language Graduates; by Flemming Koue, past president of the Association of Danish-Authorized Translators, state-authorized translator, assistant professor at the Copenhagen Business School, and coordinator of Translatørreksamen (a special examination for translators which is described in this article); and by Bo Myhrmann, state-authorized translator and member of the Board of Translators and Interpreters under the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency.

Historical Overview

On August 21, 1635, the Danish King Christian IV published an open letter stating that all foreign shipping documents had to be translated into Danish. Thus, the translation industry in Denmark began with the Sound Dues, a special toll levied on all ships passing through the sound between Denmark and Sweden, with Hamlet’s Elsinore being a major traffic junction for international shipping at that time. The “Translation Office” associated with the Sound Dues continued to exist until 1857.

Reportedly, in 1785, a royal certification was issued to a translator capable of translating Swedish, Portuguese, Italian, and several other languages. By 1800, 10 translators were certified by the king, most of them multilingual and translating up to four languages. Certification was issued on application, and applicants were tested by a notary public, who was in charge of official translations during this period. This system was in effect until 1863, the year when the Ministry of the Interior was appointed the competent authority. An official examination committee was established in 1910 in tandem with the first executive order on the authorization of translators and interpreters.

With the examination committee, the Association of Danish-Authorized Translators (Translaterforeningen) came into existence. The authorized translators obtained the sole right to use the title “state-authorized translator and interpreter” and, de facto, an exclusive right to do interpretation and translation work in the Danish courts of law. The exclusive right was granted under the Danish Administration of Justice Act, entering into force in 1919. Pursuant to Section 149 of this Act, the official language of the courts is Danish, and any questioning of persons who do not speak the Danish language must, if possible, be performed through an authorized interpreter.

In 1966, Denmark introduced the allegedly first ever law on state-authorized translators and interpreters in the world. All legislation concerning the authorization of translators and interpreters in Denmark can be found at http://130.228.210.124/ eogs/lov/menu/tolke.htm (Danish only). Another important piece of legislation is the Nordic Convention on Languages, Den Nordiske Sprogkonvention, which entered into force on March 1, 1987. The Convention makes an exception concerning citizens of other Nordic countries by allowing them to hand in to public authorities and courts of law documents that are written in their native languages. This exception is also applicable to Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish citizens and to their respective languages.

Authorization of Translators and Interpreters

Certification—or authorization, as the Danes prefer to call it—is administered by the Danish...
government and granted to students who have successfully completed five years of in-depth translation studies. Authorization is thus granted to translators and interpreters after they have obtained the degree of cand. ling. merc. (M.A.) in translation and interpretation from either the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) or the Århus School of Business (ASB).

Studies in English, French, German, Spanish, and, to a limited extent, Italian and Russian are offered by the business schools as full-time programs. The present training structure for these languages is three years for the bachelor’s degree and another two years for the master’s degree—the last two years being devoted to specialization in either international communication and marketing/corporate communication, language engineering or, most importantly in this context, translation and interpreting with a focus on language for special purposes. The core subjects taught in the qualifying master’s program for translation and interpreting include legal language, technical language, economics, accounting, banking and finance, and interpretation skills.

Moreover, grammar, linguistics, the methodology of information retrieval, and translation theory serve as useful tools for students, who are required to pass a broad range of examinations, written and oral, to obtain the degree. It is important to note that translation studies also include translation into and from Danish, as authorized translators commonly translate into their foreign language. Detailed information on the programs is available at the websites of the two schools (www.cbs.dk and www.asb.dk, respectively).

In languages other than those mentioned above, candidates may register for a special translator’s examination administered by CBS. This is an option frequently used by foreigners in Denmark who want to translate into and from their mother tongue, but also by Danes who want to obtain authorization to perform certified translations into and from these languages. The requirements of this special examination do not differ much from the requirements of the regular M.A. program, but a major difference is the fact that no structured training is available (i.e., candidates are left to study on their own). The examination is both written and oral, and is conducted more or less along the lines of the M.A. program. This means that students have to demonstrate an ability to translate complex and up-to-date texts of, for instance, a legal, technical, and economic nature, representing realistic text types from the Danish market for freelance translation services. Each text is about one page long. Dictionaries and other aids are allowed (but not the Internet), and so is the use of computers. The examination used to be free, but currently the whole process of authorization is estimated to cost about 1,800 euros. Mr. Flemming Koue of CBS is responsible for the professional standard of the languages not included in the regular M.A. program, and can provide detailed information in this respect (contact: flemming.koue@get2net.dk).

When candidates have successfully completed their master’s degree from either of the two business schools or passed the special translator’s examination at CBS, they are eligible for “state authorization” from the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency under the Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs. The authorization is granted automatically upon application, and entitles translators to use the official stamp or seal (with the crown at its center) and to call themselves “state-authorized translator and interpreter”—the official Danish title is “translatør og tolk,” or simply “translator,” which is protected by law.

The eligibility requirements are set forth in the above-mentioned law on state-authorized translators and interpreters (Act No. 213 of June 8, 1966). While the law has been amended several times since then, the original text is quoted here in unofficial English translation. Pursuant to Section 1(2), authorization may be granted to any person who:

- i. Is of Danish nationality;
- ii. Is a resident of Denmark;
- iii. Has attained the age of 25;
- iv. Is under no legal incapacity or guardianship, and whose estate is not in the hands of the Official Register; and who
- v. Has passed a particular examination.

Under Section 1(4), “the Commerce and Companies Agency may grant exemption from the condition stipulated in Subsection (2)(i) above.” In fact, the requirement of Danish nationality and residency in Denmark no longer applies to citizens of the European Union and the European Economic Area. This means that a Danish citizen is now allowed to reside in a foreign EU or EEA country and work as a state-authorized translator. Besides, any citizen of the EU or EEA is eligible for authorization when he or she has obtained the qualifying degree at the Danish business schools.

Translators from other EU countries may apply for authorization in Denmark in compliance with the provisions of Council directive 89/48/EEC concerning mutual recognition of diplomas. In this situation, the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency passes on the application, together with the respective diploma,
to the Board of Translators and Interpreters and to CBS for their comments. These official bodies then compare the contents of the diploma with the Danish rules and standards. Frequently, these diplomas do not meet the Danish standards because they do not include a test in legal, technical, or economic language, and the applicants are required to pass the corresponding examinations before they can obtain the authorization (Danish being one of the required languages).

In addition to the rules on authorization, Act No. 213 lays down the rights and responsibilities of state-authorized translators and interpreters. Overall, this law is mainly intended to protect customers by imposing on translators an obligation to be careful and accurate in their profession, and by specifying that any infringement of the provisions will be considered a punishable offence. They must also strictly observe the rule of professional secrecy.

Section 3(2) of the law stipulates that the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency may set up a board to assist the agency in administering the law. The Board of Translators and Interpreters is thus consulted on many aspects of relevance to the authorization and the profession of translators, including changes in study programs and authorization applications from translators with diplomas from foreign institutions of higher education.

A state-authorized translator has the right to perform certified translations into and out of Danish and the relevant foreign language. This is understood to mean a translation that the translator signs and stamps to certify that the text is “a true and faithful translation of the attached document.” This could typically be a legal document that needs to be used in a foreign court of law or presented to the government authorities in a foreign country (pleadings, wills, divorce orders, exam papers, and birth certificates). The translator’s signature and stamp (or seal) must later be authenticated by the Commerce and Companies Agency, whose signature and stamp (in case of a translation into a foreign language) are authenticated by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally, the ministry’s signature and stamp need to be authenticated by the consulate of the country where the translation is going to be used. It is at this point that the document obtains legal validity in the country in question. New rules and bilateral conventions have been adopted to avoid this very formal and time-consuming procedure. As a result, some countries only demand a single stamp on a translation to make it legally valid, either from their own consulate or from the Commerce and Companies Agency.

The total number of state-authorized translators and interpreters in Denmark is 2,385 (as of April 30, 2002), most of whom are organized with the Danish Association of Business Language Graduates (EsF), described in the next section. A growing number of translators combine in-house work with part-time freelance activities, and many therefore also be members of one of the two trade associations for mainly self-employed translators. Self-employed translators account for roughly 400-500 of all state-authorized translators.

**Associations for Authorized Translators and Interpreters**

Today, Denmark has two professional associations for state-authorized translators and interpreters: the Association of Danish-Authorized Translators (Translatørforeningen) and the Danish Association of State-Authorized Translators and Interpreters (Dansk Translatørforbund), respectively. Translatørforeningen was established on March 20, 1910, and acted as one of the six founding members of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) in 1953. Its members are all trained translators or graduates from one of the previously mentioned Danish business schools, and are certified by the Danish state to work as translators and interpreters. They may write the abbreviation “MTF” after their name to indicate their membership in the association. Translatørforeningen now has about 180 members, divided into five categories, and is represented on the Board of Translators and Interpreters under the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency (currently by Bo Myhrmann). The association serves its members by providing advisory services, promoting their interests in relation to government agencies, and organizing courses on relevant subjects. Courses are also open to nonmembers.

In 1989, a group of authorized translators left Translatørforeningen to form the Danish Association of State-Authorized Translators and Interpreters (Dansk Translatørforbund), while Translatørforeningen joined forces with the Danish Association of Business Language Graduates (EsF, see below) as a section for self-employed authorized translators. The hundred or so members of Dansk Translatørforbund are translators and interpreters, mostly self-employed, who are certified by the Danish state and who indicate their membership in the association by writing the letters “MDT” after their names. Dansk Translatørforbund has adopted a code of ethics which every member must follow. Each member of DT is
under an obligation to keep his or her professional knowledge and proficiencies updated. To help contribute to this process, DT regularly holds courses on relevant subjects. The courses are also open to nonmembers.

The alliance between Translatørforeningen and EsF ended in 2001, when Translatørforeningen again became an independent organization in response to developments in the market for self-employed authorized translators, and to avoid any conflict of interest between employees and employers among the two organizations’ own members.

**Danish Association of Business Language Graduates**

The Danish Association of Business Language Graduates (Erhvervssprogligt Forbund, or EsF) is among the associations featured in the September 1998 *ATA Chronicle*. EsF, a member of FIT, essentially acts as a trade union. In addition to the issues directly related to the T&I field, such as organizing courses and conferences for translators and interpreters, EsF is actively engaged in working conditions for employees, including salaries and maternity leave, working hours, all types of contractual issues, and employment in Denmark and abroad. While EsF does not offer any certification, it is of interest here because it is the only foreign organization for translators and interpreters, EsF is actively engaged in professional matters when such assistance may be offered without legal liability to the assisting party;

3. To render assistance to the organization’s members in connection with professional matters in the country in question, when customary and feasible;

4. To mutually admit members of the other organization to attend as observers and to participate on equal footing with the organization’s members in open meetings, courses, seminars, conferences, or other similar activities of the organization, on standard terms, fees, and conditions of entry;

5. To permit simultaneous membership in both organizations, upon payment of required dues and compliance with conditions of membership.

The purpose of the International Certification study is to explore the possibility and feasibility of such reciprocal arrangements, particularly in the field of certification. While reciprocity in certification does not apply to the document above, there are other reasons why future arrangements of this sort might prove difficult. In the case of Denmark and other Scandinavian countries, a major consideration is the fact that the certification processes in the U.S. and in Scandinavia are essentially different in nature. While in the U.S., certification is carried out by independent professional organizations, namely the accreditation offered by ATA, in Scandinavia, certification (authorization) is granted directly by the government of the respective country. This will be a major stumbling block in the future discussion as to whether such arrangements will be feasible.

Another important lesson learned from this agreement is the fact that while in Denmark it reportedly serves as a tool used by the EsF secretariat when giving advice to members who are traveling to the U.S., on the ATA side, the agreement could be acted upon with greater involvement than is currently the case. For future arrangements of this nature, it will be important to establish a mechanism for continued support and development of such agreements, perhaps through a standing committee or a staff member.

Further information on the organizations described in this article is available at their respective websites:

**Association of Danish-Authorized Translators (Translatørforeningen):**
www.translatørforeningen.dk (Danish and limited English)

**Danish Association of State-Authorized Translators and Interpreters (Dansk Translatørforbunds):**
www.dtfb.dk (Danish and limited English)

**Danish Association of Business Language Graduates (Erhvervssprogligt Forbund):**
www.esf.dk (Danish only)

In the next issue we will examine the very different certification procedures in Japan. As the editor of this series, I encourage readers to submit any relevant information concerning non-U.S. certification or similar programs, as well as comments on the information published in this series, to my e-mail address at jiri@cetra.com.
Cultural Awareness and the Arabic Interpreter

By Aziz El-Nasser Ismail

(Note: The following appeared in the Winter 2002 [Vol. XI, No. 1] issue of Proteus, the newsletter of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. It is reprinted here with permission.)

Since the tragic events of September 11th, issues related to Arabic–English translation and interpretation have been more in the public eye than ever before. Many articles in the electronic and print media have focused on the shortage of Arabic interpreters and translators and the shortcomings of their work. Colleagues have been interviewed in-depth about methods, processes, and delivery systems. Interpreter accuracy has been both praised and debated.

The time has come to meet the challenges of being in the public eye and maintaining the integrity of our work under sometimes difficult conditions. The Arabic language is common to 22 countries, each with its own colloquialisms, dialect, culture, and view of religion. Not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabs; Arab Christians and Arab Jews are minorities ranging from small to large in some countries. Interpreters will inevitably have to function occasionally as educators within the legal system, not only to clarify to others the nuances of Arabic, but also to interpret the rhetorical flourishes of the spoken language without creating the wrong impression. Like it or not, whether by default or force majeure, our work, to some extent, is to interpret culture as well as language.

What’s In a Name?

Culture often begins with a name. The issue of Arab and Muslim names has befuddled many in the West, from airline personnel to human resources, from law enforcement to the media. How can anyone tell who is who?

Males and females from Arab countries, including Christians and Muslims, use the father’s first name as a middle name. (Initials are never used in Arabic or other Arabic-letter-based languages, such as Farsi or Urdu.) When a child is born, families may want to honor a great-great-grandfather who was a notable, or the prophet Muhammad, and those names may be included within the full name.

“…Interpretation must be balanced with connotation and context…”

Thus, it is not unusual for a name to have four or five components, generally in this order: the given name, the father’s first name, the grandfather’s first name, the great-grandfather’s first name, and then the family name (surname). For example, my birth certificate and original ID list my name as “Aziz Abd El Rahman El-Nasser Ismail Fahmy.” On my first passport, the clerk dropped “Fahmy.” However, my brother’s official name is Ahmed El-Nasser and my sister is Dalia Fahmy. You can imagine what we went through as kids growing up in Lowell, Massachusetts!

The first official document is the birth certificate, from which a national ID card is based. The passport is based on the ID card. Along the way, government clerks can drop names, depending on the space available on the document. Countries transitioning to computer-generated documents have a space limit of four names. However, most countries’ passport-issuing departments do not have this limitation, and so banks and airlines have to deal with name variance as a continuing issue. Immigrants to Western countries use three names when filling out documents: first name, father’s first name, and family name. Name divergence was at the root of the confusion when authorities first tried to identify the 9/11 hijackers by matching foreign passport names to those on green cards and drivers’ licenses.

To further complicate matters, when Arabic-origin names are transliterated into English, they can be spelled in different ways. There is no official or government standardization in the U.S. except at the Verbatim Section of the United Nations. International media use The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage. Individuals and other entities do as they wish. For this reason, we see “Shaikh,” “Sheikh,” and even “Shaykh.” The article “Al-” is also spelled “El-,” and sometimes as “el-.” We also see “Abdel-Rahman,” “Abdul-Rahman,” and “Abd el-Rahman.” (The adjective “Abdel” is never used alone, as it means “servant of…” and the name which follows can be any one of the 99 names which refer to God. Though the name “Abdel-____” is primarily used by Muslims, Christians use it as well.)

Communication in the Legal Arena

Not all Arabic interpreters have had the opportunity to visit or work in all parts of the Arab world, or to have friends and acquaintances from different regions—which differ not only in their use of vernacular, but also in culture, religion, politics, and ideology. While some interpreter coordinators in the different courts are aware of regional issues and endeavor to assign interpreters
carefully, in some cases, the interpreter may need to determine beforehand the appropriateness of a particular assignment. An Arabic interpreter may be called to interpret for defendants and witnesses from anywhere in the Arab world. The interpreter will always be able to perform more effectively if the country of origin of the person needing the interpretation is known.

For example, if a defendant is from North Africa, I ask whether he would be more comfortable with a French interpreter. If he prefers Arabic, I ask if he understands Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). In one case, I was given an affirmative answer, but once the proceedings started, the defendant requested interpretation in Egyptian dialect, which he readily understood.

When a defendant or witness does not have the benefit of much education, he tends to speak in a colloquial language, using local words or terms which may be unfamiliar to the interpreter. I faced this in a case with an Iraqi witness. In these instances, one does the best one can, and asks the person to speak in “classical,” or to provide synonyms for unfamiliar expressions.

Trials in which a non-Western religion or belief system is highlighted in evidence or testimony will pose special challenges. In trials involving Islamic militants, there will almost certainly be references to Islam, Shariah,1 and the Koran.2 Indeed, there were numerous references to Islam in the case involving the Iraqi, but not as many as in the later trial of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric who was the spiritual leader of the Islamic group El Gama’a El-Islamiya, who was tried for seditious conspiracy in a plot to blow up New York landmarks.

In the Abdel-Rahman trial, a government translation of a sermon, which quoted extensively from the Koran and Hadith,3 was introduced. When the English translation was read in the courtroom, the Arabic interpreters had to translate it back into Arabic. Anyone familiar with the Koran and Hadith knew that the English did not closely reflect the original. Should the interpreter depart from the document and quote directly from the religious books, or interpret accurately from a bad English translation? In this case, a combination of both was best, and the interpreter informed the listener in advance—the Sheikh himself—that the Koranic verses were not being cited verbatim in the reverse translation.

The Importance of Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness of the differences and similarities in the Arab world became important in the extensive media coverage of the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War. Many Arabic-language speeches and statements, as well as follow-up debate and clarification by Arab-origin experts, were interpreted into English. When it was reported that American children were traumatized by images of Arabs and could not sleep at night, ABC News aired a three-hour television special. Peter Jennings, who for years had been based in the Arab world, wrote and anchored the program. Among the many points raised were the role of interpreters, both government and TV-contracted, and how translations of emotional rhetoric and religious verses sound to an American ear.

Interpreters under pressure generally do not have the benefit of (or the time for) clarification. We have to be careful not to inject meaning or say anything which might be misunderstood. We have to balance our interpretation with connotation and context.

In the Abdel-Rahman trial, a common everyday interjection, Yikhrib Beitak, used innocuously by Egyptians and other Arabs, was literally translated for the jury as “May God destroy your home” or “May your house be destroyed.” However, if translated contextually from a combined linguistic and cultural perspective, the translation might be: “Oh, you fool,” or “God, you’re such an idiot.” Clearly, any time in a criminal trial where life and freedom are at stake, a misinterpretation of a word or phrase, minor as it may be, may have unintended or devastating results.

