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American Translators Association
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 • Alexandria VA 22314
Tel: (703) 683-6100 • Fax (703) 683-6122
E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org
The ATA Chronicle Submission Guidelines

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

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

Standard Length
Letters to the editor: 350 words; Opinion/Editorial: 300-600 words; Feature Articles: 750-3,500 words; Column: 400-1,000 words

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 If you find that the information on the mailing label is inaccurate or out of date, please let us know.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

Ronnie Apter, a professor of English at Central Michigan University, is a published poet, a translator of poetry, and a recipient of New York University’s Thomas Wolfe Poetry Award. She is the author of *Digging for the Treasure*, a critically acclaimed book on Ezra Pound’s contribution to the translation of poetry into English, and of *A Bilingual Edition of the Love Songs of Bernart de Ventadorn in Occitan and English: Sugar and Salt*, which, together with its accompanying compact audiodisk, includes literal, poetic, and singable translations of the extant work of this important 12th-century troubadour. Contact: ronnie.apter@cmich.edu.

Enrica J. Ardemagni has been teaching courses in translation and translation studies for 12 years, and is the director of the Certificate in Translation Studies program at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. She received her Ph.D. in Spanish from the University of Wisconsin in 1985, and is a frequent consultant on translating and interpreting programs. Contact: eardema@iupui.edu.

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Eduardo Gonzalez was born in Cuba, and has lived in Europe and South America. He is an assistant professor of Spanish, French, and translation/interpreting in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He is also a certified U.S. federal court interpreter. He graduated from the University of Havana with a Licenciatura in English-Spanish translation and interpretation. He received his Ph.D. from the Moscow Foreign Language Pedagogical University. He is a member of ATA, the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, and the National Education Association. Contact: gonzaele1@unk.edu.

Mark Herman is a literary translator, technical translator, chemical engineer, playwright, poet, lyricist, musician, and actor. In collaboration with Ronnie Apter, he has written 18 opera translations which have received numerous productions in the U.S., Canada, and England. Contact: hermanapter@earthlink.net.

Arlene M. Kelly holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Florida at Gainesville with an advanced certificate in Latin American Studies. She teaches legal interpretation and interpreting methods and techniques for the Legal and Medical Interpreting Program at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts. She interprets Portuguese and French for the U.S. Federal Court and Portuguese for the Massachusetts State Courts. Contact: xingukelly@aol.com.

Nur Reinhart, when not dispensing etiquette advice, works full-time as a freelance translator and editor, specializing in legal, medical, and pharmaceutical translations from and into Turkish. She has also taught English for many years at Purdue University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Southern Illinois University, and Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Contact: nurreinhart@comcast.net.

Michael C. Walker is a writer and cultural theorist. His primary areas of inquiry include contemporary French and Slavic literatures and linguistic aspects of institutional systems (such as public health networks). Walker’s recent publications include research proceedings in *Diagnostic Imaging*, *Translation Journal*, *Multilingual Computing and Technology*, *Mots Pluriels*, and poetry in *The Church Wellesley Review*, *Fetishes*, and *Meanie*. He has published four previous articles in the *ATA Chronicle*. Walker received his graduate education at the University of California and the Sorbonne. He is affiliated with the Savannah College of Art and Design and with the Københavns Universitetet. Contact: algonquin@medscape.com.

Phyllis Zatlin is professor of Spanish and coordinator of translator training at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. She serves as editor of the collection *ESTRENO* Contemporary Spanish Plays and is an experienced theatrical translator from Spanish and French. Her translations, performed at university theaters in the spring of 2002, include Paloma Pedrero’s *The Color of August* and Itziar Pascual’s *Holiday Out*. Contact: pzatlin@hotmail.com.

It’s Not Too Early To Plan

**ATA’s 43rd Annual Conference**

Hyatt Regency Hotel
Atlanta, Georgia
November 6-9, 2002
When I first joined ATA, I was just getting into the translation profession. I attended the ATA Annual Conference in Austin, Texas, and did not know anyone there. Fortunately, however, I sought out and joined the Russian Language Division (now the Slavic Languages Division), and the people that I got to know there remain some of my closest friends in ATA. As Past-President Peter Krawutschke once put it, divisions provide members with a “home” in the larger organization.

Today, 62% of ATA members belong to at least one division, and 15% belong to more than one. These numbers reflect the success of the divisions and the important role they play in our association.

I am writing about divisions now for two reasons:

1. Since the conference, members have expressed interest in establishing divisions for medical translation and interpreting, legal T&I, teachers, Dutch, Korean, and Vietnamese.

2. If you are interested in starting a division, you should begin to plan now to have all interested members meet at the Annual Conference (November 6-9, Atlanta, Georgia). Getting the foundation set now will lead to a more productive meeting at the conference.