Another example occurred in the crash of Egyptair Flight 990 in October 1999. When the cockpit voice recorder was retrieved, one phrase spoken by the co-pilot, “Tawakkalt ‘ala Allah,” was translated according to the news reports as, “I put my trust in God.” The media speculated that it was a prayer, and a suicide prayer at that. Egyptian experts and government spokespeople pointed out that it is an everyday expression in Egypt. (Egyptians routinely use this expression when commencing a journey or starting the car, for example.) Similarly, Muslims often use the phrase “Bismillahir Rahman Nir Rahim” (“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate”), especially to begin a speech or before any written or verbal communication. Does this mean that every action is a kind of Jihad performed in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate? The possible misunderstandings are obvious. When an expression indigenous to certain people is not interpreted culturally in the context in which it is uttered, it might very well
indicate aggressive, antagonistic behavior to a foreign listener.

When the job of translating the cockpit recorder is assigned, a savvy language coordinator would know to look for a culturally and religiously appropriate interpreter. But the average person would not think of it, any more than if he were seeking a Spanish interpreter, for example. Any interpreter accepting such an assignment would do well to suggest that it would be helpful to have an Egyptian colleague for consultation. Under the circumstances, an interpreter’s need for further consultation should not be viewed as a lack of skill. However, it is up to the interpreter to make these matters known, and to doublecheck with other experts before pronouncing an expression which may carry different shadings in different countries.

The following suggestions may help us face delicate situations in the future.

- Ask friends from other Arab countries to speak to you in their colloquial Arabic so your ear becomes used to it, and ask for explanations of certain words and phrases.

- Study legal documents and references in Arabic and English, concentrating on criminal law first. Much can be downloaded from the Internet.

- It is helpful to have at least a passive knowledge of French, especially in the legal field. Consider studying it to, at a minimum, acquire reading comprehension.

- Become as familiar as possible with the Bible, Koran, Hadith, and Shariah texts in Arabic and English.

- If you are primarily an interpreter, sharpen translation skills to the highest possible level. One way to enhance your skills is through constant dictionary usage. Consider seeking ATA accreditation in Arabic→English translation, and join the ATA Interpreters Division.

- Observe Arabic→English interpretation at every opportunity. This includes taping TV coverage of visits of Arab dignitaries where there is interpretation, either simultaneous or consecutive, as well as news coverage of Arab world events.

- Develop a network of professionals (linguists, interpreters, and translators) with whom you can consult about unfamiliar terminology.

Notes

1. The principle source on which Islamic law is based is the Koran, which contains the rules by which the Muslim world is organized and governed. It describes the relations between man and God, and the means to resolve conflicts among individuals and between the individual and the state.

2. Literally, “recitation,” a record of the exact words revealed by God through the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Mohammad. It contains 114 Suras, or chapters, dictated to the companions of the Prophet and is written by scribes who cross-checked the content with the Prophet during his lifetime. Not one word of the chapters has changed since that time.

3. “Traditions of the Prophet,” a reliably transmitted report of what Prophet Mohammad said, did, or approved of during his lifetime.
Legal Issues in the Translation of Healthcare Documents

By Maria Cornelio

In my capacity as a reviewer of translations at a major medical center, I am called upon to pass judgment on the quality of translated documents intended for the healthcare consumer. Quite often, the problem with those translations is not one of quality, but one in which the original and the translated document seem to be intended for completely different purposes. This article is written from my perspective as a reviewer of translations for the Spanish-speaking user of healthcare services in the United States. However, many of its recommendations can probably be adapted for use by translators of other languages. Most professional translators do not seem to be aware of the fact that the federal government has established certain guidelines for writers of consumer health information. It is clear to me that many of the translations I see have not been done with the guidelines in mind, even when the English originals follow those guidelines very closely.

It is generally agreed that translators must:

1. Have an excellent command of their source and target language.
2. Be good writers with an extensive general vocabulary.

And, of course, for anyone doing translations in the medical field, there is a third requirement: knowledge of medical terminology.

There are three additional factors that are equally important, but do not always receive as much attention. They are crucial when we talk about the translation of health-related materials:

1. Precision in the use of language.
2. Use of the appropriate register for the intended audience.

In this article, I will examine the last three factors in the context of the federal guidelines and how they relate to healthcare translations. In order to do that, we must first look at the issue of adult literacy in the United States.

“...As translators for the healthcare consumer, we not only have to think like doctors, we also have to think like lawyers…”

Adult Literacy in the U.S. and Its Implications for Healthcare

The 1993 National Adult Literacy Survey found that about 90 million people are functionally illiterate. That is, they have difficulty finding a specific piece of information in a brief news article, computing one-step math problems, or signing in the appropriate place on a form. These people are at higher risk of misunderstanding their diagnosis, prescription materials, self-care and safety instructions, as well as making serious errors in administering medications.

In 1995, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published the results of a study carried out in two public hospitals in Atlanta, Georgia, and Los Angeles, California. More than 35% of English speakers and more than 61% of Spanish speakers had difficulty understanding directions on prescription bottles and appointment cards. In addition, 33% of the Spanish speakers, “could not understand a Spanish translation of standard patient instructions about how to prepare for x-rays.”

In 1999, JAMA published the results of a study conducted among Medicare enrollees in a managed care organization. This study found that 33.9% of English speakers and 53.9% of Spanish speakers also had problems understanding written instructions.

Another study, published in 1994, found that the mean reading level of Spanish-speaking Medicaid recipients is grade 3.1.

According to the January 2002 issue of the online journal, U.S. Pharmacist: “More than 40% of patients with chronic illness are functionally illiterate. Almost ¼ of all adults read at or below a 5th grade level, while medical information is generally written at a 10th grade level or above.”

Among the statistics cited by the Minnesota Extension Service are the following: “One in five adults cannot tell the difference between a bottle of medicine and a bottle of poison,” and each year there are 700,000 high school graduates who cannot read their own diplomas.

In addition, illness, pain, and many medications tend to reduce people’s comprehension levels.

Medical Writing for the Healthcare Consumer

Given these statistics, it is obvious that writing for the healthcare consumer has its own set of constraints that set it apart from other types of medical writing, such as writing for medical journals and medical professionals. Generally, documents written for the healthcare consumer can be divided into three major types according to the purpose they are intended to serve, and the translators of these documents must take this into account.

The first type of document consists of patient education materials.
Their purpose is to provide information. Some examples are: advising patients on how to manage a chronic illness, such as diabetes or kidney failure; teaching patients about illness prevention, exercise, or diet; and indicating dosages and side effects of medication.

The second type includes informed consent forms, which, in addition to providing information, are also meant to protect a person’s legal rights. They are used in surgery and other invasive medical procedures, and also when people volunteer for medical research studies.

The third type of document is a questionnaire designed to obtain information from the patient or research volunteer. This type includes medical histories, demographic information sheets, and research questionnaires.

**Government Guidelines: Voluntary Compliance**

In all of these types of documents, it is crucial that the patient understand the information that is being conveyed. Because of the literacy problems I mentioned earlier, in recent years several federal agencies have developed standards to serve as a guide for writers of healthcare information aimed at the consumer. These are meant not only to inform, but also to protect the rights and safety of patients undergoing invasive medical procedures. Mandatory compliance also affects all documents written for human subjects taking part in medical and scientific research.

The federal government has established a rigorous set of procedures that govern the conduct of clinical research. These are known as “Good Clinical Practices,” or GCP for short. The GCP codifies the way in which clinical research is conducted, how the quality of the results is monitored and evaluated, and how the welfare and rights of study subjects are protected. The GCP has several requirements. Of concern to translators is the one that stipulates that each study must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) where the research is being conducted to ensure that the rights and safety of the subjects are protected and that their consent to participate in the study was informed and freely given.

**Food and Drug Administration Regulations Pertaining to IRB Protection of Human Subjects**

Of the many Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations dealing with clinical research, the following have a direct bearing on how documents for the subject are written and translated.

**21 CFR 56.111 (a) (3)**

Information must not be misleading to subjects, especially to the physically and mentally ill or those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.

**21 CFR 56.111 (b)**

The IRB must institute appropriate safeguards to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects. This includes using
appropriate language so that the subject can fully understand the information he or she is given.

The informed consent form (generally referred to simply as the consent form) is the most important document given to a research subject. Its wording is closely monitored by the federal government and the IRB of each institution. Besides being the subject’s major source of information on the study in which he or she will participate, it is also a legal document that binds the researcher and the institution to protect the subject’s rights and safety.

The Office for Protection from Research Risks of the Department of Health and Human Services has developed a document entitled “Tips on Informed Consent,” which can be consulted on their website (http://ohrp.os DHS.gov/humansubjects/guidance/ictips.htm). Even a cursory reading will make it clear just how strictly the government regulates the topics to be covered, as well as the language, on the informed consent form. In the first paragraph of the “Tips,” we read:

Information must be presented to enable persons to voluntarily decide whether or not to participate as a research subject...The procedures used in obtaining informed consent should be designed to educate the subject population in terms that they can understand. Therefore, informed consent language and its documentation (especially explanation [sic] of the study’s purpose, duration, experimental procedures, alternatives, risks, and benefits) must be written in ‘lay language’ (i.e., understandable to the people being asked to participate).

The IRB of each research institution formulates its own guidelines, specifying in great detail just how a researcher is to carry out the government’s language requirements for subject informed consent forms. The federal government is extremely vigilant in monitoring an IRB’s handling of subject consent. It demands strict adherence to its requirements, and some IRBs around the country have been sanctioned or even shut down by regulatory agencies for laxity in enforcing regulations. Therefore, translators should be aware that by the time they receive a consent form to be translated, the document has been through a complete IRB review and both the style and content have been carefully crafted. This means there is very little room for creativity on the part of the translator.

Let’s look at the various elements of a consent form and how the translator can inadvertently change them so as to make them unacceptable to a reviewer enforcing IRB regulations. The examples I will be using are taken from IRB documents used in clinical trials at a major research institution. While consent forms for surgical and other procedures may differ from these in certain respects, the basic premise still holds: the document’s content and style are crucial in protecting the patient’s rights. Therefore, the translator must pay close attention to the original. In all cases, if there is a death, life-threatening issue, or malpractice lawsuit, the consent form the patient or subject signed is certainly one of the most important documents that will be examined.

Every consent form for a research study has several major sections, each designed to give the subject specific information about the study. Some of these sections seem to act as traps for the unwary translator.

The first section states the purpose of the study. Here, the subject is told what the study is designed to discover or establish and is provided with some background information on the study hypotheses, including why and how the subject was selected to participate and how many people and institutions will take part. FDA regulations do not permit investigational drugs to be given to “patients,” since that presupposes “treatment.” Therefore, it is important in studies of such drugs to call participants “subjects” to make it clear that they are participating in an experimental “study” and not undergoing established medical treatment. Many of the translations I see use the Spanish word for “patient” even though the English original clearly states “subject.”

The section describing the study procedures explains what will happen to subjects as a result of their participation in the study. The various procedures are described in chronological order. All of the explanations must be given in non-medical terms. That is, an English consent form that describes a test for “high cholesterol” should not have a translation that says “hypercholesterolemia.” Bone marrow obtained from the “hip bone” should not be translated as taken from the “iliac bone.” A procedure to detect “abnormal cells” should not be translated as detecting “dysplasia.”

The study benefits section describes the ways in which the subject may benefit from participation in the study. Often it includes the sentence: “You may or may not benefit personally from this study.” Many translations will have only one part of the statement (“You may benefit...” or “You may not benefit...”), perhaps because the translator considers that one implies the other. According to
the IRB, however, both parts of the statement must be included.

One of the most important sections of the consent form is the one listing the risks of the study. It informs the subject of all potential risks, discomforts, and inconveniences that may be expected. If the study includes any drugs, _the most serious side effects must be mentioned first_, even if they occur only rarely, followed by the other principal side effects, listed in order of frequency. For some unexplained reason, many of the translations I see do not follow the order as it appears in the original.

The section on costs includes any costs to the subject for tests, procedures, transportation to the study site, etc. If there are no costs to the subject, this should be stated. However, many IRBs are adamant as to the wording. For example, if treatment or drugs will be provided, the consent form should state that these will be given “at no cost to you,” and _never_ as “free treatment or medication.” The reason for this is that lawyers have determined that the word “free” may be coercive to financially constrained subjects.

The section on voluntary participation informs the subject that he or she may “refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time” without incurring penalties or sanctions of any kind. Often the translation will have only the first part of the statement. However, it is important to let subjects know that even if they agree to participate, they retain their right to stop participating at any point even after the study has begun.

The entire consent form should be written in the second person, with one exception—the final statement of consent. This section represents the subjects’ own statement that they are satisfied with the information that has been provided to them, that their participation is voluntary, and that they understand their legal rights. Some translators do not change to the first person when they reach this section.

Many institutions use the phrase: “The ____ Hospital will furnish that [sic] emergency medical care determined to be necessary by the medical staff of this hospital.” That sentence is frequently misinterpreted by translators. It does _not_ mean that the necessary medical care will be furnished by the hospital’s medical staff. It _does_ mean that only the hospital’s medical staff will determine what medical care is necessary. That is, a physician from outside the institution cannot decide what medical care the subject needs. That determination can only be made by hospital staff.

The IRBs at many institutions require that consent forms be written in 12- to 14-point font and that the pages be numbered using the format “Page __ of __.” A very large number of the translations I receive use a much smaller font (probably to conserve paper) and do not follow the required numbering format.

Finally, the last page of the consent form must include a statement such as, “The solicitation of subjects into this study has been approved by the (name of institution) Institutional Review Board.” The IRBs can be very creative in the names they give themselves in various languages. It is always wise to ask if the IRB already has a particular name that it prefers to use in its translations. For example, I know of at least three different names in Spanish used by the IRBs at various institutions.

**Translating Beyond the Consent Form**

Besides consent forms, there are other documents in which an imprecise translation has the potential for raising legal issues. And even when that is not the case, translations that are vague, imprecise, or do not take into account the purpose of the document can confuse the patient, change the results of research, or negate the validity of a diagnostic instrument. Here are some examples from translations I have reviewed:

- The sentence, “your surgery will be performed under your doctor’s care” means something very different from “your surgery will be performed by your doctor.”

In the first sentence, the doctor is permitted to delegate the actual performance of the surgery to another physician. The second sentence is restrictive to a specific doctor, and the patient may have grounds for a lawsuit if anyone else were to perform the surgery.

- I once reviewed a translation in which the English document informed the patient that, “you will be injected in a muscle.” The Spanish said that, “you will be injected in a thigh.”

In Spanish, there is only one syllable difference between the two words, “muslo” (thigh) and “músculo” (muscle). When I asked the translator to correct it, she resisted, since, after all, “the thigh is a muscle.” The problem is that not every muscle is a thigh. The Spanish document restricts the area where the injection can be given, while the English document does not.

- A “replacement dose” of a medication cannot be translated as an “additional dose.”
This can end up as an “overdose,” which may bring on problems of its own.

• In a questionnaire, the patient is instructed to “circle your answer.”

If the translation says, “mark your answer,” the patient may put down a check mark. But if the aim of the document is to assess the patient’s hand-eye coordination by making a circle around a word or group of words, this translation would not give the patient the correct instructions. The clinician may think the patient did not understand or did not read the instructions, since the English clearly says “circle” and the clinician assumes the translation says the same thing.

• A patient interview to assess memory impairment or cognitive dysfunction includes the following question: “I am now going to read a phrase to you. Please repeat this phrase and try to remember it: Robert Jones, 30 Market Street, Boston.” Several questions later, there is the instruction: “Please repeat the phrase that I asked you to remember a few minutes ago.” Here, the clinician waits to see if the patient will repeat the sentence, “Robert Jones, 30 Market Street, Boston,” correctly. The translation kept the personal and street name as is.

Of course, we all know that proper names are not translated. However, in this case, we are not referring to a real person or a real address. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out if the patient remembered what was said. But people who speak no English are not likely to remember English names that most likely are unfamiliar to them. In this case, it would be more appropriate to translate the names. For example, a Spanish-speaking person is more likely to remember a familiar name, such as Juan Pérez, and the Spanish word for market (mercado). If the patient does not remember them a few minutes after hearing them, the clinician has grounds for suspecting memory problems rather than simply a lack of familiarity with the names.

• A questionnaire with four responses in English:
  1. Completely satisfied
  2. Satisfied
  3. Dissatisfied
  4. Completely dissatisfied

  is translated with just three responses:
  1. Completely satisfied
  2. Satisfied
  3. Dissatisfied

Problem: The survey is being done with 5,000 respondents. In a statistical analysis of the responses, there would be no equivalence between the two sets of questionnaires. The English speakers have two negative choices while the Spanish speakers have only one. The investigators would have no way of knowing how many of the Spanish speakers were merely “dissatisfied” as opposed to “completely dissatisfied.” There is an entire category that would have a value of zero in the Spanish version, which would not necessarily reflect how the respondents really felt. The translation has changed the results of the research.

When a translator believes that the choices or categories in a questionnaire do not translate well into the language in question, it is important to communicate with the client in order to find a mutually acceptable solution.

From the previous discussion, it is clear that there are important legal implications in writing and translating many documents for the healthcare consumer. The translator must be aware that seemingly minor points may be of crucial importance. I often tell my students that as translators for the healthcare consumer, we not only have to think like doctors, we also have to think like lawyers.

Notes


The medical interpreter is, among other things, a facilitator of communication between a healthcare provider and a patient who do not speak the same language. Whenever possible, the interpreter would like to walk away from the medical session with the feeling that he or she has not only served as a conduit of information, but has also helped to engender a sense of trust between patient and provider. At times, though, a patient may refuse a recommended treatment. For example, healthcare professionals frequently encounter Jehovah’s Witness patients who abstain from treatment involving whole blood, packed red blood cells, plasma, or platelets. What might motivate a patient to take such a stand? What alternative treatments exist? Are there legal precedents governing how providers should treat patients seeking alternative treatment? And how will the ethical interpreter react in the event that personal biases and beliefs interfere with his or her ability to remain impartial in such an emotionally charged situation?

**“Blood...is the most dangerous substance we use in medicine.”**

*Dr. Charles Huggins, Massachusetts General Hospital (The Boston Globe Magazine, February 4, 1990)*

For Bible-based reasons, Jehovah’s Witnesses refuse blood transfusions (see Acts 15:20, 28, 29). Interestingly, the media has consistently portrayed Witness patients as ignorant of, and resistant to, advances in medicine. But statistics show that Jehovah’s Witnesses do accept, and are proactive in their pursuit of, quality alternative medical treatments. “Jehovah’s Witnesses actively seek the best in medical treatment,” stated Dr. Richard K. Spence, former director of surgery at a New York hospital. “As a group, they are the best educated consumers the surgeon will ever encounter.”

It is well documented that the use of blood in medicine has been a subject of much controversy since the experiments of the French physician Jean-Baptiste Denis involving the transfusion of animal blood to human patients. In 1670, the procedure was banned in France and, soon after, in England. Only in the late 19th century did blood transfusions regain popularity. Consequently, during World Wars I and II, blood was widely transfused into wounded soldiers. Today, in the U.S. alone, more than 11,000,000 units of red cells are transfused into 3,000,000 patients each year.

Concern over the health risks of transfusion has grown since the Korean War, when nearly 22% of those who received plasma transfusions developed hepatitis. By the 1970s, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimated the number of deaths from transfusion-related hepatitis at 3,500 a year. In the 1980s, it was discovered that blood could be contaminated with HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS. Since then, scandals exposing HIV-contaminated blood have rocked the global community. For example, it is estimated that in France, between 6,000 and 8,000 people were infected with HIV through transfusions administered between 1982 and 1985. It has been said, too, that blood transfusions are responsible for 10% of HIV infections throughout Africa and 40% of the AIDS cases in Pakistan. Today, because of improved screening, HIV transmission through blood transfusion is rare in first-world nations. However, such transmission continues to be a problem in developing nations that lack an effective screening process. Consequently, there has been, on the part of the international community, an increased interest in bloodless medicine and surgery. What alternatives have been found?

Recent medical advances have done much to dispel the popular belief that blood transfusion is the “only” treatment for certain critical medical conditions. Some time-tested quality treatment alternatives are Ringer’s lactate solution, dextran, and hydroxyethyl starch, all used to maintain blood volume, thus preventing hypovolemic shock. Genetically engineered proteins can stimulate the production of red blood cells (erythropoietin), blood platelets (interleukin-11), and various white blood cells (GM-CSF, G-CSF). Other medications greatly reduce blood loss during surgery (aprotinin, antifibrinolytics) or help to reduce acute bleeding (desmopressin).

Biological hemostats, such as collagen and cellulose woven pads, can stop bleeding through direct application. In addition, fibrin glues and sealants have been used effectively to plug puncture wounds or cover large areas of bleeding tissue. Many surgical teams also have access to blood salvage equipment, which is used to recover blood lost during surgery or trauma. Surgical planning and laparoscopic surgical instruments are also effective. Interestingly, Dr. ...
Stephen Geoffery Pollard, a British consultant surgeon, stated that the morbidity and mortality rates among those who receive bloodless surgery are: “at least as good as those patients who receive blood, and, in many cases, they are spared the postoperative infections and complications often attributable to blood.”

Currently, most major cardiac, vascular, gynecological, obstetrical, orthopedic, and urological surgery can be performed successfully without the use of blood or blood products. In fact, bloodless medicine has proved so effective that Professor Luc Montagnier, discoverer of the AIDS virus, commented: “The evolution of our understanding in this field shows that blood transfusions must one day die out.”

“‘There are two good things in life, freedom of thought and freedom of action’”

William Somerset Maugham

Today, many hospitals publicly display a “Patient’s Bill of Rights.” One of these rights is informed consent or informed choice. J. Lowell Dixon (M.D.) explains the concept of informed consent as follows: “After the patient is informed of the potential results of various treatments (or of nontreatment), it is his choice what he will submit to. At Albert Einstein Hospital in the Bronx, New York, a draft policy on blood transfusion and Jehovah’s Witnesses stated: ‘Any adult patient who is not incapacitated has the right to refuse treatment no matter how detrimental such a refusal may be to his health.’”

Further exploring the issue of informed consent, the publication Informed Consent-Legal Theory and Clinical Practice (1987) notes: “The law of informed consent has been based on two premises: first, that a patient has the right to receive sufficient information to make an informed choice about the treatment recommended; and second, that the patient may choose to accept or to decline the physician’s recommendation...Unless patients are viewed as having the right to say no, as well as yes, and even yes with conditions, much of the rationale for informed consent evaporates.”

Even so, patients attempting to exercise this freedom of choice have encountered opposition from healthcare providers, some of whom have elected not to operate on Witness patients. On the other hand, over 78 bloodless medicine centers have been established in the United States. In these centers, patients seeking non-blood management are treated with dignity and receive quality care.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have promoted quality nonblood medical management by developing a system of over 1,400 Hospital Liaison Committees worldwide, equipped to provide doctors and researchers with medical literature from a database of over 3,000 articles related to bloodless medicine and surgery. These committees are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and serve as intermediaries between Witness patients and healthcare communities, even assisting Witnesses in locating medical providers willing to implement alternative treatment techniques.

Providers who cooperate with Hospital Liaison Committees and stay abreast of developments in bloodless medicine often find themselves administering fewer transfusions. Thus, Dr. Charles Baron, a professor at Boston College Law School, noted that: “Not only Jehovah’s Witnesses, but patients in general, are today less likely to be given unnecessary blood transfusions because of the work of the Witnesses’ Hospital Liaison Committees.”

Some doctors and hospitals have expressed concern over legal issues such as liability. This concern has proved largely unfounded, as most Witnesses are eager to sign medical release forms relieving physicians and hospitals of liability. In addition, Witnesses usually carry wallet-sized medical directives, which are updated annually and signed in the presence of legal witnesses. Common among medical release forms are the Advance Medical Directive/Release and the executed Durable Power of Attorney (DPA).

Similarly, a properly signed “Refusal to Accept Blood Products” form is widely considered a contractual and legally binding agreement. In March 1990, the Supreme Court of Ontario, Canada, upheld a decision that commented favorably on such a document: “The card is a written declaration of a valid position which the card carrier may legitimately take in imposing a written restriction on the contract with the donor.”

Indeed, courts worldwide have repeatedly upheld the supremacy of an adult patient’s right to choose. In one case, the New York Court of Appeals stated that: “The patient’s right to determine the course of his own treatment [is] paramount...A doctor cannot be held to have violated his legal or professional responsibilities when he honors the right of a competent adult patient to decline medical treatment.”

Witness Children and Alternative Treatment

Often, in cases involving minors, medical personnel have sought court
backing to give blood. And in a few isolated cases, providers have gone ahead without court permission and forced blood on Witness children. Consider Lisa, a 12-year-old Canadian diagnosed as having acute myeloid leukemia, usually a fatal condition. Providers prescribed intensive chemotherapy and multiple blood transfusions. Hoping to encounter a more cooperative staff, Lisa’s parents took her to Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children. That night, a nurse entered Lisa’s hospital room to give her a blood transfusion. Lisa pleaded with her to stop, but the nurse continued to administer the transfusion. The next morning, a court order was sought to authorize the hospital to use force in imposing treatment. The trial began three days later in a room at the hospital. Each day, at her own request, Lisa was brought into the room on her hospital bed. Although very sick, she was determined to be heard in matters that involved her faith.

On the fourth day of the trial, Lisa was propped up so she could directly address the court. She began to discuss her determination to remain obedient to God’s law on the sanctity of blood, and pledged to physically resist any effort to give her a blood transfusion. She then explained her feelings about the blood transfusion already administered, saying: “It made me feel like a dog being used for an experiment, because I couldn’t control anything. Just because I’m a minor, people feel they can do anything to me, but I feel that I have a right to know what’s going to happen to me and why they’re doing these treatments, and why they’re doing them without my parents’ consent.” When asked if she could think of a comparison to explain to the judge what getting a blood transfusion against her will was like, she said: “Well, the one I can think of is rape because…a rape is getting something done without your will, and it’s just like that.”

Judge David R. Main concluded that Lisa was to be returned to the custody, care, and control of her parents. He expressed his admiration for her in the following words: “She has a well thought out, firm, and clear religious belief. In my view, no amount of counseling from whatever source or pressure from her parents or anyone else, including an order of this court, would shake or alter her religious beliefs. I believe that Lisa K. should be given the opportunity to fight this disease with dignity and peace of mind. That can only be achieved by acceptance of the plan put forward by her and her parents.”

Addressing the issue of the forced blood transfusion, he said: “I must find that Lisa has been discriminated against on the basis of her religion and her age pursuant to Subsection 15 (1) [of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms]. In these circumstances, upon being given a blood transfusion, her right to the security of her person pursuant to Section 7 was infringed.”

Thus, multiple court rulings have encouraged providers to work with Witness parents to develop a treatment plan acceptable to all. Regarding a parent’s voice in medical matters affecting underage children, the U.S. Supreme Court has stated: “The law’s concept of the family rests on a presumption that parents possess what a child lacks in maturity, experience, and capacity for judgment required for making life’s difficult decisions...Simply because the decision of a parent (on a medical matter) involves risks does not automatically transfer the power to make that decision from the parents to some agency or officer of the state” (Parham v. J.R., 1979).

That same year, the New York Court of Appeals ruled: “The most significant factor in determining whether a child is being deprived of adequate medical care...is whether the parents have provided an acceptable course of medical treatment for their child in light of all the surrounding circumstances. This inquiry cannot be posed in terms of whether the parent has made a ‘right’ or a ‘wrong’ decision, for the present state of the practice of medicine, despite its vast advances, very seldom permits such definitive conclusions. Nor can a court assume the role of a surrogate parent” (In re Hofbauer).

Reflecting on the complexities of pediatric medicine, Dr. James L. Fletcher, Jr. commented: “I fear it is not uncommon for professional arrogance to supplant sound medical judgment. Treatments that are regarded as ‘the best today’ are modified or discarded tomorrow. Which is more dangerous, a ‘religious parent’ or an arrogant physician who is convinced that his or her treatment is absolutely vital?” (Pediatrics, October 1988).

In conclusion, while many have criticized the Witnesses refusal of blood transfusions, a great number of medical professionals echo the sentiments of Dr. Grant E. Steffen, who asserted that: “quality medical care is the capacity of the elements of that care to achieve legitimate medical and nonmedical goals” (The Journal of the American Medical Association, July 1, 1988). Clearly, “nonmedical” goals would include respecting the conscience and informed decisions of a patient seeking alternative treatment.

The Ethical Interpreter

How relevant is the above information to your effectiveness as a...
medical interpreter? In the U.S., the medical interpreter is a key element of quality care for non-English speakers and those with limited-English proficiency. The interpreter must be acutely aware of any personal tendency to obstruct a patient’s access to that care. Interestingly, the likelihood of interpreting for a patient who requires non-blood management grows ever greater, due to the fact that some of the largest immigrant populations in the country hail from countries with fast-expanding Witnesses communities. For example, there are now over 542,000 Witnesses in Mexico; 555,000 in Brazil; 111,000 in Columbia; 123,000 in Argentina; 138,000 in the Philippines; 120,000 in Russia, and another 120,000 in the Ukraine; as well as 113,000 in France; 228,000 in Italy; and 220,000 in Japan. Therefore, when facing a situation where a patient requests alternative treatment, how should the medical interpreter react in the event that personal biases and beliefs interfere with his or her ability to remain impartial?

Several professional organizations have established guidelines shaping the ethics of medical interpretation. A particularly useful outline is the Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice, developed by the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association and Education Development Center, Inc. Its principles delineate a course of action for ethical interpreters, which can be applied to a variety of situations that may arise in the triadic encounter.

According to the Standards, the ethical interpreter has developed the following skills:

1. Can clearly separate personal values and beliefs from those of the other parties.
2. Is able to withdraw from situations where strongly held personal values and beliefs may interfere with impartiality.
3. Lets the parties speak for themselves and does not take sides in the conflict.
4. Remains calm in stressful situations or where there is conflict.
5. Focuses on the communication between provider and patient, and refrains from interjecting personal issues, beliefs, opinions, or biases.
6. Refrains from counseling or advising.

It must be said that exercising professional restraint of one’s emotions in medical interpretation is no easy task. Rather, it is an art to be developed over time and with practice. Interpreter associations can provide training, guidance, and support, as can a handful of privately operated cross-cultural institutes. Many of these offer study programs and workshops designed to produce ethical, culturally competent medical interpreters. Several include training in transparency, conflict resolution, “culture coaching,” and stress management in the interpreting session.

Alternative Treatments and the Medical Interpreter Continued

May we, as medical interpreters, strive evermore to be ethical interpreters. Let us not forget that each individual is the rightful guardian of his own health, whether physical or spiritual. And thus, by respecting our clients, we will personally share in the elevation of the profession and the promotion of equal access to quality medical care.

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Multilingual Medicine: Translation at Mayo Clinic

By Karen Engler

Since it was founded in the late 19th century as one of the world’s first group medical practices, Mayo Clinic continues to provide diagnosis and treatment in virtually every medical and surgical specialty. Each year, nearly 400,000 patients from all over the U.S. and the world are treated at Mayo Clinic’s outpatient and hospital facilities in Rochester, Minnesota; Jacksonville, Florida; and Scottsdale, Arizona. 

Like other international medical centers, not every patient who walks through our doors speaks English. And not all information required to treat patients is available in English. Bringing the best treatments to patients today is truly an international endeavor, often involving teams of physicians from around the world, research conducted in many languages, and patients who speak every language on the globe. For example: treatment for a specific patient might hinge on the contents of a research article written in German; a patient from Spain might need specific and detailed instructions for self-care after a procedure; physicians in Brazil might learn about a new treatment for pancreatic cancer from a presentation by an English-speaking physician using accompanying slides and handouts in Portuguese.

Translators provide an invaluable service by facilitating the exchange of written information between all of these groups. This information can sometimes improve medical treatments, increase patient compliance, or even save lives.

This article will describe the production of written translated documents at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Though the translation process may differ from one healthcare institution to the next, the audience and demand for translation are generally the same throughout the healthcare industry. The increasingly global reach of modern medicine requires that patients, physicians, researchers, and others at major medical centers communicate across language barriers.

“When written information is provided in a patient’s or a physician’s native language, patient care is enhanced and the communication of medical knowledge flows freely…”

Audience

Each year, nearly 10,000 patients from 120 countries visit Mayo Clinic facilities. Many international patients come from the Middle East, Mexico, Central and South America, Canada, and Europe. In addition to international patients, the Clinic also serves the diverse local populations of the communities located near its facilities, including recent immigrants and refugees who do not speak English. For example, in the small city of Rochester, Minnesota, several immigrant groups saw a population increase of nearly 400% between 1990 and 2000. One of these growing groups represents one of the largest Somali communities in the United States.

These local and international non-English-speaking patients should receive the same level of care as every other patient that comes to the Clinic. Providing services to patients in their own language is one way we provide appropriate care. Language services for patients and visitors to Mayo Clinic in Rochester include free interpreter services in over 30 different languages, as well as translated materials in many languages. Translated materials for patients currently include more than 500 non-English patient education materials and general patient/visitor items like maps, forms, handbooks, and other basic information. Our primary languages for international patients are Spanish, Arabic, and Turkish. Primary languages for local limited-English proficiency (LEP) patients are Spanish, Somali, and Vietnamese.

While patients are our most important audience for translated materials, requests are often received from physicians or researchers in need of translations of medical journal articles or scholarly presentations. Communications and marketing departments often need translations of news press releases and news articles in foreign publications. In addition, Internet content has become increasingly important for healthcare providers. Mayo Clinic has recently added non-English content for international patients on its website (www.mayoclinic.org/international).

The Translation Process

At the Rochester facility, the translation coordinator in the Division of Communications coordinates translations of a public nature. These include items for patients, visitors, physicians and staff, and the general public. All translations are completed by highly qualified freelance translators, and are subsequently reviewed internally by at least one staff member (a native speaker of the target language) who is familiar with the content. These reviewers are either medical interpreters who work in the Language and Cultural Services Department or other qualified staff members around the institution.
The production of documents often involves in-house graphic designers, who format the pieces according to the visual identity standards of the institution. Most materials are produced in either PageMaker or Quark XPress, and localized versions of software are used for non-Latin-based languages such as Arabic. To aid healthcare providers, all titles and subtitles are formatted bilingually (in English and the target language).

After a piece is designed, the translation coordinator, or her assistant, reviews all translations for layout and formatting, accuracy of the English content, and correct assignment of document numbers. All documents are assigned a unique number (“MC number”), and non-English versions are given a language extension (SP = Spanish; AR = Arabic) for tracking purposes. Version control and document storage are maintained in a database, and revision dates are listed on the back cover of each revised piece. The translation coordinator is responsible for maintaining and updating all existing translated materials, as well as the creation of new materials. The entire translation process can take several weeks to several months, depending on the length and complexity of the document. Most translations are based on existing English pieces, although we are seeing an increase in the production of culturally-specific pieces for certain audiences.

All medical centers must manage their limited translation resources wisely to ensure the best use for the greatest good of the patients. The sheer volume of requests received by the Clinic necessitates prioritizing all translation requests. Requests for patient education and visitor information are prioritized based on a number of criteria. These criteria include: urgency for the patient; status of the source publication (has the content been approved by a Mayo physician, is it due for revision?); number of patients served; and priority as part of a patient education plan. Each request is given a numerical ranking, and translation usually proceeds on high- and medium-priority pieces. Translation of low-priority pieces may be dropped or moved to a later date.

Generally, requests by physicians for the translation of documents critical to their research or practice are honored. Requests are often received for the translation of medical journal articles, presentations for physicians or administrators who are traveling abroad, and for occasional correspondence from other physicians or researchers. All translations of confidential, patient-specific information are completed by interpreters in the Language and Cultural Services Department. This includes faxes and e-mails from patients, as well as patient records from referring physicians.

The translation coordinator chairs a translation team, which is made up of approximately 10 people around the Clinic who work on translations and patient education. This group meets monthly to discuss translation issues and share information about current projects. The group also initiates continuous improvement and evaluation projects.

**Tracking and Accessing Translations**

All patient education and visitor information pieces (including non-English pieces) published by the Clinic are tracked in several databases maintained by the Section of Patient Education and the Publishing and Media Technology Services Division. Information available in the databases includes an abstract, copyright and revision dates, a content review date, ordering information, and usage instructions, in addition to numerous other fields that are used by those involved in the production of a piece. Every piece is tracked at each stage throughout its production.

Staff members can access these completed documents via the Clinic’s intranet site for employees. PDF versions of most translated items can be downloaded and printed directly from the intranet from anywhere in the Clinic. An English version is available for each translation publication, so healthcare providers know what is being presented to patients. In addition, special intranet pages on transcultural patient care offer cultural information, phrase sheets, and menu choices in many different languages for patients who are hospitalized.

The translation coordinator attends division and department meetings, and writes articles for staff publications in order to publicize the existence of translated materials and to teach employees how to access these materials through the intranet sites. The large number of staff at Mayo Clinic in Rochester (over 25,000 employees) makes internal communication about translation a challenge and an ongoing need. The interpreters also play a critical role in helping to distribute translated materials.

**Recent Initiatives**

Issues related to translation in a healthcare setting are often complex. Most institutions lack the resources to produce large numbers of translated materials. Existing English publications may not be culturally appropriate for translation for certain audiences. In addition, it may be difficult to know whether translated materials are being used by their intended audience. Like other healthcare institutions, we face...
all of these challenges at Mayo Clinic. Nevertheless, recent initiatives and programs are helping us address some of these concerns.