To start a division, the ATA bylaws require a petition with the signatures of 20 active members and a set of division bylaws. This information, along with the name of the proposed administrator and newsletter editor, is presented to the Board of Directors for their approval.

ATA Headquarters is prepared to help achieve this goal. Mary David, chapter and division relations manager, can offer hands-on assistance in a variety of areas: collecting signatures, providing a bylaws template, and promoting the group online and in the ATA Chronicle. In addition, Dorothee Racette, ATA Divisions Committee chair, will work with the groups in submitting the proposals to establish new divisions to the Board of Directors.

In my five years on the ATA Board, I have seen what has made some divisions more successful than others. The key to success for both proposed divisions and established ones is having a core group of volunteers to serve as administrator, assistant administrator, and newsletter editor. The administrator and assistant administrator must make the time to be involved in overseeing the division and to work at including and recruiting other volunteers. The newsletter editor needs to produce a publication at regular intervals. While this may seem to be a daunting task, the newsletter can be as simple as four pages; it does not have to be a 32-page newsletter like the great newsletters of many of our larger language divisions. In addition, Mary will take care of the production. The editor, or whoever handles the layout, simply provides camera-ready copy or an electronic file. Finally, in recognition of the extra time required to produce a newsletter, the ATA Board approved offering honoraria to newsletter editors. The money is not intended to cover actual expenses, but to offer some compensation for the extra time given to the association.

If you are interested in starting or assisting in the start up of a division, please contact Mary at 703-683-6100, ext. 3009 or mary@atanet.org. Participation in division activities will reap benefits for years.

ATA Translation Company Division

Third Annual Conference

The TCD will hold its third annual conference in Chicago, June 13–16, 2002. For more information, please send an e-mail to Steve Iverson, acting administrator, at steve@iversonlang.com.
From the Executive Director

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

The Anniversary Column

This past March marked my eighth anniversary with ATA. As I have written in my past anniversary columns, I like to reflect back on where we were at that time for several reasons. First, you learn from your past experiences, which there is no question we have. Second, we can appreciate where we are today because of these past successes. Third, we can look to the future with real excitement about the possibilities, or as I’ve read to my daughter only about 100 times in the past year from Dr. Seuss’ Oh, The THINKS You Can Think!: “Oh, the thinks you think up if only you try!”

ATA has tried and succeeded. In these eight years, ATA’s membership has more than doubled. For 2002, we are on track to finish the year with over 9,000 members. The budget has more than doubled to just under $2 million. The number of divisions has more than doubled and division membership has grown as well—most members belong to at least one division. (The Spanish Language Division alone has roughly 2,000 members.) Finally, the ATA Chronicle has gotten better and better, particularly with this year’s redesigned look.

Much of this success has to do with a devoted group of ATA members who have given their time and energy to make ATA better. This group includes the various ATA officers and directors who have served over the years, but also those involved in the accreditation program and ATA’s other programs and services. I also want to thank the ATA staff. ATA is fortunate to have such a hard working group of individuals in their employ. I would like to recognize them by their years of service to the association: Maggie Rowe, membership services manager, nine years; Roshan Pokharel, information services manager, nine years; Jeff Sanfacon, ATA Chronicle editor, six years; Terry Hanlen, deputy executive director and accreditation program manager, five years; Teresa Ly, membership and accreditation specialist, three years; Orson Carter, accounting manager, two years; Mary David, chapter and division relations manager, just under one year; and Teresa Kelly, administrative coordinator, just over a half year. To put this in perspective, eight years ago ATA had five full-time employees and one part-time employee, with the veteran on the staff having a year and a half of experience.

So, what are some of the “thinks” for this year? We are working on more professional development opportunities and dramatic changes to the accreditation program. We are getting ready to undertake a compensation survey for translator and interpreters and a comprehensive survey of company owners and their businesses. Plans are well underway for the ATA Annual Conference, with our usual vision of building on our past successes and trying out new “thinks.”

I want to thank you all for allowing me to work with you these past eight years. As I said when I wrote my anniversary column last year, I look forward to working with you for many more.

Attention Exhibitors

American Translators Association 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, McNeill Group Inc.; brian@mcneill-group.com; (215) 321-9662, ext. 38; Fax: (215) 321-9636.
American Translators Association
43rd Annual Conference
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL • ATLANTA, GEORGIA
NOVEMBER 6 – NOVEMBER 9, 2002

Plan now to attend ATA’s Annual Conference. Join your colleagues for a rewarding experience in Atlanta, Georgia.

ATA’s 43rd Annual Conference will feature:
• Over 150 educational sessions offering something for everyone;
• The Job Exchange where individuals promote their services and companies meet translators and interpreters;
• Over 50 exhibits featuring the latest publications, software, and services available;
• Opportunities to network with over 1,600 translators and interpreters from throughout the U.S. and around the world; and
• Much more!

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

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Note: Students and one-day participants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings.

All speakers must register for the conference.