More than a dozen healthcare organizations in Minnesota have formed the Translated Health Resources Exchange. This group meets monthly to share information about translation resources and issues. The group’s goals are to share information about translated materials currently available at each site, to share health education approaches that work for LEP patients, and to develop a clearinghouse for translated health education resources. The Health Resources Exchange also plans to jointly create new and culturally appropriate materials in multiple languages. The clearinghouse is currently in the planning phase, and development is scheduled to begin this summer. We are hoping to share the responsibility and cost of developing patient education pieces in multiple languages. Documents in the clearinghouse will be available to all Exchange members.

The Clinic has also recently completed a pilot survey of local Somali, Vietnamese, and Spanish-speaking patients to determine the usefulness of translated material and the availability of technology in patient homes. We are trying to identify appropriate methods of delivering patient education to these audiences: in-person communication, written, audio, video, or via the Internet. Based on our findings, we will begin work on some pilot audio, video, and print products soon. We also have plans to conduct patient and provider surveys of select patient education documents to determine the effectiveness of these materials. Our goal is to develop more culturally-specific materials in the future.

**Conclusion**

In a field where life or death can depend on accurate communication, healthcare institutions must find ways to overcome language barriers. This need will only grow in the future. When written information is provided in a patient’s or a physician’s native language, patient care is enhanced and the communication of medical knowledge flows freely. Treatment possibilities may expand. After translation, patients or physicians have an important reference tool or a document to serve as a common source for discussion. To provide excellent medical care today, medical centers must navigate a multilingual course to serve a more diverse medical and patient community.

Though this article is about translation, I would also like to acknowledge the work of interpreters, who provide a critical service at many medical centers and who are often actively involved in the translation process, as they are at Mayo Clinic. Though this article focuses on translation, both translation and interpretation are crucial tools in providing compassionate care to non-English-speaking patients.

For those of you reading this who are medical translators, I hope you also find a renewed appreciation for the work you do. You are making a difference in the lives of people—patients and physicians who are sometimes desperately seeking a cure for a life-threatening illness. Those of us who work in healthcare institutions see this nearly every day. You are making their journey a little less frightening. You are giving physicians new tools to fight disease. Your words truly have the power to heal.
A Quality Assurance Model for Remote Language Mediation

By David Sawyer, Frances Butler, Jean Turner, and Irene Nikolayeva Stone

Since the establishment of the Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service in Australia in 1973, the use of call centers for the provision of interpreting services has risen exponentially. Telephone interpreting services are currently provided to the global marketplace in Australia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, the U.S., and a growing number of other countries. Ease of use, interpreter accessibility, and the skyrocketing volume of communication over conventional telephone lines has led to a demand for remote interpreting services that outstrips the supply of interpreters trained in academic institutions. Moreover, educational institutions offering training in only a few of the languages offered by service providers. The demand for remote language mediation will continue to rise in the wake of quality improvements in wireless networks and voice-over-Internet Protocol (IP). Provisioning this global marketplace with qualified bilinguals who can provide premier customer service in a mediated language environment is a formidable challenge.1 There is a great need for valid and reliable procedures for training and testing telephone interpreters. Indeed, the professionalization of the language industry calls for rigorous quality assurance systems that provide convincing evidence of validity and reliability to public and private service providers.2

In response to this situation, the Linguistics Division at NetworkOmni® Multilingual Communications is funding the development of a two-tiered, proprietary certification program for both professionally trained interpreters and skilled bilingual individuals who wish to serve the expanding multilingual markets. The new training and testing program currently being implemented refines the company’s hiring procedures. Developed in conjunction with practicing interpreters and experts in interpreting studies, applied linguistics, and language testing, the NetworkOmni® Telephone Interpreters Certification Program ensures clients that language mediators have the necessary knowledge and skills to work in the area of telephone interpreting. This program provides telephone interpreters with credentials that benchmark their skills in the language industry. The program also provides a model for training and testing in industries requiring competent bilingual staff. Validation studies are currently underway.

Fundamental Considerations

The NetworkOmni® Certification Program in Telephone Interpreting is designed as a proprietary training and testing program that prepares skilled bilinguals to work as language interpreters on the telephone. The primary purpose is to improve quality in telephone interpreting, and thus add value to the company’s products and establish a new benchmark in the language industry. At the end of the program, successful participants will be awarded the NetworkOmni® Telephone Interpreting Certificate for the language combination in which they complete the program.

”…The demand for remote language mediation will continue to rise in the wake of quality improvements in wireless networks and voice-over-IP…”

Interpreting is carried out in a variety of different settings, each with unique characteristics.3 While interpreter training has been formalized in academia for conferences, legal, healthcare, and social service settings, this has not been the case for telephone interpreting. Telephone interpreting differs from other settings in that it cuts across both venue and subject matter. In addition, the market it serves is comparatively new to language mediation. It consists of many entities in the public and private sectors, such as hospitals and social service agencies, that, in the past, have either not needed or been required to provide language services to their clients.

Telephone interpreting is a recent form of remote, spoken language mediation, resulting primarily from the rise of globalization and telecommunications technology over the past 20 years. Due to rapid growth in this area, it is not surprising that telephone interpreting has yet to be integrated into translation and interpretation curricula in academic settings. In many languages experiencing mid-to-high call volume, such as Vietnamese, Cantonese, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole, little or no language-specific training is available in the United States. Concurrently, the rapid growth in demand for telephone interpreting services has resulted in the need for trained bilingual staff who can begin providing effective service within a relatively short span of time. Hence the need for a formal training and testing program certifying that performance requirements have been met.

In the language industry and beyond, there is much confusion concerning the term certification.4 Several types of certification models can be readily identified. One type includes certification programs mandated by
legislation and administered by government agencies (e.g., federal and state court interpreter certification programs). By definition, any legally mandated certification falls into this category, and, strictly speaking, is considered a licensing that restricts access to employment in the area it governs (Wilson, 2002; Hamm, 2002).

A second type includes voluntary certification programs offered through nonprofit professional associations, generally on an industrywide scale. (A good example is the ATA accreditation exam.) A third type is found in the educational system. Colleges and universities offer programs of study, both internal and external degree programs, leading to certificates. Finally, proprietary certification is sometimes conducted by corporate sector entities that offer their own testing and training programs. This type of credential is widespread in the computer industry (Tittel, 2002). Proprietary certification programs have the potential to lay the groundwork for industrywide standards and other certification efforts that may also be spearheaded by professional associations or public sector institutions.

As a private sector entity, NetworkOmni® offers a proprietary, corporate-sector certification to both contract and staff interpreters as a means of adding value to its services. The certification program formalizes the company’s internal hiring, training, and testing procedures, and may eventually acquire recognition throughout the language industry. As a statement that participants have completed the testing and training program in telephone interpreting, the NetworkOmni® Telephone Interpreting Certificate is intended to set standards, educate practitioners, and inform the lay public (primarily the company’s clients).

The range and depth of the certification program are clearly defined. The program is designed to equip the bilingual with basic skills in consecutive interpreting and with knowledge of interpreting in general, and telephone interpreting in particular. Material is drawn from representative content in the customer service, insurance, emergency/911, finance, healthcare, and information technology sectors. Though knowledge of the pertinent subject matter and terminology is required to complete the training course, this program is not intended to provide specialized certification in any of these subject fields.

**A Brief Task Description of Telephone Interpreting**

The telephone interpreter serves as a remote linguistic and cultural bridge to facilitate the exchange of ideas between two parties over the telephone. Usually, the two parties and the interpreter are geographically separated from one another. (On rare occasions, particularly in emergencies, the two parties may be in the same location.) To make telephone interpreting possible, a three-way call is set up through a call center. As a result, parties who would otherwise not have access to language support can communicate efficiently and effectively (American Society for Testing and Materials, 2001).

The telephone interpreter generally works in the consecutive mode. In routine situations or in times of emergency, these brief exchanges, which may only consist of a few words or a phrase, may occur in rapid succession, so that the interpretation is almost simultaneous. At other times, exchanges may be highly descriptive or provide sequential instructions. When this occurs, the interpreted segment of the call may last up to one minute or longer. The majority of telephone calls are relatively short in duration, with most exchanges lasting less than 10 minutes. Many calls are routine exchanges of much shorter duration; however, a small percentage of calls are much longer than 10 minutes.

**Telephone Interpreting: A Special Form of Language Mediation**

Telephone interpreting differs from other forms of interpretation in several ways (Stone, 2001). First, when interpreting over the telephone, interpreters do not have the visual cues that are normally considered to be extremely important in mediated communication. The vast majority of calls concern business that would be conducted over the telephone if there were no language barrier. By the same token, many exchanges, such as roadside assistance and emergency situations, can only take place via the phone. Participants in NetworkOmni®’s certification program are trained to rely heavily on auditory acuity in developing their active listening skills. They are also trained to verify information, particularly names and numbers, when they have the slightest doubt that they have not heard the information correctly. In addition, participants learn a set of techniques to use intermittently to prompt speakers in order to ensure that the exchange continues to flow. All of these factors ensure successful communication, which is vital given the customer service function inherent to this type of language mediation and client base.

**Industries Served**

NetworkOmni® handles calls in a wide variety of industries. The calls generally fall into one of several categories: customer service, insurance,
healthcare, finance, emergency/911, information technology, or legal. Some calls also fall into more than one category (e.g., medical emergencies). Typical call scenarios include customer service requests, roadside assistance, credit card inquiries, and the filing of insurance claims. Most calls are initiated by an English-speaking client representing public or private entities with a strong focus on customer service. When NetworkOmni® telephone interpreters begin taking calls for the first time, they interpret general customer service calls. As their training and experience increases, the range of call types they handle becomes broader.

Test Validation

Because the NetworkOmni® Certification Program in Telephone Interpreting includes several phases of testing and training, test validation is an important process. The purpose of test validation is to ascertain whether tests are indeed serving the purpose for which they are intended. Validation means that any decisions based upon test results are appropriate and meaningful (e.g., the tests are demonstrably useful in determining whether a NetworkOmni® contract interpreter who has completed the training program is able to successfully interpret the types of calls required by clients). In this sense, validation is an essential part of a quality assurance program.

In determining whether a test is valid for a particular use, different types of validation evidence must be gathered. First, the appropriateness of the test content should be established (content validity). Second, documentation should be provided which shows that successful performance on the test requires the application of representative interpreting skills and abilities in the necessary subject areas (construct validity). Finally, monitoring should show that interpreters who pass the tests perform acceptably on real interpreting tasks (predictive validity).

Validation evidence, then, is ideally gathered in multiple ways and from multiple perspectives. First, test materials and procedures should be based upon real needs (i.e., empirical data should serve as the basis for the development of the test content). In the case of telephone interpreting, evidence is required of the types of call scenarios that must be interpreted. This evidence comes from interpreted calls that are transcribed as part of the test development process. Second, testing needs to be carried out consistently and systematically. For this to happen, the individuals administering and scoring a test need to be trained. Third, data that reflect the needs and expectations of users of interpreting services should be gathered. User opinions concerning the suitability of interpreting tests should also be solicited. Finally, interpreter performance on tests should be compared with performance on other interpreting tasks. This comparison helps to determine whether performance in the test situation is consistent with performance in actual interpreting settings.

Given the need for multiple approaches and perspectives when gathering evidence, validation is a long-term effort. It should be recognized as an inherent part of ongoing quality control and quality assurance processes, rather than an isolated, short-term project (Bachman, 1990).

Conclusion

The NetworkOmni® Certification Program in Telephone Interpreting provides systematic, well-rounded training in the sector of the language industry that has emerged most recently. Through the joint efforts of applied linguists, language testing specialists, interpreting studies researchers, practicing interpreters, and clients, well-established principles of language testing and interpretation pedagogy are being employed to intensify and streamline training and testing for this particular target group. Thus, this certification project brings together technical expertise in these key areas on an unprecedented level in an effort to lay the groundwork for empirically-based test design and development in interpreting.

The pace of development in the language industry is determined, to a large extent, by technological innovation. Demographic trends, ensuing language use, public policy, and legislation are also determining factors. In the U.S., industry observers have seen that interpreter education in colleges and universities has been outstripped by the demand for language mediation in the public and private sectors, particularly by the demand for remote interpreting. As the pace of innovation quickens and media technologies integrate, a key platform for today’s interlingual, mediated customer service applications—the use of the telephone for spoken language interpreting—is destined to become a springboard of tomorrow.

Notes

1. For an industrywide summary of call center trends and demographics, see Call Center News (2002).


4. For a broad discussion of certification issues in the language industry and beyond, see Beltran Avery and Bernstein (2001); Cross Cultural Healthcare Program (2002); Hamm (2002); Roat (2002); Tittel (2002); and Wilson (2002).


6. For a theoretical discussion of validity and types of validation evidence, see Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995); Bachman (1990); and Bachman and Palmer (2000).

References


Resource Materials for the Japanese→English Translation of Lab Animal Studies

By Lee Seaman

When Tony Atkinson and I first talked about doing a presentation at the 13th International Japanese/English Translation Conference (IJET 2002), held May 11-12 in Pacifico Yokohama, Japan, we selected the provisional title, “Trends in Medical Translation—Building Your Business in a Time of Change.”

Although it turned out that business kept me home this year, I’m delighted to have this opportunity to share some thoughts with you on the field of medical and pharmaceutical translation. I hope we can build an ongoing dialogue that will help all of us continue to grow as translators. (You can contact me at lseaman@seamanmedical.com.)

Challenges in the Medical Translation Business

Medicine and pharmaceuticals have seen some radical changes in the last few years, including the mass production of monoclonal antibodies and T-cell receptors, the use of genetically engineered animal models of human disease, and the increasing internationalization of standards and regulations (the International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use, or ICH). Many of those changes are just beginning to affect the translation market. We’ll see a lot more of them in the work that crosses our desks in the next few years.

The Bad News

I anticipate continued downward pressure on prices in some areas of medical and pharmaceutical translation, due in part to improved database technology which makes machine translation more feasible for highly repetitive materials, and also due to the large number of people willing to translate for low rates.

The Good News

Fortunately, there is also a growing demand for high quality “value-added” translation, especially from Japanese to English. Younger Japanese managers and researchers understand the value of submitting materials in accurate and professional-sounding English. They are looking for translators who can collaborate with them in producing a finished document that will not only get the information across, but will add to their international credibility.

“…Medicine and pharmaceuticals have seen some radical changes in the last few years…Many of those changes are just beginning to affect the translation market…”

What’s in This Article

The kind of “value-added” translation I am speaking of requires good writing and good client relation skills, but you also have to have field-specific expertise. My current area of interest is animal studies, because there is a lot of new technology coming down the pike. Most of it will be tested on animals before it is tried on humans, and when testing moves into the clinical trials, there will be further discussion of the findings resulting from tests on laboratory animals. So I did a bit of research on some of the areas that I think are “up-and-coming,” and ran down the answers to some terminology questions. As they say in medical articles, “results are reported below.”

Up-and-Coming: In the Popular Press

Here are some excerpts from the popular press on recent medical advances involving animals.

Pig Cloning for Human Organs

(Chicago Tribune: January 4, 2002)

Today, there are more than 70,000 Americans on waiting lists for scarce human organs. That makes a tremendous humanitarian and economic incentive to develop an animal source for organ transplants. Most researchers have focused on pigs because the organs are of the right size and transmit fewer germs to people than primates such as baboons. And since pigs are already slaughtered for food, their use may present less of an ethical issue.

The problem is that most mammals, including pigs, produce a sugar called GGTA1 on cell surfaces. Humans and their close primate relatives stopped making GGTA1 millions of years ago, and developed antibodies that attack any tissue containing the sugar. That’s useful in protecting us against bacteria carrying that sugar, but it is a major stumbling block for xenotransplantation (the cross-species transplantation of organs, especially from other animals into humans). Heart valves from pigs can be safely transplanted into people because the tissue is not living and no longer produces the troublesome sugar.

Researchers at the University of Missouri and at PPL Therapeutics Inc. in Virginia inserted a disabled version of the sugar chain into ordinary fetal pig cells as they were dividing, and then made copies of the modified cells and injected their DNA into eggs, making cloned pig embryos.

“If it worked, the number of transplants we did wouldn’t be limited by organ availability, but by the number of recipients and the number
of operating rooms you have to do the surgery,” said Dr. David Cronin, a liver transplant surgeon at the University of Chicago.

Monoclonal T-cell Receptors
(New Scientist: April 20, 2002)
Monoclonal antibodies can seek out and destroy diseased cells. Now researchers at Avidex and at Sunol Molecular are developing drugs which can detect and destroy all diseased or cancerous cells, not just the 10% to 15% targeted by monoclonal antibodies.

Starting with human T-cells, researchers extract the genes that manufacture the T-cell receptor. They shuttle those genes into E. coli bacteria, and the bacteria start producing identical copies of the receptor protein. This process mimics the one used for creating monoclonal antibodies, which is why the mass-produced receptors have been termed “monoclonal TCRs.” Avidex is just beginning animal trials.

Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor
(New Scientist: March 23, 2002)
The brain reacts to a stroke by trying to grow new blood vessels. Cells around the edge of the damaged area secrete vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), which stimulates capillary growth and breaks down the blood-brain barrier long enough to allow housekeeping cells to cart off dead brain tissue. In rat models of stroke, treatment with extra VEGF has dramatically increased the density of blood vessels in the damaged area, and provided more complete recovery.

There are several problems, however. VEGF increases the permeability of blood vessels, so the treatment for stroke could increase the risk of cerebral edema. Also, VEGF is the same growth factor that cancer cells use for angiogenesis, to improve the blood supply to tumors. Expect to see this technology stay in animal trials for some time yet.

Euthanasia and Pain Management
With the new developments in genetically modified animal models for human disease, look for more articles on humane killing, including establishing humane endpoints in animal models of cancer.

When death was imminent, animals were euthanized by inhalation of methoxyflurane followed by decapitation.

Euthanized vs. Sacrificed
Articles in AALAS publications overwhelmingly favor “euthanized,” with “humanely killed” coming in a distant second. I have seen only one AALAS article in the last six months that used “sacrificed,” although this term is still used in English-language articles in Experimental Animals, the publication of the Japan Association for Laboratory Animal Science.

Animal Models of Disease
Selective breeding has been used for years to develop and maintain animal strains for studying various human diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. In many cases, these conditions originated as spontaneous mutations, and have been maintained by careful breeding.

Mice homozygous for the mutation scid (SCID mice) were identified in a breeding study examining antibody subclasses in specific-pathogen-free-housed (SPF-housed) mice. Absence of detectable antibodies in some of the animals led to extensive characterization of this spontaneous mutation.

Angiogenesis was examined in an inflammatory context in SCID mice grafted with human skin and then given human blood leukocytes.
allogeneic (genetically different donor) to the skin. Allogeneic recognition established the inflammatory response necessary to trigger angiogenesis. A similar model was developed to examine discordant graft rejection in the context of generating pigs as universal transplant donors for humans.

An immunodeficient mouse does not reject the transplantation of tissue from other animals, so it can be used as a small and relatively inexpensive “living test tube” for in vivo studies.

The SCID-bo mouse was developed as a rodent model to study the bovine immune system. This mouse model is created by surgical implantation of small sections of second-trimester fetal bovine liver, lymph node, and thymus into the peritoneal cavity of a female C.B-17 scid-bg mouse. The resultant xenochimeric mouse is capable of developing primary and secondary bovine humeral immune responses to T-cell-dependent antigens, and long-term self-sustaining multilineage bovine hematopoiesis. Use of this rodent model allows for the functional study of the bovine immune system while avoiding many of the problems associated with using large animals in research, such as expensive housing, difficulty of handling, uncertain health status, and nonuniform genetic background.

Of course, immunodeficient mice must be carefully protected from any source of infection.

Prevention of Disease in Laboratory Animals
Good Laboratory Practices require careful attention to the laboratory environment, so that results can be reproduced reliably by other scientists. Mice and rats are prone to chronic infections (for example, minute virus of mice [MVM], and mouse parvovirus 1 [MPV]), which can significantly change baseline values. Test animals and breeding stock are frequently shipped from one laboratory to another, increasing the risk of infection.

Despite the absence of clinical disease and histopathologic changes, marine parvoviruses can have appreciable deleterious effects on research due to their immunomodulatory effects in vivo and in vitro. However, serologic assays cannot be used to detect parvovirus infections directly in immunodeficient strains of mice that cannot generate a humeral immune response. As a result, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assays that specifically detect rodent parvovirus DNA have been developed and have proven to be a useful adjunctive diagnostic method to detect or confirm the presence of MPV in mice.

External Laboratory Environment
Most discussions of animal experiments will include a description of animal housing. The following is typical.

Upon arrival at our AAALAC International-accredited facility, animals were quarantined for two to three weeks. Animals were incorporated into our monthly in-house screening for coronavirus, Sendai virus, and Mycoplasma pulmonis by the Immunocomb method (Charles River Laboratories, Wilmington, MA). During the quarantine period, mice were housed in groups of 10 in polycarbonate cages (47.6 cm x 26 cm x 15.2 cm) on hardwood bedding (Beta-Chip: Northeastern Products Corp., Warrensburg, NY). During the study, the animal room was maintained at 26 to 27°C and 30% to 70% relative humidity with 12:12-h light: dark cycle. A maintenance diet of rodent chow (Teklad 8640, 22/5 Rodent Diet [W]; Harlan Teklad, Indianapolis, IN) and tap water were made available ad libitum during the study. Animals were cared for in accordance with guidelines set forth by the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (Memphis, TN).

Genetic Engineering
So what IS a knock-out mouse, anyway?

Confused about the difference between selective breeding and genetic engineering? There’s a fairly clear definition on page 53 of Pharmacology (fourth edition) by HP Rang, MM Dale, JM Ritter, and P. Gardner (Churchill Livingstone, 2001). I’ve excerpted it below. (The subheadings are mine.)

Selective Breeding
By selective breeding, it is possible to obtain pure animal strains that express abnormalities closely resembling human disease conditions. These are extremely useful for characterizing drug effects that may be clinically relevant. Genetic models of this kind include spontaneously hypertensive rats, genetically obese mice, epilepsy-prone dogs and mice, rats with deficient vasopressin secretion, and many other examples.
Transgenic Animals

More recently, deliberate genetic manipulation of the germ-line is increasingly used to generate transgenic animals with defined mutations as a means of replicating human disease states in experimental animals. These animal models are expected to be more predictive of therapeutic drug effects in humans.

“Knock-outs and Knock-ins”

This technology, first reported in 1980, allows for the inactivation of existing genes (“knock-outs”) or the insertion of new genes (“knock-ins”) in breeding colonies of animals. Examples of such models include transgenic mice that overexpress the amyloid precursor protein (APP), which is important in the pathogenesis of Alzheimer’s disease. When they are a few months old, these mice develop pathological lesions and cognitive changes resembling Alzheimer’s disease, and provide a very useful model for testing possible new therapeutic approaches.

Conditional Mutagenesis

The technology (of genetic engineering in animals) is improving rapidly, and the use of such models in pharmacology will undoubtedly become widespread. There are several limitations. One is that the gene switch may cause the animals to die during gestation, or shortly after birth. A second is that adaptive changes may compensate for the lack, or overexpression, of a particular gene and complicate interpretation of the phenotypic changes seen in the transgenic animals. To overcome these problems, ways of achieving conditional mutagenesis are being developed, whereby the introduced genes are engineered so that they are expressed only in particular cells (e.g., neurons), or so that they can be switched on or off by an external signal, such as the administration of interferon, allowing the animal to develop normally up to this point.

Mostly Mice

At present, the technology used in genetic engineering is mainly confined to tests on the mouse, which breeds quickly but is inconveniently small for many experimental purposes. Despite this, its importance is growing rapidly.

Nomenclature

Those Strange Abbreviations for Rat and Mouse Names

Here is some background information for the names of mice and rats commonly used in preclinical trials. The abbreviations sometimes provide an abbreviated history of the animal. (These are all summarized from the Charles River Laboratories website, www.criver.com). Charles River uses the following abbreviations (my comments in parentheses):

CRL or Cl: Charles River Laboratories.

SD: Sprague Dawley descended rats.

CD: Caesarean-derived (offspring are born by caesarean section rather than by natural birth to prevent contagion—this is often done to save a valuable line of animals that has become infected by disease).

Barrier-reared: Animals are raised in a basically germ-free environment, and stringent measures are taken to avoid infection. This is necessary to maintain lines of animals bred to have an impaired immune system.

Mice

BALB/cAnNCrl–nuBR (BALB)


Crl:CD-1-∗nuBR (nude)

Origin: Developed from the transfer of the nude gene to a CD-1 mouse through a series of crosses and back-crosses. The animal does not have a thymus, and is therefore immunodeficient and unable to produce T-cells. Coat color: hairless, albino background.

BALB/cAnNCrl–nuBR

Origin: Developed through crosses and back-crosses between BALB/cABon-nu and BALB/cAnNCrj-nu at Charles River Japan (CRJ). This mouse is inbred, and genetic monitoring results confirm it to be a BALB/c nude. It also lacks a thymus and is therefore T-cell deficient. Coat color: hairless, albino background.

Rats

Crl:CD (SD) IGS BR

(Sprague Dawley)


Crl: (ZUC)--faBR (Fatty Zucker)

Origin: The obese or fatty condition appeared spontaneously in the 13M strain of Theodore and Lois Zucker at the Laboratory of Comparative Pathology in Stow, Massachusetts. Research colonies were
established at many institutions from this nucleus colony. Coat color (four principal variants): 1) predominantly brown; 2) brown and white; 3) predominantly black; and 4) black and white.

**WKY/NCRlBR (Wistar)**
Origin: Outbred Wistar stock from the Kyoto School of Medicine to NIH in 1971. This is the same stock from which the SHR/N strain was developed. Coat color: albino.

**Crl:(WI)BR (Wistar)**
Origin: To Scientific Products Farm, Ltd. (predecessor of Charles River United Kingdom [CRUK]) in 1947 from Wistar Institute. Caesarean rederived in 1975 to form the nucleus of the current Wistar rat colonies. This particular colony was selected because of a low incidence of hydronephrosis. Coat color: albino.

**SHR/NCRlBR (Spontaneous Hypertensive)**
Origin: Okamoto, Kyoto School of Medicine, 1963, from outbred Wistar Kyoto male with marked elevation of blood pressure mated to female with slightly elevated blood pressure. Brother x sister mating with continued selection for spontaneous hypertension was then started. Coat color: albino.

**Crl:NIH-rnu (nude)**
Origin: The NIH nude rat was developed in 1979-1980 through a series of matings involving eight inbred rat strains. This athymic nude rat is T-cell deficient and shows depleted cell populations in thymus-dependent areas of peripheral lymphoid organs. Coat color: albino, black, black & white.

**More on Laboratory Animals**

**Some of the Animal Testing Offered by Charles River Laboratories**

**Expression Testing**
Estimation of the level of expression from a transgene or knockout construct using reverse transcription PCR (RT-PCR) methods to quantify the level of RNA production within an animal model.

**SCID Testing**
Severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) is the result of a spontaneous autosomal recessive mutation. Charles River can confirm the presence or absence of this point mutation using PCR.

**Zygosity Testing**
Determination of two-fold difference in copy number between hemi-/homozygote status of knockout and transgenic rodents using quantitative PCR (Q-PCR) methods.
Developing a Glossary of Special Lexical Units Used in Cuba’s Variant of Spanish

By Eduardo González

(Note: The following is based on a presentation the author gave at the Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literatures at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, October 4-6, 2001.)

The extremely prolific Cuban exile writer Zoé Valdés, former university student, magazine editor, and writer of poetry, fiction, and semi-biographical prose, has undoubtedly blazed a few new trails in Spanish literature. Zoé writes the way Cuba speaks. Her uninhibited style, full of colloquialisms, vulgarisms, Cubanisms, and “Zoisms,” has earned her a respectable place among writers in Spanish all over the world, including the large Hispanic population in the United States.

Fabiola Santiago, in a recent issue of Críticas, writes the following:

Valdés is in a category of her own with impressive sales figures, a successful list of titles that cross literary genres, and a bold style that has turned her most painful life experiences into daring works of art…(Críticas, Jan/Feb 2002)

In 1996, Le Monde, the prestigious French journal, wrote:

Zoé Valdés tells us about daily life in the last bulwark of socialism. Once again, after Solzhenitsin and Kundera, a novel is a better accusation than any essay: the plain telling of the story is worth more than all anathemas…

The above characterizes another major aspect of Valdés’ prose: it shows without telling us; it criticizes without telling the reader it is a critique. Valdés never even mentions the name of the Cuban dictator. Instead, she uses a rich mosaic of expressions that are utilized in Cuba and abroad (no less than 20% of the total Cuban population lives “abroad,” perhaps the largest exodus per capita in the whole Western hemisphere). When referring to daily life in Cuba, she resorts to the very argot that is used and heard all over this island: a combination of slang, colloquialisms, resemantizations of old terms, and even “deeper” aspects, like changing the gender in old words to denote a

“…Zoé Valdés’ uninhibited style, full of colloquialisms, vulgarisms, Cubanisms, and ‘Zoisms,’ has earned her a respectable place among writers in Spanish all over the world…”

completely new and different referent. For example, the word (el) paladar meant, and still does, either (mouth) palate or taste; as such, paladar is a common noun, masculine in gender. A new usage has evolved which depicts the new realities of Cuba: (la) paladar meaning a little, semi-illegal “restaurant.” This establishment is usually inside a common-looking house, hidden from passersby, where drinks and some food not available to the general population are served in exchange for U.S. dollars. With this new meaning, paladar has become a feminine gender noun.

The very fact that Zoé Valdés writes using an updated general style and register, so common and yet sometimes so different in Cuba, The Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the Yucatán peninsula, and other Spanish-speaking areas, makes her prose attractive and appealing for Spanish speakers and readers all around the world. However, the very bold style that characterizes Valdés can become a true nightmare for the translator who wants, or needs, the challenge of translating such language variants, especially into the most widespread lingua franca in the world today: English.

With such concerns in mind, and also thinking about the possibility of including some of Valdés’ vocabulary in courses on the Caribbean and Cuba (lexicology and semantics of the Spanish language, and so forth), I started to develop a glossary of all the special lexical units (SLUs) found in Zoé Valdés’ prose. At first, this glossary was limited to just Te dí la vida entera, a Planeta Prize finalist and winner of $100,000 in Spain. On average, I found one to two SLUs for every two pages (for about 150 total) while going through this novel. After researching the most complete and updated dictionaries of Cubanisms, I found that these references listed only 20-30% of the SLUs used by Valdés. In some cases, only a partial meaning was given. In all cases, neither an explanation nor a translation into English was offered. In other words, the dictionaries I consulted only addressed the Spanish-speaking reader who wants to understand the meaning of a word or expression used by Cubans. Even the most recent dictionary (Paz-Perez, 1998), though an excellent source for colloquial and vulgar Cuban Spanish, does not account for roughly 60% of the SLUs used in Valdés’ writing.

Therefore, the task at hand is to create a comprehensive glossary, perhaps a dictionary, of all the SLUs.
found in Valdés’ prose, starting with her first famous novel, *La nada cotidiana* (1995), through her latest book in Spanish, *El pie de mi padre* (2002). The current glossary is complete concerning *Te dí la vida entera* and *Milagro en Miami* (1996 and 2001, respectively), although I am still working through several of her other novels. The novelty that makes the glossary a useful multipurpose reference is, in my opinion, the fact that each SLU has an explanation in Spanish, followed by a selection of possible synonyms. A literal translation is then given in English, accompanied by a short definition and a suggested “free” translation.

I encourage and appreciate any comments, critiques, or suggestions readers may have regarding the glossary. Some entries could be considered “foul language,” but are included here because these expressions form an important part of the language, both in the texts I researched and in real life. A brief glossary sampling follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingual Spanish-English Glossary of Special Lexical Units/Sampling Eduardo González (May 2002)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aplaudir la Cara</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sopapear, dar de bofetadas, dar gaznatones, galletear</em>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Literal Translation) To “applaud, clap” someone’s face; to slap repeatedly/to slap someone dumb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agua Tibia (Inventar el ~)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Inventar, crear lo ya inventado o creado</em>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Literal Translation) To invent/discover lukewarm water; to reinvent the wheel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bolo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidad léxica utilizada en Cuba para referirse a los soviéticos, primero despectivamente y luego de modo neutral: Esa rubia es bola. Estudié con los bolos (en la USSR). Tiene su origen en la forma física de los “rusos” que comenzaron a ir a Cuba en 1960-1961: bajos, regordetes y redondeados. También por los zapatos “puntera de bola” que usaban los primeros “bolos” vistos en Cuba.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bora (Ir en ~)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ir abajo, ir echando, irse, menos uno; siempre con el significado de “marcharse”</em>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No literal translation/to hit the road; scam; beat it. Always with the meaning of “leaving, departing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cagástrofe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neologismo. Palabra compuesta de cagar + catástrofe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desastre, tormenta o huracán de “mierda” con el significado de “pobreza, desgracias, derrumbes de edificios que no se arreglan, apagones, etc.”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neologism. Compound of two Spanish words meaning, respectively, “crap, shit,” and “catastrophe.” It refers to a chain of misfortunes in Cuba: poverty, scarcity, the collapse of buildings for lack of repairs, blackouts, etc. (“Crapastrophe”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comedante En Jefe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neologismo producto de la alteración del nombre común <em>Comandante</em>, usado muy frecuentemente por el régimen cubano para referirse al dictador Castro: “Comandante en Jefe.” Ahora significa “Payaso en Jefe”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neologism resulting from the alteration of the common noun <em>Commander</em>, especially from the ubiquitous phrase used by the government media to refer to Dictator Castro: “Commander in Chief.” It now means “Comedian, Clown in Chief.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cayo Cruz</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Basurero famoso cerca de la ciudad de La Habana. Usase actualmente para referirse a Cuba y, en especial, a La Habana;</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of a famous garbage dump close to Havana City. Used now to refer to Cuba and, especially, Havana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changó</strong> (con conocimiento)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En la expresión “tener/coger/darle (a alguien) un ~ quiere decir “tener un ataque de nervios” o “coger un muerto.” Se refiere a la deidad afro-cubana Changó (Sta. Bárbara) y a lo que acontece a algunos practicantes de ritos “espirituales”: coger un muerto, darle un ataque con convulsiones, etc. En este caso significa molestarse tanto que a la persona le da un ataque.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMPLIMENT FROM EUGENIO FERNÁNDEZ (MAY 2002):**

> Eduardo González has done a very good job in developing the glossary. I would like to suggest that the two English translations to each SLU be an actual situation in Cuba. For example, “ficha” can be translated as “a record card” or “a record” in the following situation: “El hombre le entregó a la policía un ~ (a record card)”. The first gives a more English feel, and the second a more Spanish feel. The choice of one or the other will depend on the context of the glossary. Eduardo’s glossary is both a useful and a very important tool for all his readers. There is a need, however, to incorporate a new edition of relevant books that deal with the phenomenon of SLUs. The glossary’s definitions should be as clear as possible. Overall, I congratulate Eduardo for developing this first edition of the glossary.”

**IN CONCLUSION:**

It is hoped that the Bilingual Spanish-English Glossary of Special Lexical Units/Sampling will be useful to those who are interested in the language of Cuba. The glossary is not exhaustive and future editions may include more SLUs. The glossary is a work in progress and is subject to change. Please feel free to send comments, critiques, or suggestions regarding the glossary. The glossary is available for download at the following link: [Bilingual Spanish-English Glossary of Special Lexical Units/Sampling](#).
Derived from what happens to some people who practice Afro-Cuban rituals: to get into a fit; a seizure-like trance. Changó is the name St. Barbara receives in Afro-Cuban rituals. Here it means to get so upset about something that the person gets in a fit or hysterical crisis.

**D**

**Desencolado**

Tristón, deprimido, “por debajo.” Proviene de la frase “(como un) piano desencolado”;

(Literal Translation) Unglued. From a phrase in Spanish that denotes a piano that has come apart. Blue, depressed, “down,” torn apart.

**Diplo**

Prefijo que se antepone a nombres comunes para denominar a personas y cosas del “área dólar” y, por ende, con acceso a beneficios que no están al alcance la población en general.

Prefix used with common nouns to refer to people and things from “dollar areas” (what is not within the reach of the general population). Some examples:

- Diploauto: Diplocar (“foreign” car or car obtained with “diplomoney”);
- Diplobarriga: Diplobelly (big belly from eating and drinking “diplo-products”);
- Diplopuerco: Diplopig/pork (type of meat only obtained in dollar areas);
- Diploputa: Diplohooker (type of prostitute who specializes in foreigners).

**Duro (Al ~)**

A veces seguida por “sin guantes” y “sin careta,” esta expresión significa “de verdad” “fuerte” “mejor” pero siempre con la idea de que no será fácil lo que se haga. Proviene del béisbol o “pelota dura” donde se lanza una pelota muy dura y a gran velocidad. Para aumentar el efecto, se añade “sin guantes” y “sin careta,” o sea, con todos los riesgos posibles.

Sometimes followed by “with no gloves” and “without a mask,” this expression comes from baseball jargon and means “really hard,” “very difficult,” “risky” (imagine a real baseball game where players wear no gloves and the catcher wears no mask!).