Hotel Accommodations

The Hyatt Regency Hotel, the host hotel, is conveniently located in downtown Atlanta at 265 Peachtree Street, NE. The hotel is 20 minutes from Atlanta’s Hartsfield International Airport.

Conference attendees can register at the discounted rate of $160 single, $165 double, $175 triple, and $185 quadruple plus tax per night. (Regency Club accommodations are offered at an additional charge of $35 per room based on availability.) This rate is good until October 15, 2002. The availability of guest rooms or the group rate cannot be guaranteed after that date.

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.

Travel Arrangements

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.

Mark Your Calendar Today!
November 6–9, 2002
Multilingual Desktop Publishing

In her article in the March ATA Chronicle (p. 19), Nancy Locke states: “It will come as no surprise to translators that the translation of an English text will result in a longer text than the original.”

On the contrary: it comes to me as quite a surprise. As a translator and typesetting consultant (inter alia) from English into Hebrew and vice versa, I’d say that this is far from being the case. Hebrew is a compact, highly agglutinating language, and is typically 20-25% shorter than English.

There is no indefinite article, and the definite article and most prepositions are one-letter prefixes. Many possessive and pronoun inflections and declensions behave likewise.

Of course, you may object that mere word-counts fail to take into account the character-count and/or word-size. This may be true of Arabic and German, of which I make brief mention below, but not of Hebrew.

Words tend to be quite short in Hebrew, a feature largely attributable to the absence of true vowels. Fitting Hebrew text into space previously occupied by English is mostly an exercise in what to do with the huge swathes of emptiness left behind.

As regards Ms. Locke’s mention of German, I am unsure whether she meant that it is “expandable” when working into English, or vice versa. I translate from German into English, and the word-count typically increases by 8-10%. However, because many of my German clients pay by the character, I have discovered that German into-English does result in a contraction of (typically) 10% on this basis.

Turkish and Italian are other agglutinating languages and, in terms of word-counts, are frequently much shorter than the English source text. Presumably there are other such examples.

Chinese is another language in which the absolute amount of space needed is less than in English. Therefore, saying that “Interestingly, Japanese translations are typically less long [shorter?] than the source English text” is true per se. However, the implication that this is a phenomenon largely restricted to Japanese is far from reality.

Yoni (John) Kinory MITI
Hebrew, English & German technical translations and interpreting
kinory@compuserve.com

Reply to Mr. Kinory

I apologize that my article implied that all languages, except Japanese, expand in translation. Indeed, as Mr. Kinory points out, that is not the case for Hebrew, nor many other languages, including, for example, Chinese and Arabic. However, from the perspective of a desktop publishing specialist (DTP), and perhaps tautologically, languages that contract in translation do not present issues of expansion. Some of the languages cited by Mr. Kinory, however, present computational issues that do effect the job of the DTP specialist. For instance, English>Arabic texts represent a considerable challenge, not due to expansion but because of the bidirectionality of text combining Arabic and English.

I must take issue, however, with certain of Mr. Kinory’s other statements related to expansion. First, his supposition that English>German translations might not expand markedly, based on a mathematical extrapolation from contraction evident in German>English translation, is flawed. All it proves is that language defies mathematical abstraction. Second, his assertion that translations from English to Italian “in terms of word-counts are frequently much shorter than the English source text” is simply not borne out by my experience. In any case, word-count is not the issue, space is (a distinction addressed below). However, since my experience is just that—my experience—perhaps more objective data is required.

According to UN text expansion equivalencies published in the IBM National, Language Design Guide, Volume 1 (Sadek and Zhukov, 2-4), German and Italian translations of an English text resulted in 109% and 110% expansion, respectively. The same source indicated that the English>Greek translation expanded by a full 129%. (My thanks to Suzanne Topping for providing the resource.)

Further, I would venture to assert that the expansion rate of translated text not subjected to rigorous editing is far higher than the figures cited. Unfortunately, the pricing structures of localization projects often do not encourage rigorous editing—a process step often viewed as a luxury or an unnecessary expense.

A very unscientific poll of my translation colleagues supported Sadek’s and Zhukov’s data. Adriana Beaton, a seasoned Italian translator, offered to provide “100 examples” to illustrate the degree to which Italian translations of English texts expand.

Finally, and if it was not clear in my article, word-count ceases to be important at the DTP stage of the localization process. At that stage, text becomes a graphic element of a certain size. Words, of whatever number, lose their importance as the actual space they occupy becomes paramount. Perhaps this is the source of confusion.

I thank Mr. Kinory for his feedback. I learned something about Hebrew, a language with which I am not familiar.

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International Certification Study: U.K. and Ireland

By Jiri Stejskal

Last month we explored the interpreter-oriented certification process in Austria, a country where legislation for the certification of translators dates back nearly one and a half centuries. Since then, I have reviewed the websites of the Institute of Translation & Interpreting and the Irish Translators’ and Interpreters’ Association and contacted their respective representatives, Dr. Catherine Greensmith (chairman of ITI) and Mary Phelan (public relations representative of ITIA and a lecturer at Dublin City University).