**E**

**Extranjia**

Neologismo usado para referirse a cualquier país que no sea Cuba y sus habitantes. Los procedentes de tal hipotético país pueden comer en los buenos restaurantes, alojarse en los hoteles buenos, obtener adecuada atención médica, etc. pagando, por supuesto, con dólares de los EE.UU. País de los “no cubanos.”

Neologism used to denote those who are “Non-Cuban” (and thus have access to the best hotels, adequate medical attention, good restaurants, etc., by paying in U.S. dollars). A hypothetical country whose inhabitants are “Non-Cuban.” Proposed translation equivalent: “Noncubanland.”

**G**

**Guerra De Dependencia**

Forma burlona de referirse al control que los extranjeros, en especial los españoles, han adquirido en los últimos años en muchos aspectos de la economía cubana. Se basa en el término histórico “Guerra de Independencia,” o sea, la que sostuvo Cuba contra el colonialismo español a partir de 1895 y que culminó con la intervención norteamericana de 1898, la derrota total del gobierno español y la fundación de la República de Cuba el 20 de mayo de 1902.

(Literal Translation) “War of Dependency,” a jocular modification of “War of Independence.” A true historical term which refers to the war against Spanish colonialism in Cuba, which began in 1895 and led to the total defeat of the colonialists and to U.S. intervention in 1898. Eventually, the U.S. troops departed and the Republic of Cuba was founded on May 20, 1902. “War of Dependency” refers to the gradual control foreign companies, especially Spanish, have been gaining in the present chaotic Cuban economy. It is equivalent to “return to colonialism.”

**H**

**Habaneer**

Neologismo cubano con el significado de “amanecer en La Habana.” Formado por la combinación de Habana + amanecer;

Neologism for “Dawn in Havana,” or “the start of a new day in Havana.” Combination of Habana (the capital of Cuba) and amanecer (dawn; beginning of a new day): Habanadawn.
Invernación (Oficina de ~)
Variante jocosa e irónica de “Oficina de Inmigración.” Lugar donde se hacen los trámites para poder salir del país. Las demoras y los trámites burocráticos ¡son tan largos que es como invernar en lugar de emigrar!

(Literal Translation) Hibernation (Office). Comic, ironical way to refer to the “Immigration Office,” where red tape and delays are so marked that people who want to “emigrate” must instead “hibernate!”

Lengueta
Palabra formada por la aleación de tres palabras pronunciadas juntas: “lengua de trapo.” Significa chis- moso, lengua larga (lenguilargo);

(Literal Translation) “Rag tongue.” Combination of three words pronounced together (see above). It can be translated as “telltale,” “big mouth” (Deep Throat?).

Muro De Las Lamentaciones
Desplazamiento semántico del significado de un término a un referente totalmente distinto, pero basado en la connotación actual. El Muro de las Lamentaciones de Tierra Santa se utiliza aquí para referirse al Malecón de La Habana, donde los cubanos se sientan y suspiran mirando al mar mientras se lamentan, sueñan y hacen planes para huir del país;

(Literal Translation) The Wailing Wall. Semantic displacement from a true referent to a different one, but based on a newly acquired connotation of the new referent. It refers to the Havana seawall (el Malecón) where Cubans go to look at the sea, speak and complain “freely,” day-dream, and make plans to flee Cuba.

Ñengueteá
En la expresión “quedarse ~.” Usase también en masculino. Quiere decir “tullido, lisiado, imposibilitado, retorcido” como suele ocurrir cuando se sufre un ataque grave al cerebro (apoplejía). Connotación negativa;

Handicapped; crippled, as after a major stroke: (physically) “f---ed up.” Very negative connotation.

Parar Bola
En la expresión “no parar bola” quiere decir “no prestar atención,” “no hacer caso” a alguien.

(Literal Translation) “(Not to) stop the ball.” It means “not to pay attention to”; “not to show interest in.” In this case, the context is not to be interested in purchasing cocaine from someone.

Pinguero
Vulgarismo por “prostituto.” Usualmente el joven que se ofrece para cualquier actividad (bi)sexual a cambio de dólares estadounidenses;

(Literal Translation) “Dicker.” Vulgarism for “(young) male prostitute” who offers his body for any and all kinds of (bi)sexual activity in exchange for U.S. dollars.

Quince
Usase en la expresión “tener quince” (Ella tuvo quince) con el significado de “fue bonita”; “fue joven y atractiva” o lo contrario al decir “ella no tuvo quince.” Implica que la mujer de quien se habla no es joven ya;

It means “she was pretty” or “she was young and attractive” when the affirmative is used (She was 15 once), and the opposite when the negative is used (She was never 15). It also implies that the female in question is not young anymore. In Spanish, Los Quince is the equivalent of “Sweet Sixteen” in English. Possible translation equivalents: “She was a looker once”; “She was a knockout in her time.”

Retama De Guayacol
Expresión popular que significa “lo peor,” “de baja calidad,” “vulgar” si se refiere a personas. La palabra retama se usa también sola con el mismo significado;

Idioms that mean “the worst”: “scum,” “riffraff,” “the dregs.” The word retama can be used in isolation to mean the same as the whole expression.

Tajada De Aire
Eufemismo por “no tener nada que comer”; “pasar hambre”;

(Literal Translation) “A slice of air.” It means “to have nothing to eat”; “to starve.”

Talla Super Extra
Uno de los numerosos calificativos que usa el cubano para referirse al dictador Castro;

One of many ways the Cuban population uses to refer to Dictator Castro (superextra size):

Otros ejemplos. Other examples include:

Cara de coco/caradura: shameless

Continued on p.61
An Interview with Professor Bernard Lewis

By Lily Liu

Professor Bernard Lewis is the Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Emeritus, at Princeton University. He was educated at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, where he received both his B.A. and Ph.D. in history. He also did part of his graduate work at the University of Paris, and spent some time touring the Middle East. In 1938, he accepted his first teaching appointment as an assistant lecturer in Islamic history at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. From 1940-1941, he served in the British Army (Royal Armoured Corps and Intelligence Corps). He was attached to a department of the Foreign Office from 1941-1945, where his work involved some translation of captured and intercepted documents. He remained at the University of London until 1974, when he started teaching at Princeton University. He retired in 1986.

Professor Lewis has been a Fellow of the British Academy, and was appointed a Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities by the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has been the recipient of 13 honorary doctorates. His professional affiliations have included membership in: the Institut d’Égypte, Cairo; the Turkish Historical Society, Ankara; the Turkish Academy of Sciences; the American Philosophical Society; the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and the Institut de France, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

Professor Lewis’ earliest interest was in medieval Islamic history, especially religious movements such as the Ismaïlis and Assassins. As a result of the war years, he became interested in the contemporary Middle East. His major research interest has been the history of the Ottoman Empire. He is the author of more than 20 books, including: The Arabs in History (1950); The Emergence of Modern Turkey (1961); The Political Language of Islam (1988); Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry (1990); Islam and the West (1993); The Shaping of the Modern Middle East (1994); The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years (1995); and A Middle East Mosaic: Fragments of Life, Letters, and History (2000). His articles on Islam and the West have appeared in Atlantic Monthly, Foreign Affairs, National Review, and The New Yorker. He recently published a collection of his translations of classical poems from the Middle East in Music of a Distant Drum: Classical Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew Poems (Princeton University Press, 2001). The following interview, conducted in December 2001, talks about this latest publication.

L.L.: How did the idea to publish this collection come about?

I had published some of these translations in odd places here and there, in journals and so on. The notion of a book came up in the course of a conversation with a publisher. The idea was later taken up by Princeton University Press. I liked the idea, and set to work to put the collection together. Most of the translations in the book were done quite a long time ago, with some being 50 years or older.

L.L.: Was it necessary to go back and fiddle with some translations?

Yes, I must confess, partly because the English language has changed. I did some of those translations back in the 1930s, and the English we use now and the English used then are not quite the same language. The overtones and undertones of particular words have sometimes changed to the point where, if left as originally worded, the effect of the poem would be totally misleading.

L.L.: What is significant about this collection of 129 poems?

This volume marks the first time that poems from four leading literary traditions of the Middle East have appeared in English in a single volume compiled by one translator. These poems present a broad sweep of medieval Middle Eastern history, encompassing more than one thousand years, from the 7th to the 18th century. I have chosen poems representing the three major languages of medieval Islam (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish) and Hebrew. Quite a few of the poems appear here in English for the first time.

The introduction does discuss the problems of translation at some length: how I set about it, what I was able to do, what I wasn’t. I think a translator might be interested in this collection of translation samples.

L.L.: Where did the title of this volume, Music of a Distant Drum, come from?

That’s from Edward Fitzgerald’s translation in the mid-1800s of one of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam, the Persian poet and scientist.

L.L.: What is significant about this collection of 129 poems?

This volume marks the first time
Take, for example, the very common adjective “gay.” As a substitute, depending on the context, one could now say “happy,” “merry,” “cheerful,” or “bright.” There are a number of possible words, but you can’t really say “gay” anymore without evoking other, and irrelevant, connotations.

LL: So, should there be periodic re-translations of classics?
I think it’s not a bad idea for major works to be re-translated from time to time, because of the changes in the language and also the changes in approach. For example, when Fitzgerald translated Omar Khayyam, he tried, on the whole pretty successfully, to reproduce the meter and rhyme scheme of the original, but you can’t do that without doing some violence to the content. I mean, it’s difficult enough to translate poetry, but to do it in rhyme and meter is, I would say, impossible without sacrificing some of the meaning. So, one resolution I made when translating the poems in this volume was that I would not try to reproduce scansion and meter.

LL: In your introduction, you said that Middle Eastern poetry has very elaborate prosody.
Yes, very elaborate. Now, what I did was simply to translate into, how shall I put it, poetic, rhythmic prose, but nevertheless prosy, and without any attempt at rhyme. This is more of a problem in Middle Eastern poetry (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish), because the rhyme is very important. As you know, the Greeks and the Romans didn’t use rhyme.

The extensive use of rhyme in Middle Eastern poems is a major innovation. The Arab conquerors of Spain and Sicily brought it into Europe and, undoubtedly, influenced the development of rhymed verse in European languages. The early Arabic poets developed a number of different meters. Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew poets adapted them and added others. Their metrics, however, differ from those of most European poetic traditions in that they are based on quantity, not stress.

LL: Why is it more difficult to translate poetry than prose?
It is obviously more difficult because in a poem each word has a special resonance. When you’re translating a prose text, particularly an historical text, the use of words is normally fairly straightforward. It’s not always as simple as, “The king went out and won a battle,” but, nevertheless, it is a simple narrative statement, at least for the most part in earlier texts. If you don’t know a word, you can look it up in a dictionary, and that will give you an approximate, or even better than approximate, idea of what it is about.

However, it is much more tricky to do this if you’re reading a poem, because the word in a poem not only uses the dictionary meaning, but will have all kinds of resonances and associations which are part of the culture. This is a common difficulty, even between neighboring languages like English and French or French and Italian.

It’s much more difficult, and therefore more interesting and challenging, to try and read a poem that was written several hundred years ago in a land several thousand miles away—a different culture, a different civilization—and by an author who was nurtured on different classics and scriptures. Therefore, things that would be immediately intelligible to a listener or reader within the culture and within the period may be very difficult to penetrate for someone elsewhere and at another time.

LL: So, what’s a translator to do?
I can only tell you what I did, although I wouldn’t put what I am about to tell you in the form of a “guidance manual.” I have translated poetry from a very early stage in my life, particularly during the war, but often after that, for several reasons. The main reason, to be honest, is because I enjoyed it. I’ve always liked reading poetry and enjoyed the challenge of translating it, if only to convince myself that I’d really understood it.

It will often happen—not just with poetry, but with more ordinary writing—that you read something and think you’ve understood it. But try and translate it, and then you suddenly realize that perhaps you haven’t understood it or, even worse, you may have misunderstood it! I think, in that sense, translating is a very useful test of understanding, and that is another reason why I did it. I felt it deepened my appreciation of the poem if I could turn it into my language, and found this process very interesting, stimulating, and valuable.

I also translated poetry because I found it useful in my work as a historian. I am not a literary scholar; by training, I am an historian. All my life I have studied, written, and lectured on history. You might ask, “What has an historian to do with poetry?” And I would say, “A poem is an historical document, no less than a treaty or a diplomatic report, and considerably more interesting!”

LL: Please talk about your translations of historical texts.
I did a two-volume history of the Middle East, from the death of the Prophet to the capture of
Constantinople in 1453, entirely in the form of excerpts from history books, literary works, travel books, documents, and other writings of the period. The idea was to tell the history of the Middle East, from the 7th to the 15th century, entirely through the words of their own historians and other writers—not as I see it, but as they saw it. The excerpts were arranged chronologically to give a more or less connected history of those centuries in the region. To achieve this, of course, I had to translate these writings. The title of the book is *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*. Volume I is *Politics and War* and Volume II is *Religion and Society*.

Each text had to be introduced and, where necessary, annotated. The purpose of that book was scholarly. I was writing as an historian for students of history to give them what you might call the “raw material” of history, the documentation. And, of course, I provided brief introductions to the pieces and annotations, explaining unfamiliar terms, filling in the allusions, and so on.

**LL:** Is the process you use different when translating poetry?

Now, when I go on to poetry, this is a different matter. I have different principles of selection. How did I choose a poem? I don’t claim that my collection of poems in *Music of a Distant Drum* is in any sense representative; not of the literature, not of the poets. If it is representative of anything at all, it’s representative of my taste.

How did I choose these poems? Requirement #1: I had to like it. Obviously, I wasn’t going to waste time translating a poem I didn’t like. It had to have something that appealed to me. Requirement #2: I had to understand it. That’s not as straightforward as it may sound. I mean, you can like a poem without fully understanding it. And how can you be sure that you really do understand it? You look at it, you understand it. Then you start trying to translate it, and you begin to think, “Well, maybe I don’t quite understand it!” And then you start pursuing things. For example, you look up a word in a dictionary and it gives you one or more equivalents to the term. But that can be very misleading, particularly in poetry, because the associations, the resonances, are so different. This is why I had to be sure that I could understand it.

The third requirement, which is not the same as the second, was that I had to be sure I could translate it. Sometimes you can really satisfy yourself that you have understood the thing and still not be able to render it in English. Or to do so, but only with lengthy footnotes and explanations.

I wanted to do this book as a volume of poems for people to appreciate as poems. I did not want to distract them with learned footnotes and “See the Quarterly Review of this or that” (which would be an entirely different kind of book). I did have some of that in my collection of historical excerpts.

**LL:** Do you have any “principles of translation”?

I have the one general principle which Arthur Waley, the renowned translator from Chinese, gave me, and I think it is a very important one. He said it’s the only basic rule he would offer to translators: Never introduce an image which is not in the original. If you can reproduce the image in the original, do so. If you can’t, drop it. Don’t try to replace it.

**LL:** So, what’s “lost” in translation?

That’s a very interesting question. Obviously, something is lost. There is a story told of a Turkish poet of the late 19th/early 20th century, Ahmed Hashim, who was asked one day, “What is the inner essence of poetry?” And he said, “That which is lost in translation.”

Then, there is also the 17th-century English writer, James Howell, who remarked that some people hold translations to be not unlike the wrong side of a Turkish tapestry!

**LL:** Is there anything “gained” on behalf of readers from your having translated this volume of Middle Eastern poetry, especially in light of current events?

It is nice to have something about Middle Eastern Islamic civilization that is not connected with bombs and terrorists—to show that there is another side to it. Translations of literary and other works can serve as an important channel of communication, even as a bridge between different societies and cultures. An obvious example is the translation of ancient Greek philosophic and scientific works into Arabic, and their re-translation from Arabic into Latin in the medieval West. Another is the translation of ancient Persian works into classical Arabic, and of classical Arabic works into Persian.
LL: What do you hope that readers will gain from this book?

The first thing I hope they would gain is the aesthetic enjoyment of the poems. That surely is the primary purpose. But also, to gain some insight into the culture. All the poems I translated in this volume are, without exception, pre-modern.

From the time when Middle Eastern poets came under the influence of Western civilization in the late 18th century, everything changed, including poetry. And the themes, the patterns, the scanion, and almost everything else were affected by Western (mostly English or French) influences. Therefore, I limited this collection to poems that were composed before that great change. These poems are, so to speak, authentic within the culture, and are not the products of external influences.

LL: So, these poems reflect cultures that are...?

That are very rich and very diverse. That have striking resemblances with our own culture, but also contain some differences. There are always the universal themes of wine, women, and song. Remember that we are dealing with a predominantly Muslim civilization in which wine is forbidden and access to women is circumscribed by all sorts of elaborate restrictions. Nevertheless, they managed to produce a lot of poetry about wine, women, and song.

LL: What do the poems reveal about cultures that are different from the West?

Certainly religion is a more important element. But we have religious poems in the West. For instance, in English, we have the metaphysical poets who were deeply religious. But it is not as important a theme as it is in Islamic poetry, if you look at Rumi, for example.

What I find very attractive and distinctive about Middle Eastern poetry, and particularly Persian poetry, is the use of humor. A lot of the poetry is what you might call epigrammatic. These are often short poems—they particularly liked the quatrains, the four-line poem. Some of these have a kind of lightness of touch, which, in Western literature, you would relegate to the comic pages, so to speak. Let me give you an example from a relatively minor Persian poet, Mujir (Music of a Distant Drum: 105):

_In one hand the Qur'an, in the other a wineglass, sometimes keeping the rules, sometimes breaking them. Here we are in this world, unripe and raw, not outright heathens, not quite Muslims._

I think that’s rather charming. Sometimes they are even quite philosophical. Here’s another one with a light touch by the Persian poet Kamaluddin Isma’il Isfahani (Music of a Distant Drum: 116):

_Though my master speaks ill of me I shall not mar my face with pain. I shall speak nothing but good of him so that we may both be seen as liars._

I really like these two quatrains by the Persian poet Ubayd-i Zakani (Music of a Distant Drum: 127 and 126):

_Lord, of your grace all that I hope is this— keep the realm of my pleasure prosperous avert from me the calamity of chastity and keep far from me the doom of repentence._

He who built the heavens and made the stars and fashioned mind and soul and made mankind tied all the strings of being in a knot then lost the thread of this cosmic tangle.

LL: How did all this interest in the Middle East start in your life?

I was going to be a lawyer. As you know, before doing law, you can take a degree in whatever amuses you. It never occurred to me at that time that one could actually earn a living by studying Middle Eastern languages and cultures. So, I indulged my curiosity, as it were, without worrying about a profession, in the secure belief that I was going to go on afterwards and become a barrister.

It didn’t quite work out that way. I really got totally absorbed in what I was doing. I did start my legal studies in a desultory sort of way, but never finished them. I received my B.A. in history with special reference to the Near and Middle East, and went on to do a Ph.D. in the history of Islam, after which I took an academic position. And that launched me in a career which I have followed ever since, and which I have never for one moment regretted.

LL: When did you start to do translations?