It turns out that in the U.K., the focus is on the certification of translations rather than of translators. A similar situation exists in Ireland, a haven for many multinational translation and localization companies. Neither translators nor interpreters in the U.K. or Ireland can be officially certified through procedures similar to ATA’s accreditation or the certification offered by the government, as is the case in Austria. A translator, however, may certify his or her translation either as a professional member of a translators association or by having it witnessed by a solicitor. In addition, academic credentials in T&I can be obtained by linguists in both countries through examining bodies such as the London-based Institute of Linguists. The following information relies largely on the respective organizations’ websites.

United Kingdom

The Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI) was founded in 1986 as the only independent professional association of practicing translators and interpreters in the United Kingdom. It is now one of the primary sources of information on these services for government, industry, the media, and the general public. With its aim of promoting the highest standards in the profession, ITI serves as a meeting place for all those who understand the importance of translation and interpreting to the economy and society.

ITI has a large and growing international membership of translators and interpreters, not just in the U.K. but also throughout Europe and in other countries where English is commonly used. Different levels of membership are offered to suit translators and interpreters with varying amounts of experience, from newcomers to the T&I industry to experienced professionals. Members are required to abide by ITI’s professional code of conduct. Corporate membership is also open to educational, commercial, and government bodies, as well as translation companies.

As a professional association, and one that assesses the skills of its members, ITI maintains a list of members with suitable language skills and technical expertise. It can also hold its members accountable in the event of complaints. ITI has taken steps to establish itself as a body whose members can certify translations. “Qualified members” of ITI, while not certified themselves, can certify their translations.

The requirements for “qualified membership” consist of:

1. A minimum age of 25 years.
2. A first degree or postgraduate qualification in a relevant subject or a corresponding qualification that is accepted by ITI.
3. Recommendations regarding ability and good repute by at least two persons for translators and lecturers, three for ad hoc interpreters, and five for conference interpreters.
4. Recent professional experience, including:

   For translators
   • A minimum of five years of full-time work (or a correspondingly longer period of part-time work) and successful assessment of work or a passing grade on the ITI membership examination.
   • Alternatively, three years of full-time work (or a correspondingly longer period of part-time work), plus a passing grade on the ITI membership examination and/or a successful assessment interview.

   For interpreters
   • A minimum of 200 days of work over a period of five years, plus a successful assessment interview.
   • Alternatively, a minimum of 120 days of work over a period of three years, plus a passing grade on the ITI membership examination and/or a successful assessment interview.

In contrast to civil law countries, the concept of a “sworn translator” does not exist in the U.K.’s common...
law system. Even so, translations have to be “sworn/certified” for various purposes. Whether a translation is “certified” or “sworn” has no bearing on its overall quality, but such classifications serve to identify translators and their qualifications so that they can be held accountable for the work produced. When a translation is sworn before a solicitor, this individual does not verify the quality of the translation, but merely satisfies himself or herself of the translator’s professional status. Certification does, however, lend weight to a translation. For example, if a document is willfully mistranslated or carelessly translated, the translator could be charged with contempt of court, perjury, or negligence.

The legal advice received by ITI is that, “a certificate is acceptable if it is accepted,” and that ITI should certify translations and wait to see whether a certificate is challenged and, if so, by whom. ITI advisers feel that such a challenge is unlikely, or that by the time a challenge does arise a firm precedent will have been set. Where users insist on a higher grade of certification, they should be reminded of the existence of notarization and referred to notaries (where practicable, those firms whose members are ITI members).

Below is the suggested form the wording of a self-certification should take:

I, the undersigned, (name), Member of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, (other qualifications), declare that the translation of the attached documents (identifying particulars) is to the best of my knowledge and belief a true and faithful rendering of the original (language), done to the best of my ability as a professional translator (and verified by [name and ITI membership qualification]).

Ireland

Since 1986, translators and interpreters in Ireland have been represented by the Irish Translators’ and Interpreters’ Association (ITIA). ITIA brings together technical, commercial, and literary translators, as well as interpreters. Through its Professional Membership Committee, ITIA is working towards standards of certification for Irish translators and interpreters. Ordinary membership is open to anyone with an interest in T&I. ITIA has about 300 members, of whom 95 are full “professional members” (i.e., they have proven standards of professional competence and expertise). Apart from the professional membership category, membership in ITIA should not be misunderstood as representing a professional qualification.

Requirements for Professional Translators in the Commercial/Technical Fields

1. Success in foreign examinations organized by the profession abroad and recognized by ITIA (within a period of five years preceding the application, plus one year of full-time professional experience in the same period); or
2. Award of a translation degree by an Irish third-level institution or similar foreign institution recognized by ITIA (within a period of five years preceding the application, plus one year of full-time professional experience in the same period); or
3. If the applicant is a staff translator, two years of professional experience substantiated by the employer’s reference (within a period of five years preceding the application); or
4. If the applicant is a freelance translator, three years of professional experience substantiated by invoices, statements, or other recognized proof of work completed on a commercial basis (within a period of five years preceding the application, where it is estimated that the linguist translated at least 80,000 words in each of the above three years). The applicant has the option of submitting references, or, where discretion will allow, examples of work completed (to be treated in utmost confidence by ITIA). The association also reserves the right to administer a sample translation test.

Literary/cultural translators are required to submit a portfolio of work they have had published, broadcast, or produced.

Requirements for Professional Interpreters

For bilateral interpreters:

Three years of professional experience, estimated to be at least 40 days of interpretation per year and substantiated by invoices, statements, or other proof of work completed on a commercial basis (within a period of five years preceding the application).

For conference interpreters:

Three years of professional experience, estimated to be at least 20 days of conference interpretation per year and substantiated by invoices, statements, or other proof of work completed on a commercial basis (within a period of five years preceding the application). The interpreter has the option of submitting references from clients. The association also reserves the right to administer its own test.

Acceptance for professional membership is ultimately at the discretion of the Professional
International Certification Study: U.K. and Ireland Continued

Membership Subcommittee, whose decision in all such matters is final. Anyone failing to satisfy the above criteria in a given year of application may submit their application one year later, indicating further experience or qualifications which may be relevant.

For those who wish to take a degree course specifically aimed at training translators, there is the B.A. in applied languages program offered by Dublin City University (French, German, Spanish, and Japanese). Modules are available in economic and scientific/technical translation, and students can choose an option in bilateral/consecutive interpreting. This is a four-year program which involves training in two foreign languages, translation skills, courses in science, technology, and economics, and a year abroad at a foreign translation school. Another B.A. program in applied languages, offered by the University of Limerick, also provides graduates with linguistic and cultural competence in two foreign languages (with the possibility of studying three years for a degree) along with elective courses in marketing, politics, international relations, and technical writing.

An advanced degree in translation is available at the Dublin City University (M.A. in translation studies). The program was featured in the October 2001 issue of Language International magazine, and includes courses on localization, corpus linguistics, terminology, and translation from either one or two languages into English. As regards interpreting, Dublin City University offers an M.A. degree in conference interpreting, available in French, German, Spanish, and Irish.

Similar programs are also available in the U.K.: Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, the Modern Languages Centre in Bradford, the University of Kent at Canterbury, the University of Surrey at Guildford, and the University of Westminster in London.

Other Options

Linguists in both the U.K. and Ireland may opt for training and examination by an external examining body, such as the Institute of Linguists. The Institute of Linguists is the U.K.’s largest membership organization for professional translators, interpreters, language educators, and those using languages in industry and commerce. The Institute also serves as an examining body, offering assessments and certification in a large number of languages to suit candidates at higher levels (degree and postgraduate) seeking a professional qualification. Founded in 1910, the Institute now has around 7,000 fellows, members, and associate members. It aims to:

- Promote the learning and use of modern languages;
- Improve the status of all professional linguists;
- Establish and maintain high standards of work;
- Serve the interests of all linguists; and
- Ensure professional standards amongst language practitioners through its code of conduct.

The Institute of Linguists’ Language Services Ltd. carries out customer-specific assessment and validation of language qualifications, and conducts courses on behalf of local and central government, industry and commerce, and educational institutions. It also assists with the recruitment of linguists. The institute provides a range of public examinations at the post-beginner, professional translator, or public service interpreter levels. The examinations assess qualifications of practical and vocational linguistic skills, and are currently available in nearly 40 languages at centers throughout the U.K. and overseas. The Institute of Linguists’ qualifications are recognized in education, industry, and professional life as a concrete measure of competence in language skills.

The Institute offers a Diploma in Translation at the postgraduate level in most of the major European languages. It consists of three parts: a general paper with annotations and two papers with semi-specialized options (technology, business, literature, science, social science, and legal). The examinations are very difficult with a high failure rate. They may be taken at any acceptable venue anywhere in the U.K. and the world. Another diploma offered by the Institute is a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, which is an initial professional qualification available in a range of languages, in combination with English, including Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Croatian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin, Mirpuri, Punjabi, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. It is available in four options (health, local government, English law, and Scottish law) and tests simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and sight and written translations into and out of English. Both diplomas serve as a qualifying examination for membership in the Institute of Linguists, and the Diploma in Interpretation also serves as a qualifying examination for membership in the National Register of Public Service Interpreters.

Continued on p.23
An Interpreter’s Nightmare

By Tony Beckwith

(Note: The following was originally published in the AATIA Letter, the newsletter of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association.)