Languages were an important part of my education, and translating was an important part of the course of study in English schools, starting at an early age. I had to translate vast quantities from both French and Latin, and later, also Greek. Then, when I did my Middle Eastern studies, I had to translate from Arabic, Hebrew, and, later, Persian and Turkish. Thus, translation was, so to speak, a component of the curriculum.
Things were really difficult in those days. We had to do a great deal of translation from whatever language we were studying into English, working from both classical and modern texts. From time to time, we were even required to translate from English into the language. I remember in Latin class, for example, being required to translate the leading article from The Times into Latin! We had one Latin master with a more imaginative approach. He used to get us to translate some of Damon Runyon’s stories into Ciceronian Latin, so one confronted such problems as, “How would you say ‘a hotdog seller from East Side’ in Latin?” I don’t think we would have won any literary prizes for our Latin versions, but it was a good exercise!

LL: In what sequence did you learn the languages you know?

French and Latin at school, which was later supplemented by German. My father was a passionate lover of Italian opera; he didn’t know any Italian, but he could sing Italian very lustily and vigorously. And since I was always passionately interested in languages, I took the opportunity to learn some Italian. He was able to give me the more or less correct pronunciation—vocally, as it were. Since I was already doing French and Latin, Italian wasn’t that difficult. I did some Hebrew as part of my religious education, and that led me on to Arabic. Latin, of course, led to Greek.

Once I started on Middle East studies as a career, I was required to learn the other two major Middle Eastern languages, namely, Persian and Turkish. And my teachers took it for granted that if you are intending to do serious scholarship in this field, you have to be able to read the published scholarly works of the various authorities. These are not by any means all in English. So, it was absolutely necessary to read German, Italian, and so on.

I attended the University of London. It is a kind of a federation of colleges, schools, and institutes, which together form the university. The School of Oriental and African Studies was among them. It has its own professors specializing in these various languages, cultures, and histories. So, I had people teaching me these languages and giving me exercises to do.

Later, I went on to Paris to continue my studies. This is where I did most of my studies in Persian and Turkish. While in Paris, I had the rather difficult task of learning a foreign language in a foreign language, and translating from one foreign language into another! It was also quite a, shall we say, demanding exercise.

LL: Of all these different languages you’ve studied, do you have a favorite?

No, it depends on my mood. I like different languages for different purposes. I find it very difficult to define these “moods.” I’ll just say that there are times when I find that I can express myself better in Turkish, or when I like to read Turkish, and at other times, another language.

LL: Did you discuss the art of translation with any of your teachers?

One that I particularly cherished was my Turkish teacher, a Turk named Adnan Adivar. I used to do translations from Turkish into English. English was not his mother tongue, but he had a good knowledge of English and was able to read and comment on my translations from Turkish into English.

He was the only one with whom I discussed translations of poetry. With my other teachers, it was more or less discussions of routine stuff, more particularly historical texts. With Adnan Bey, we developed, how should I put it, a higher level of communication. I took the liberty of showing him some of my translations of poetry, and he commented on them. Very enlightening.

LL: When did translations first appear in the Middle East?

You have translations for practical purposes and administrative purposes from a very early date. When people of different countries needed to communicate with each other they had interpreters (we usually use that word for oral translation). But they also had written translations. This goes back to remote antiquity. We learn, for example, of translators from the Bible. There are occasional references to translators, because there were contacts between people of different languages and cultures. Thus, for example, we read in Genesis 42:23 that when Joseph, as a high Egyptian official, spoke to his brothers newly arrived from Canaan, they did not know that he understood them when they spoke among themselves (“for he spake unto them by an interpreter”). The New Testament offers this piece of advice: “If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret” (1 Corinthians 14:27).

Sometimes when reading of a great empire (for example, Persia, which extended from India to Ethiopia), we are told that the emperor’s decrees, “were made known to all in their own languages.” So, obviously, someone had to be doing some translating somewhere.
An Interview with Professor Bernard Lewis Continued

Then you have religious translations, scriptures, for spreading the message of God. There is an interesting contrast between the Jewish and Christian, on the one hand, and the Muslim on the other. The Jews and the Christians translated their scriptures from a very early age. You know, the Old Testament is in Hebrew and the New Testament is in Greek. There came a time when most Jews didn’t know Hebrew and most Christians didn’t know Greek. So, they made translations that were widely used in many languages.

The Muslims didn’t do this. The Muslim view is that the Qur’an is divine and miraculously untranslatable, so it was forbidden to translate the Qur’an. But, in fact, they did. It was called a “commentary,” an “interpretation,” or an “explanation.” It is a de facto translation, if you like, from Arabic, which is the language of the Qur’an, into whatever language it was that the particular group of Muslims was using (possibly Persian, Turkish, or languages of South and Southeast Asia or Africa—wherever the Muslim faith spread).

Obviously, there had to be translators, since for a translation, you need a translator. Somebody who knows the source language well enough to understand it and is able to express what he has understood, presumably in his own language (one normally translates into one’s own language from another language).

LL: In your introduction to Music of a Distant Drum, you mentioned an early Arabic translation of Aristotle’s Poetics. What would have given rise to the translation of such works?

The Arabs were very conscious of poetry. The discipline of literary history and literary analysis begins quite early among them. There are collections of poets, biographies of poets, and histories of poetry. They did translate a fair number of texts from Greek, mainly philosophy and science. But there was also some interest in poetics, and then they produced a rich literature of poetics themselves.

There’s another thing about Europe that contrasted with the Islamic world: there’s a much greater variety of languages. In the whole of the Middle East, you basically had three major languages: Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. In Europe, you had many, many languages. We have a 14th-century Persian historian who says, “The Franks have 25 different languages which they use among themselves, and nobody understands the language of anybody else.” It meant that Europeans had greater skill in learning languages. There’s nothing genetic about it. If you lived in Europe, you had to learn languages. If you wanted to read your scriptures in the original, you had to read Hebrew and Greek, and, for a few passages, Aramaic. If you wanted to have a good education, you had to learn Latin and Greek. If you wanted to talk to your neighbors, you probably had to learn one or more modern European languages.

For an Arab in the Arab world, his scripture was in Arabic, his history was in Arabic, and his classics were in Arabic. He didn’t have any need or, therefore, incentive to learn other languages.

LL: In your introduction, you present an enlightening discussion about the role of poetry in Middle Eastern culture.

Yes, poetry has had a public and social role. Poetry was not just something that you read in private and the poet wasn’t just an author; he was an important public figure. Remember, this is before the mass media and before printing, so that a poem was virtually the most effective way of communicating a message. Poets were employed by rulers to serve as what we would nowadays call “spin doctors.”

LL: What insights have you gained from your studies about translation between cultures?

What I think is an interesting question that deserves to be examined more closely is the role of mis-translation, especially systematic and purposeful mis-translation. What I’m thinking of is mainly in diplomacy. If you look at the diplomatic negotiations between two countries using different languages, neither knows the language of the other. So, both have to use interpreters. Now, who are the interpreters, how are they found, who employs them, and how reliable are they? Those are very interesting questions.

I had occasion to examine this in some detail on one particular issue. I was looking at the beginning of diplomatic relations between England and Turkey. This comes towards the end of the 16th century. The Levant Company, an English trading corporation, thought it would help them in their work if they had a diplomatic mission in the Turkish capital, and persuaded Queen Elizabeth to establish one. So, the first English embassy was established in Istanbul, and the Sultan agreed to receive it.

Now, nobody in England knew a word of Turkish, and nobody in Turkey knew a word of English. So, they used Italian as a sort of medium of communication. Educated Englishmen of that time would know Italian; Turks would not know Italian, but they had people who learned Italian. So, the
correspondence and discussion was carried on through interpreters from English into Italian and from Italian into Turkish, and then from Turkish into Italian and from Italian into English. Thus, communication involved two stages of translation in every case. And, a lot can happen.

We are very fortunate in that from the English and Turkish archives, we have a good set of the documents, not complete, but enough to give you the picture.

LL: And that picture is of…

Of the systematic mis-translation! Not by the principals on either side, but by the interpreters and translators on both sides. This was purposeful mis-translation in order to avoid trouble. At that time, the Sultan was the greatest power on earth. England was a very minor little country at the far end of Europe. So, the Sultan would write what was intended to be a friendly letter to Queen Elizabeth in which he says, I’m quoting from memory, but I think it’s approximately right: “You will continue to be firm-footed on the path of loyalty and obedience to our Imperial throne.” In other words, he’s treating her as a sort of tributary princess. This is translated into Italian as: “You will continue to show sincere friendship” (“sincera amicizia”). We have the Turkish text and the Italian version from the Turkish text. From this, we can see that the translator systemically toned down the rather haughty and imperious style, making it something more, shall we say, genteel. Now, we don’t have the text the other way, but one may safely assume that the same thing was being done.

You see this also in treaties. Sometimes if you look at the texts of treaties that are drawn up in two languages, you may see quite remarkable differences between the two—somebody trying to cheat somebody!

LL: This underscores the importance of language training, doesn’t it?

I think it is important to have better language training available so that people can really acquire a mastery of foreign languages. Not just enough to scratch at them and pick out dribblets of meaning, which is frequently all that happens, but enough to get the finer points. I think it’s extremely important. English has become a world language, and we do have a tendency to sit back and say, “Why should we bother? Everybody speaks English.”

LL: What needs to be better “translated” between the Western and Middle Eastern cultures?

What needs to be better translated for our purposes are the things they say among themselves. What we get from these other places is what they say to us, which is often quite different from what they say to their own people. For example, I have seen interviews given by heads of state where the differences between the English version, for distribution to the world press, and the Arabic version (or whatever other language it may be), for distribution to the local press, are quite dramatic.

LL: What is difficult to understand or “translate” about Middle Eastern culture?

I don’t think it’s specific to the Middle Eastern culture. Between any two different cultures there will be elements that are different. Take women, for example. References to women, womanhood, and the role of women will be different between a monogamous culture and a polygamous culture. That will affect almost any reference to the matter. The same thing is true for different perceptions of religion, as well as for many other topics. It is not a question of better or worse, just different.

LL: Have you written specifically about translation?

Yes, the piece is called “From Babel to Dragomans,” a lecture that was read to the British Academy on May 19, 1998, and published in the Proceedings of the British Academy (Volume 101, 1999). It was a memorial lecture for a distinguished scholar, Elie Kedourie. The piece was written to show the importance of translation and translators in human history in general, and more particularly in relations between cultures.

LL: Do you have any advice to give to translators?

What you should not do is hurried translations. You need to think about it carefully and test the resonance of it. And be very careful in your use of dictionaries. Dictionaries give you almost mathematical equations, you know. “Good” equals “bon,” equals “gut,” equals “buono.” Words are not mathematical symbols. This word does not equal that word, even if you take the most simple, ordinary everyday word between culturally related languages. You may be told that the French for “good” is “bon.” Let us say that in 99 cases out of 100, “bon” and “good” would be interchangeable, but there’s always the 100th case where it is different, where there is an overtone or an undertone.

Or, what do you do with simple questions regarding, for example, the seat of the emotions? In English, and in most European languages, the seat of the emotion is conventionally at the heart. In Persian and Arabic
An Interview with Professor Bernard Lewis Continued

poetry, it’s sometimes the heart and sometimes the liver. To someone with a Western education, the idea of writing poetry about your liver does seem comic. But, be reasonable. There’s no reason why the liver should be any more or less appropriate than the heart. They are both parts of the anatomy; both are crucial. One convention has the heart and another convention has the liver. Turks use both.

But, it means that when you are translating, you may sometimes have to substitute one for the other. An English poet would say to his beloved: “You have set my heart aflame.” That sounds right, but if you translate literally from Persian and say, “You have turned my liver to kabob”…

LL: You mentioned that in the 18th century, Western civilization started to have an impact on Middle Eastern culture. Can you explain more?

What happened was that because of the dominance of the West in the world, they felt obliged to learn Western languages, primarily French and English. First, Italian was overtaken by French, and then French was overtaken by English. So, you had generations of people who learned these languages at school. Great numbers of them went to Western universities for their advanced studies in the hope of catching up with the advancing West. And, inevitably, they were, so to speak, contaminated. Their own traditions were modified, and they were transformed in a variety of different ways. And words changed meaning because of it. Even word associations. Take a word like “freedom.” We all agree that freedom is a good thing, but freedom in the West has a political meaning. In the traditional Middle East, this concept did not have a political meaning. “Freedom” was a legal term; you were “free” if you were not a slave.

The West used freedom and slavery as a metaphor for good and bad government, which the classical literatures of the Middle East did not. In modern times, of course, they do. Freedom now in present-day Arabic, Persian, or Turkish means much the same as it does in English, French, or German. But in pre-modern times, it wouldn’t have occurred to them to use “freedom” in that sense. They defined good government as justice, not as freedom.

LL: How did translations start appearing in the Middle East after this early exposure to the West?

There is a fair amount of translation into Arabic, Persian, and Turkish from European languages. Naturally, they started with things which were more familiar: The Talisman, Robinson Crusoe, and The Count of Monte Cristo were among the first works to be translated. These works had a sort of familiar ring about them. Then, they went on and translated more and more.

Today, there is a sizable body of Western literature available in translation in these languages. This has inevitably had a tremendous impact on their own literature. It has brought in completely new forms, for example, the novel, play, and drama. What they did not have very much of in Arabic, but a great deal of in Persian and Turkish, was narrative poetry. The Arabs didn’t have epics.

LL: In that region, has a shift from using the classical language to the use of the vernacular in literature happened?

The vernacular language is still not treated with respect even today. Even an ordinary letter or a speech would be written in what they hope is a reasonable approximation to the classical language. There are many colloquial languages, of course, a different one in each place, but colloquial language has not really acquired literary status. In Turkey it has, but not in the Arab countries. They still preserve the classical language, or what they imagine to be the classical language.

LL: Do you have any other translation projects ongoing at this time, or any translation project you wish to do?

I have no translation projects as such, but I continue to translate, from the Middle Eastern originals, passages that I quote from documents and other writings on Middle Eastern history. An example is the study of Osama bin Laden’s declaration of war on the U.S., published in Foreign Affairs (November/December, 1998). My new book, What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response (2002), quotes extensively from Middle Eastern discussions of these matters, translated, of course, from the Middle Eastern originals.

LL: After more than half a century of doing translations, what would you say doing translations has added to your life?

I would say that doing translations has added enormously to my life. First, and most obviously, in achieving a better understanding of alien cultures expressed in foreign languages. Second, and perhaps more important, in enriching my own understanding of the different ways in which our common humanity can be expressed.
Accreditation Forum:

New Policies to Take Effect in November 2002

By Celia Bohannon, deputy chair, ATA Accreditation Committee

Examination Format

Beginning with exams offered at the ATA Annual Conference in Atlanta, the ATA accreditation examination will consist of three passages of approximately 225–275 words each. The passages present common translation challenges that may vary from one language combination to another. The level of difficulty is comparable to the level that professional translators would expect to see in their daily work.

One passage is mandatory for all candidates. This general text is written for the educated lay reader in expository or journalistic style.

Each candidate must also choose between two elective passages, one from the domain of science/technology/medicine and one from the domain of law/business/finance. These passages have the characteristics of typical texts within these domains, but should not contain specialized terminology or require mastery of a particular field.

Under the new policy, a candidate should only complete two passages: the mandatory general passage and one of the two elective passages. If a candidate does not follow instructions and translates both elective passages, the ATA accreditation program staff will arbitrarily select one for grading. A passage that is substantially incomplete is not graded.

An examination receives a grade of Pass if the translation of the general passage and one elective passage meets the standards established by the ATA accreditation program.

Point Marking System

Accreditation exams taken at the ATA Annual Conference in Atlanta and all subsequent exams will be graded according to a point marking system. The grader will identify errors by category according to the long-established Framework for Standardized Error Marking. The grader will assign 1, 2, 4, 8, or 16 error points for each error. This scale reflects experienced graders’ judgments about the relationships among different types of errors, and about what sorts of errors might be allowed in a translation that meets ATA standards. Criteria include whether a target-language reader would certainly recognize the error, and how serious the consequences would be in the context of the passage.

One of the main advantages of the new point system is that our grading will now reflect five different levels of seriousness for each error, rather than only two. The two scales below illustrate this important difference between the old and new systems.

**Old System:**
- minor error
- major error

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**New System:**

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In addition, under the new system a grader may award quality points for specific instances of exceptional translation. (Quality points are not awarded for overall “artistic impression.”) Each exceptionally good rendition may be awarded one quality point, for up to a total of three quality points per passage.

Examples of renditions earning quality points include:

- Choice of a particularly felicitous word or phrase;
- Exceptionally skillful casting of a sentence or sentences; and
- Target-language rendition that precisely mirrors ambiguity in the source text.

Any quality points are subtracted from the error point total to yield a final score. A passage with a score of 18 or more points receives a grade of Fail.

Although the use of points may impart a certain impression of objectivity, it is, in truth, still subjective. In no way is the score on each passage meant to be a percentage. For example, an error score of 20 does not mean that 80% of the passage is correct. The error score is simply a number that, along with the error scale that generates it, embodies the grader’s understanding of translation quality and accreditation standards.

The ATA Accreditation Committee firmly believes that these changes, along with those they build on and others still to come, will strengthen the accreditation program and enhance the stature of the credential it provides. Watch this space and the ATA website for more information.

Visit ATA on the web at www.atanet.org
When Kamkin’s Russian Bookstore closed recently, I was one of those who waited in line that last day for over two hours to save 40% on my purchases. I already had invested two hours grabbing dictionaries, glancing at the titles, and placing those that seemed to have potential value into my growing stack. After I was home and had arranged them neatly on the shelves, I forgot most of the titles. Recently, however, I translated a paper about the influence of organized crime on business and came across one or two terms, the translation of which from other sources bothered me. So, I started to look more closely at those “new” dictionaries on the shelf. It was there I discovered I had the most recent edition of the Толковый юридический словарь бизнесмена.

This little gem provides not only better translations, but it explains the terms in Russian. As an example, юридическое лицо and физическое лицо were bothersome terms. (Law is not my specialty, and my client was hard to reach.) Lingvo was the only dictionary that provided a number of translations for the former, but in the context of the paper, none made much sense with the possible exception of “legal entity.” Thanks to the Russian explanation in this Толковый, not only did I understand why “legal entity” was the most suitable translation, but the difference between the two terms was clear as well. And закон, a word we all think we know, can be translated as “legislative act,” another term that made better sense in this particular paper.

Printed on the cheaper paper seen in so many older books from Russia, the dictionary is nonetheless well bound and easy to read. The layout of the dictionary is unusual in that there are no head terms on each page, and the Russian word or term is printed in all caps on the right side. On the left side, also in all caps, is the English translation. Beneath both is the Russian explanation of the word or term. I found I really liked this layout, and the explanations were extremely helpful.

Subordinate terms to what might be considered a “lead” term appear in italics, once again on the right side of the page, with the English translation on the left side in standard typeface. These terms refer the user to the “lead” term for the entry contained elsewhere in the dictionary. In addition, lesser terms, for which no explanations are deemed necessary, also appear in this format.