The lights dimmed in the hotel ballroom as the keynote speaker strolled across the stage. He stood behind the podium and looked out at the audience. I adjusted my headset and leaned closer to the microphone in the booth at the back of the hall. I ran my tongue across my lips and swallowed. The rustling and the shuffling and the talking subsided, and the man on the stage eased into his speech.

“Good morning,” he said brightly. “My theme today is ‘Clarity and Synergy in an Age of Divergent Paradigms and the Implementation of the Conceptual Approach.’” My heart sank. How was I supposed to interpret that? I understood the individual words, but what was he trying to say? My job was to convey his meaning into another language, but so far he was making no sense at all. For me, the process is quite simple: if I can hear you and I can understand you, I can interpret what you say. Speakers who talk like this make me crazy, they drive me insane. Where, I wondered miserably, were we going today?

“Now, let me say right away,” he continued, “that I don’t intend to articulate a TDC perimeter of cognitive assumptions or leverage a real-time review that is mission-critical and structured around a survey-based data bank. No! What I …”

Somebody was knocking on the side of the booth. Like an iguana under a rock I shot a lightning glance to my left. There was the lady from the agency, shaking a sheaf of papers, grinning triumphantly and mouthing “I got his speech for you!” My eyes swung back to the front, smoldering beneath furiously furrowed brows. What in the world was the acronym that odious little cretin on stage just uttered? I waved my arm wildly to make the lady from the agency go away. Why do they talk in acronyms? Have your SCUBA call my RSVP!

…I understood the individual words, but what was he trying to say?…

The speaker paused and looked around the darkened hall. He smiled, protected by his spotlights. “Let me get back to the NGY synergy and how that inevitably transitions to the cross-cutting issues we are considering. But, hey, I know we’re all on the same page on that one.” A wave of laughter rippled comfortably through the audience.

There was a roaring in my head, like a high wind in a hot valley, and my eyes were seared in their sockets. The muscles in my neck had turned to stone and my shoulders were hunched up around my ears. I seemed to be trying to move large pieces of furniture around in my brain, pushing pianos through keyholes underwater. Blissfully oblivious, the speaker moved away from the microphone and stood with his elbow on the podium. When he looked to his right his voice was muffled and barely audible. When he faced forward or to his left I couldn’t hear him at all. “…what we in fact envision…unwavering across-the-board support of our ongoing objective of clarity at any cost…and a market-driven focus…essential competitive edge….” There were shouts of “Bravo!” from the front rows.

The booth had filled with ants, and I could no longer see my hands. My skull was lowered slowly into a cauldron of molten lava. I could see out of my ears and my tongue lay down with a crocodile. There was no time, no distance anymore. No colors, no laughter, no light. Only the roaring.

“In closing,” said the speaker, who seemed to be moving further away, “let me say one thing. We cannot make mountains out of innuendo! There can be no win-win synthesis if we don’t move proactively together to….”

It was dark in the booth. Huge black clouds rolled in over a vast angry sea that hissed and boiled across the beach where I was buried up to my chin in the sand. A seagull stood on a rock, looking at me, its feathers ruffling in the wind. My nostrils were packed with gravel.

“…60% of our MIF will be transferred to the PDT. 19% of the R-sevens will regroup…and with that, it is my very great pleasure to hand you over to Donnie Donaldson, who will go over the rest of the TDCs.”

A tall monkey in a white coat took me gently by the arm as the speaker waved and said, “Thank you and have a great day!”

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Collaborative Translation Projects: 
Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching Translation

By Enrica J. Ardemagni

(Note: The following is based on a presentation the author gave at the ATA 42nd Annual Conference in Los Angeles last November.)

The Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures at Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis offers a Certificate in Translation Studies program with a concentration in French, German, or Spanish. The program offers two courses designed to prepare students through practical, hands-on exercises and by introducing them to the theoretical aspects of the translation profession. “Introduction to Translation Studies” focuses on the history and theory of translation and “Computers in Translation” teaches students how to use technology in their work.

These courses offer students numerous benefits. Since students work in different target languages, they have the opportunity to observe the interrelationships that exist between various language pairs. Students are required to translate different discourse typologies (such as commercial, legal, medical, and technical texts) into their target languages, which gives them practical experience as well as an understanding of the linguistic characteristics distinguishing one text type from another.

In the process, students not only gain new insight on how culture and language are intertwined, but get a sense of the significant role the translator plays in crossing both linguistic and cultural boundaries to achieve relevant meaning in the target language. Through these exercises, students not only get a chance to share the challenges of their work with each other, but become familiar with the different stages involved in the translation process. My curricular goals in these two courses are based on a scaffolding process, where students build upon their knowledge of the profession through their reading and enhance their translation skills through exercises of increasing difficulty. These two factors combined give students a clearer understanding of the translation profession as a whole. I find this to be an effective pedagogical tool in translator training. The courses are outlined in more detail below.