For English→Russian, there is a cross-reference list of the English terms which refers one to the page where that Russian term appears. In this section, too, the “lead” terms are in all caps, while the subordinate terms have only the first letter capitalized.

Of note for legal translators are over 20 pages of Latin→Russian and Russian→Latin terms used in legal texts and banking.

The other sections of this little gem include:

- Some typical terms and conditions of foreign trade contracts (Russian→English);
- Monetary units of foreign countries and territories (Russian→English);
- Names of foreign countries and territories (Russian→English);
- Deciphering of English abbreviations of some monetary units;
- Some free-trade zones;
- Court bodies of some foreign countries considering commercial disputes;
- Supreme legislative and court bodies in developed countries; and
- A list of Russian legislative acts (to which references are made in the dictionary).

Roy Cochrun is a freelance Internet researcher and Russian→English translator. Since 1995, he has maintained the “Language Conference List” (www.royfc.com/confer.html), which presently lists over 550 events for linguists, translators, interpreters, and language teachers. He holds a B.A. in foreign languages from the University of Maryland. Contact: roy@royfc.com.
These two dictionaries are identical in format and type of content. There is some, but not excessive, overlap between them. Each offers 60-odd pages of hard to find jewels. Lookup is convenient, with many compound terms listed under a given headword. Given their size, neither dictionary stands alone as a primary source for legal or financial translation, but they are certainly a good place to start a terminological search. They are worth much, much more than their price of approximately $10, and are a tremendous addition to the scant Portuguese→English resources. You should be able to purchase these books directly from the publisher (www.sbs.com.br), through Brazilian Translated (www.braziliantranslated.com), or through Nogueira (danilo.tradutor@uol.com.br).

My library of Portuguese→English financial and legal resources is not extensive. I doubt anyone’s is, because there simply isn’t much out there. I generally rely on my Spanish→English resources, Noronha’s legal dictionary, Michaelis’ business dictionary, and, more than anything else, the Internet. (When I find financial terminology translated into English on the Internet, it is often in an article written by Nogueira.)

Each dictionary includes several abbreviations and acronyms. They also contain extremely useful explanations of many terms. Since these dictionaries are aimed at into-English translators, I would have preferred these explanations to appear in English, but they are invaluable nonetheless. Grammatical information is provided for each headword. Few synonyms and no appendices, tables, or illustrations are provided. I did not find much in the way of filler or errata in either dictionary. Both dictionaries include primarily U.S. usage, and occasionally include a well-marked alternative for the United Kingdom. There are helpful notes on the differences between Brazilian and U.S. laws and practices.

One typo I found was “lote,” translated as “lot” in Direito, although in the same entry “lote fracionário” is translated correctly as “odd lot,” and both appear correctly in Balanços. Michaelis was the only other dictionary where I found “lote fracionário” (actually, “lote fracionado”).

There are helpful examples of usage, for instance, distinguishing between two occurrences of “bonus”: 1) A empresa comprou bônus do tesouro. = The company bought treasury bonds.; and 2) Pagamos um bônus pela produção. = We paid a production bonus. Another example is the difference between “liberar” as “release” and “pay.” Nogueira gives: 1) Ele foi liberado de seu compromisso. = He was released from his commitment.; and 2) As ações somente foram liberados em 31 de dezembro. = Shares were only paid on December 31. While I prefer the latter sentence to read, “Shares were not paid in until December 31,” Nogueira gets his point across and allows the user to come up with an appropriate translation.

Nogueira gives an excellent explanation of how to translate “quota” (meaning “share”) and how it differs from “ação” in Portuguese, but not in English. Nogueira also gives the expansion and translation for the acronyms used by several Brazilian market-related associations that I was not able to find elsewhere. In addition, he gives “ITR,” “Quarterly Report” (informações trimestrais), which I found nowhere else.

Generally speaking, I agree with Nogueira’s choices of translation, although I have some reservations about a few. Acknowledging in a lengthy note the difficulty of translating “ativo permanente” and explaining what it includes, Nogueira gives “permanent assets.” I would not use that translation, but he gives enough information to arrive at the translation “assets subject to indexation.”
and, if necessary, to footnote the term and explain that it includes long-term investments (which Nogueira calls “permanent investments”), property, plant and equipment, and deferred charges.

For “livro de registro de ações nominativas,” Nogueira gives “nominate shares register; stock transfer register; stock transfer ledger.” My clients have always accepted “stock ledger,” and, rather than “nominate,” I would prefer “registered.” (Noronha translates “livro de registro de ações” as “share recorder; share registration book.”)

The note under “interesse,” “interest; equity; stake,” is excellent and something I’ve had to explain countless times to students and colleagues. “Interest é o termo genérico. Equity é uma participação societária. Stake inclui qualquer tipo de interesse, inclusive, por exemplo, o interesse que os fornecedores têm no sucesso de uma empresa.”

The translations for the many entries under “ação,” including “ação caída em cominso” (forfeited share); “ação cheia” (cum dividend share); “ação de primeira linha” (blue chip share); and “ação divisível” (fractional share) are all excellent and not generally found elsewhere.

One particularly elegant entry that I think you would be hard-pressed to find elsewhere is “corregir,” translated as “apply indexation; restate for inflation,” along with an explanation of what it means and a warning not to translate it as “correct.” This is absolutely on the money. I did not find this term elsewhere.

Another real-life usage translation given by Nogueira is “government agency” for “órgão público,” while Noronha gives “public agency; public officer.” At least here in the U.S., “government agency” is the way to go.

Nogueira is again spot-on with his translation of “sócio oculto” (not found elsewhere) as “dormant partner; silent partner.”

In summary, I highly recommend these two little and unbelievably inexpensive dictionaries. I am looking forward to the next in the series. And when Nogueira decides the series is complete, I really hope his publisher will issue a compilation so we can have all these little books in one big volume.

Review by Sharlee Merner Bradley

What I like best about this dictionary is that for each place name, it gives the first known form (or at least one early spelling), together with its date, and the etymological meaning. This gives us some idea of the age of the name and of its original form. Most of the early forms are from Old English, often from the Domesday Book (1086), although the names themselves often go back to Anglo-Saxon times between the 5th and 11th centuries.

The place names included in the dictionary are for England only, excluding Wales and Scotland. According to the introduction, there are more than 12,000—not too many for a fairly compact book to take traveling with you. Indeed, they are the names that tourists will find on most of the road atlases. Thus, we have all the better-known places in England: towns and cities; a good number of villages, hamlets and city suburbs; counties and districts; and many rivers and coastal features. Americans can find the origins of the many U.S. towns and cities that were named after “the old country,” such as Boston, Lancaster, and Chatham.

Two maps are printed to show the counties before and after the 1996 reorganization. The importance of those changes is that each place name in the dictionary is followed by its county. This provides a major incentive for publishing a second edition (the first appears to have come out in 1991). No pronunciations are given (try asking for directions to Cholmondeley!)

My second favorite feature is the long introduction (xi-xxvi), which, in addition to explaining the dictionary,
is fascinating to any word sleuth, a term applicable to most translators. The author chronologically discusses the different languages represented: pre-Celtic or “Old European,” Celtic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian (Old Danish and Old Norse), French, and even modern concoctions, all of which mirror the history of the English language itself.

Different types of place name formation are also discussed, such as back formation, with a typical example such as the River Plym, whose name came about because the village name of Plympton, “historically ‘farmstead of the plum-tree’) came to be understood as ‘farmstead on the stream called Plym.’”

The entries are quite brief, averaging four or five lines in two columns. The names are in bold, easy to spot, but the type size of the information about each is small.

At the end of the dictionary, the author gives us a fairly extensive glossary of common elements in English place names, with the language of origin and the meaning of each, followed by a three-page bibliography of other dictionaries and works of reference, surveys, monographs, and interpretive studies. One of the earlier place-name dictionaries listed, by E. Ekwall, was a standard reference work, and was also published by Oxford, but way back in 1960.

Author Mills is not only a place-name buff, but a professional: Emeritus Reader in English at the University of London, member of the Council of the English Place-Name Society, and of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland.

One of the blurbs on the back cover says, “a book which will prove to be an indispensable traveling companion.” I cannot but agree that when traveling about England, I would be delighted to be able to refer to this absorbing reference book to seek the stories behind such names as Wigwig, Were, and Wigglesworth. Who would ever suspect that Barnacle in Warwickshire was written as Bernhangre in 1086 and meant “wooded slope by a barn,” from Old English bere-ærn + hangra (wood on a steep slope)? It almost looks like an example of folk etymology.

Note
* Pronounced Chum’ lee. Webster’s New Geographical Dictionary (G. & C. Merriam Co., 1972) gives pronunciations, but, being international in scope, does not include such tiny English village names.

Update:
The publisher of the Catálogo de Expresiones Para la Traducción Inversa Español-Inglés, reviewed in the March 2002 issue, has informed me that you can once again find this volume listed on i.b.d.’s website (www.ibdltd.com). The price is still $28. According to the publisher, all of Anglo-Didáctica’s books may also be purchased from El Corte Inglés (www.elcorteingles.es), or directly from the publisher:

Editorial Anglo-Didáctica
C/Santiago de Compostela, 16
28034 Madrid, Spain
Tel./Fax: +34 91 378 01 88

cuba

Sharlee Merner Bradley (Ph.D.) is an ATA-accredited (Spanish and French to English) translator. Contact: smbradley@compuserve.com.

References


Continued on p.64
The Translation Inquirer  By John Decker

Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmore Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: Jdecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the 25th of each month to be included in the next issue.

If you are a fan of this column, it may be fun for you to have a look at some old introductory paragraphs culled out from columns from years past, and placed in a special section entitled “Publications” on the Translation Inquirer’s brand-new website (www.languagesofmontour.com). Just go to the bottom of the publications page, and click on the section clearly labeled as referring to the Translation Inquirer column. Rather than put many excerpts onto the site, I agonized over what to eliminate, and chose only four. But if I get a good response regarding these, I may be tempted to put in more. Perhaps I could be persuaded to double the number to eight. Every website ought to have at least a little comic relief!

[Abbreviations used with this column: Da-Danish; D-Dutch; E-English; F-French; G-German; R-Russian; Sp-Spanish; Sw-Swedish.]

New Queries

(Da-E 8-02/1) “Ændringskontrol” appeared in a document encountered by a ProZ correspondent which turns out to be a back-translation of something which began life in English. The problem sentence: “‘Blev ændringskontrol gennemført for alle ændringer?’ og er et af en række spørgsmål I orbindelse med projektvaluering.”

(D-E 8-02/2) A Lantra correspondent presented a railway technology question whose troublesome phrase was “en op het dak afvoren.” Here is the overall context: “Een elektrodynamische rem, die de aandrijfmotoren als generator laat text: “Een elektrodynamische rem, die het dak afvoren.” Here is the overall context: “Een elektrodynamische rem, die het dak afvoren.”

(E-F 8-02/3) Social science has “entitlements” as one of its most prominent buzzwords, but how does this word fit into the world of oil and gas? A Lantra user discovered it in an English-to-German job: Excluding the effects of lower entitlements caused by higher crude prices, liquids production was 3% higher than 1999. How can the word be explained in this context, and what would be good German for it?

(E-R 8-02/4) True, the English term described here refers to a fictional, futuristic concept, that of a pre-crime unit within the judicial system. But who knows? It may some day be a reality, when police come to feel that they must arrest individuals whose personalities predispose them to murders, armed robberies, etc., of which they currently are innocent. Several ProZ attempts were made to provide Russian equivalents, such as отряд предотвращения преступлений, etc. But the concept, besides tickling the imagination, invites many approaches. Any further ideas?

(E-Sp 8-02/5) Deep within the world of banking a phrase has emerged that needs to be well rendered into Spanish, as found in the bold-print part of this context sentence from a ProZ user: The institution continues to rely on potentially volatile liabilities, as reflected by a Net Non-Core Funding Dependence Ratio. No clue about this can be found in the Dictionary of Finance from the Oxford Paperback Reference series, so it is up to financially savvy readers of this column to try this one. What is it?

(E-Sp 8-02/6) Spanish television in the Los Angeles area offered a show which featured Steven Segal, entitled Hard to Kill in English. Renato Calderón wonders whether any of three Spanish equivalents which he saw really do the job: “Duro de matar,” “Bicho malo nunca muere,” or “Matar dificilmente.” Before the Translation Inquirer gives Renato’s suggestion, he will allow readers a chance to suggest something.

(F-E 8-02/7) Admitting that “legal is not my bag,” a lantran discovered three troublesome phrases in a document relating to infringement on a corporate trademark. Bold print marks the problems in the three sub-queries:

(7.a) Objet: “xxxx vs. vous-mêmes;”

(7.b) “Cette marque se retrouve d’ailleurs dans de nombreuses marques de commerce enregistrées appartenant à notre cliente et constitue la totalité de son nom commercial et corporatif;”

(6.c) at the beginning of a paragraph, near the end of the document: “en conséquence de tout ce qui précède” – something such as in light of the foregoing?

(F-E 8-02/8) A decoration “dans la masse,” (i.e., inside the flexiglass), caused trouble because of its indefiniteness and the need to choose between participles such as sculpted, carved, or whatever. Who can solve the problem of proper English, if provided with this contextual sentence: “Le garçon pose son verre sur la petite table de jardin en flexiglass épais, coûteusement décoré dans la masse.”

(G-E 8-02/9) Apparently, “Ablauen,” as a verb, can be applied to commercial paper, since a Lantra member discovered “abgelaufene Stocks und Bonds” in a pseudo-German text regarding a database of historical securities prices. Would expired be appropriate in English, or is there something more appropriate?

(G-E 8-02/10) A ProZ correspondent felt uneasy about posing a query
regarding what he felt was surely one of the easier words in a technical sentence, but the word was “Streuspanne”: “Die Streuspanne ist definiert als das Verhältnis der Bauteil-Dauerfestigkeit bei 10 prozentiger Überlebenswahrscheinlichkeit un der Bauteil-Dauerfestigkeit bei 90 prozentiger Überlebenswahrscheinlichkeit.” Good English, please, to shatter this translator’s mental block.

For a ProZ member, there were two stumbling blocks in a document on swimming pool bottom cleaners. The first was “vaso,” and it appeared thus: “Existen dos versiones de las boquillas xxx… Normally su instalación se efectúa en el momento de las construcción del vaso.” What is it, and what might be appropriate in German? Then appeared “boquillas barredoras emergentes” as in “Es un conjunto de una válvula y boquillas barredoras emergentes que impulsan el agua efectuando automáticamente la limpieza del suelo de su piscina.”

Body of thought, conceptual baggage, or paradigms were just three of the suggestions that came out of a long Lantra discussion of “tankegods.” It came out of a rhetorical question type of sentence: “Finns där ett tankegods som inte förändrats från 1960-talet till idag?” No real agreement was reached, and now the much larger ATA membership can give it a try.

Replies to Old Queries

(E-R 4-02/6) (gestural sketch): After consulting a professional artist, Boris Silversteyn believes that набросок or быстрый набросок (quick sketch) are quite adequate to convey the meaning.

(G-E 5-02/3) (“Wangentisch”): Philip Tomlinson learned from an antique dealer’s website that it is a trestle table in English, and that it preserves medieval characteristics, with its x-shaped oak panels at either end; the “legs” for the table top. He gives a useful reference: The Complete Encyclopedia of Antiques by Ramsey, published by Hawthorn Books in 1962.

Query E-R 8-02/4 about a “pre-crime unit” within the police reminds me of the half-joking references I have made over the last few years about a possible future federal-level Department of Marginal Males. The job of this department would be to use every tool of modern social science and psychology to conduct early (in childhood, if possible) identification of marginal males (the ones who grow up and buy guns to shoot up schools, fast-food restaurants, and post offices) and get them off the streets and into sheltered workshops from which they would never emerge for the rest of their lives. Looks like the author of the film script referred to in the query beat me to it.

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Mark Twain said that the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between “lightning” and “lightning bug.” Such is the difference between “villains” and “villagers” as a translation of “Dorfbewohner,” an infelicity found in a translation of a history of German railways submitted to me by fellow columnist John Decker.

English has other interesting etymologically related words: demagogue/synagogue/agony; housewife/hussy; god/giddy; iceberg/burglar; teach/prejudice; supposition/suppository. “I could have corrected your incorrect supposition about ‘suppository’ if you hadn’t sat on it.”

Sometimes even the right word isn’t:

“He’s a criminal lawyer.” “Aren’t they all?”

Tom Lehrer’s “He majored in animal husbandry till they caught him at it.”

All of which suggests that English has traps for the unwary, and that the non-native speaker needs help to avoid them. But definitely not the sort of help offered Turks by an English-Turkish conversation book published in 1949. Excerpts from this book were submitted to me by Costa Kanellos. Included are typical Turkish conversational phrases, English translations, and a pronunciation guide to the English translations. Here are some of the English translations, verbatim, sometimes followed by my comments in parentheses:

Sing at my front (but dance at my back).

He did tier his note-book.

The weather is very delicious. (That cloud looks like lobster thermidor.)

Did you devine the enigma.

Pleat your thumb and the second finger. (Do-it-yourself torture instructions.)

You did not administrate the establishment.

Do you like some mere beer? (You plebeian!)

They did not agitate the guestion.

Is it killed anybody? Thanks to the Cod, did not. (Said on the next-to-the last voyage of the Pequod.)

You did not dried the boody-linens.

He did arrest the ball. (What for? Speeding?)

How’s That Again?

Humor and Translation

Mark Herman

Herman is a librettist and translator. 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. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.

Developing a Glossary of Special Lexical Units Used in Cuba’s Variant of Spanish

Continued from p.61


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The Registration Form and Preliminary Program will be mailed in July to all ATA members. The conference rates are listed below. As always, ATA members receive significant discounts.

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All speakers must register for the conference.

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To make your hotel reservations, contact the Hyatt Regency at 1-866-333-8880 or 404-577-1234. Be sure to specify that you are attending the ATA Annual Conference.

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ATA once again offers the services of Stellar Access to help you with your travel arrangements. Through Stellar Access conference attendees are eligible for discounted air travel and rental cars.

Call Stellar Access at 1-800-929-4242, and ask for ATA Group #505. Outside the U.S. and Canada, call 858-805-6109; fax: 858-547-1711. A $30 ($35 from outside the U.S. and Canada) transaction fee will be applied to all tickets purchased by phone. Reservation hours: Monday-Friday 6:30am-5:00pm Pacific Time.

A $15 transaction fee will be applied to all tickets purchased online. Go to www.stellaraccess.com and book your reservations from the convenience of your home or office anytime! First-time users must register and refer to Group #505.

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American Translators Association Announces New Publications

Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government, compiled by Ted Crump, is a comprehensive survey that provides the language needs, career ladders, and contact information for over 80 federal agencies and offices. 174 pages; $30 (ATA members), $50 (nonmembers).

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