... Students not only get a chance to share the challenges of their work with each other, but also gain a better understanding of the stages involved in the translation process...

In addition to learning the practical aspects of translation in the “Introduction to Translation Studies” course, students read articles covering the history, theory, and practice of translation. Beginning with the earliest commentaries on translation, students get an overview of how translation practices have evolved over the centuries. However, more emphasis is placed on the study of articles that focus on the impetus behind translation studies over the last 30 years. Students are required to comment on these articles and how the ideas expressed in them relate to their own translation practices in class. I include these readings because, even though it is a given that knowledge of a foreign language and the mastery of translation technique are the most important components in translator training, true professionalism comes with being knowledgeable about the history and theory of translation and knowing how to communicate this knowledge base to the client.

Some professors have referred to translation as a tripod, but in class I like to refer to translation also as a circle (because the circle indicates that there has to be closure). By closure, I mean that any translation destined for publication has a deadline. As such, students need to be aware that they must develop speed and accuracy to get the job done when the client specifies. In addition to top-notch language skills, translators must know how to run a professional operation and deliver a final product that indicates a respect for their work as well as the needs of the client. Therefore, these courses encourage students to strengthen their language skills, to fully understand the process of translation, and to be able to handle the business of translation (including knowing how to charge, bill clients, and to maintain accurate records of their work).

To help my students understand the importance of following a defined procedure as they translate, I draw an analogy between translation and health care. For example, a patient must first be diagnosed, then treated, and adequate records must be kept on the treatment and its results. Thorough case management assures adequate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care. Translation has a similar process in that one must first assess the work to be translated, decide what process to follow and what resources are needed, and make sure that the correct procedure is undertaken for client satisfaction. I teach my students to understand that, like patients, many clients are unfamiliar with the
amount of work, not to mention the difficulties, involved in making an adequate “diagnosis” to arrive at satisfactory results. Many do not understand the “treatment,” or process, that must be followed to obtain these results. Like a patient under a doctor’s care, translation clients must rely on the professional expertise of others to reach their goals.

The “Introduction to Translation Studies” course combines translation, classroom commentaries on translation exercises, and insights into what takes place during the translation process. Students apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained from the articles they read to their translation assignments. Along with translation theory, students are also taught the daily operating procedures of running a translation business and how to work independently. For instance, students learn how to analyze a text for any potential difficulties that might arise while translating, and to get a sense of the resources that will be required to aid them in their translation. Students also familiarize themselves with the various aspects of creating quality customer relations, such as first listening to the client to make sure they understand what is expected, and how to educate the client on various aspects that may have a bearing on the desired outcome (such as explaining any cultural and intercultural issues that might be involved). Students are also taught the significance of always keeping the target audience in mind while translating. On the business side, students are also taught how to charge for their work.

The “Computers in Translation” course calls upon students to apply what they have learned in the “Introduction to Translation Studies” course, and teaches them the basic computer skills they will need to succeed in the translation business. Here, the focus shifts from individual translations to working on larger, long-term, team-oriented projects requiring a project supervisor, multiple translators, proofreaders, and editors. Special attention is given to managing resources and acquainting students with the use of computer-assisted translation software. Since students in this course are required to work in teams, a more detailed text analysis is required. This includes evaluating the needs of the client and how the project will be divided up among team members (for example, who is responsible for the final evaluation of the project) to achieve the desired result. Students in this course continue to master their individual language skills, but most of the coursework is based on group projects involving collaborative learning.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning (CL) has been defined as a situation in which two or more people learn, or attempt to learn, something as a team (Dillinbourgh, 2). There are many advantages to this approach. As Goodsell states: “Collaborative learning changes students from passive recipients of information given by an expert teacher to active agents in the construction of knowing. It provides structured group activities for students and promotes social skills that students need to work together” (Goodsell, 4). My goal in these courses was to design projects that would require students to gain practice working together (a necessary skill when employed in translation agencies or subcontracted on large projects). Collaborative projects give each student the opportunity to contribute his or her own knowledge, and teaches them how to conduct themselves professionally in a team-oriented environment.

Outlined below is one project students completed in the “Computers in Translation” course. This exercise allowed students to see how CL techniques can be used to solve problems in a professional setting.

Phase 1

I lectured on what was entailed during a large project, discussing the functions of the various individuals involved (project supervisors, translators, proofreaders, and editors) as well as the resources that might be needed. To illustrate this, I used a scenario involving a translation assignment from a pharmaceutical company. The company had developed a drug that was going to be marketed internationally, and was requesting multiple translations of the dosage instructions and the contraindications of the drug. I demonstrated how the translation could actually become part of the marketing strategy by taking cultural differences into consideration. I stated how the translator could be cost-effective to the company by establishing a terminology database of target corpora that could be used for future translations as updates on the drug were introduced. I explained how computer-assisted translation might prove beneficial to both the translator and the company. I also discussed the localization of websites, and how translators on the project would have to research any standards or regulations that controlled the product. I explained that doing so would make it possible for the translation to reflect any compliance needs.

Students were then divided into groups of three, where all members in each group worked in the same language pairs. Each group had to
form a mock translation agency, name the company, develop a logo and office letterhead, and use these for all correspondence. We had a total of six agencies.

**Phase 2**

I sent a letter to the agencies requesting bids on the translation of a book into their target languages. I limited the information I gave so that each group would have to prepare a needs analysis and discuss how the project would be carried out. My letter read:

I am the president of Green, Greener, Greenest, Inc., a lawn care company that specializes in the lawn and garden industry. Over the years, our company has produced a book which gives specifics of the lawn care industry. Included are a copy of the table of contents of the book and a one-page sample text. The sample text is about ‘Seeding and Sodding,’ and explains the differences and advantages of seeding or sodding a lawn, and a short paragraph on general lawn maintenance. The one-page sample text is 665 words. The book is 430 pages long, of which 70 pages contain full-page pictures of different plants. The only text on the pages with pictures is a caption that gives the name of the plant and the best time for planting.

I informed the agencies that I was very busy, and that they had two weeks to ask me for any specifics they might need to come up with a bid. I indicated that I would be making my decision after this period, and would need an estimate for the translation two weeks from the date of the letter. The groups were not allowed to see or discuss the questions that each submitted to me.

**Phase 3**

After the two-week period allotted for agencies to discuss project specifics, each group had to submit an estimate for their translation. Each group’s estimate had to reflect the responses they had received from me to their questions. In addition, the estimate had to be submitted using a template that my co-teacher, Michael Scott, designed for them. As a simulated project, I had to accept all bids in order for the groups to complete the other phases of the exercise, but I did not tell them until the project was complete which bid I had officially accepted.

**Phase 4**

Students had to submit a contract for me to sign to begin work on the project. We used ATA’s Model Contract (available at www.atanet.org).

**Phase 5**

The first four phases involved the actual work that was expected from the collaborative groups functioning as translation agencies. The groups were required to keep logs to assess their progress during each phase. These logs included information such as how each group decided which questions to ask, how my answers had shaped their estimates and team formation, who (and how many) they assigned to specific tasks, and what resources were available. The students had to record the specific objectives of the translation and, upon completion of the project, if those objectives had been met and how. They also had to write a brief job description for each team member (such as the project manager), including details on the expertise of their translators, proofreaders, and editor(s). They also had to tell me in what format (Word, etc.) the final translation would be delivered.

**Sharing of Projects**

This course is taught in a computer lab, and only electronic submissions are allowed. The course syllabus and assignments are placed on a web-based grade book, Oncourse, which is used within the university system. Oncourse contains an e-mail component which allows students and instructors to correspond via e-mail and send file attachments.

All translations and projects were sent to students via e-mail attachment (for example, my letter to them as president of a company requesting a bid on the translation of a book). This setup allowed me to display their correspondence on an overhead screen (students were informed beforehand that I would do this) at the end of the project. Comparing each group’s correspondence was helpful because collaborative projects have a “think-pair-share” subtext, meaning that the whole pedagogical purpose of this exercise was to learn from each other.

Sharing proved to be a tremendous learning experience, because students learned that many of their questions to me regarding the proposed translation project had been unnecessary. At the same time, students discovered that there were many other questions that they had failed to ask that would have changed their bid estimates. Reviewing each other’s correspondence helped students to see what aspects of their group’s needs analysis were missing.

Following this demonstration, I shared the estimates and the contracts each group had drawn up, comparing prices, time frames in which the project would be completed, how
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each group had selected the project supervisor, how many translators in each group had been assigned to certain tasks, the resources each group had indicated were necessary to complete the job, how each group had established terminology databases, and how proofreaders and editors from each group would finalize the project. Students received a group grade for their project based on a set of rubrics that included all the components of the project. In this case, since the actual translation was not done, the learning outcomes guided the rubrics. These outcomes included each group’s needs analysis, team formation, translation process, and, very high on the scale, the professionalism of their correspondence and my response to the way each group demonstrated their expertise.

Learning Outcomes

Phase 1

Students were prepared for the task by having a sample project to use as a guideline for working on large projects. They also had the advantage of having read numerous articles on translation and what is expected of translators. They also were given a code of ethics for professional business practices, and taught how various aspects, including grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence must be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to accept a translation (Mason, 7).

Phase 2

The needs analysis that each group carried out through asking questions and compiling answers afforded many insights into what translators have to consider when preparing a project. The questions each group asked are too numerous to list here, so I have selected those questions that prompted more classroom discussion, and questions and answers which students felt had taught them more about working on large projects in a team environment.

“When would you like this document completed?” All of the groups asked this question, but most students acted negatively to the use of the word “document” in this question. They stating that the client would feel offended that a book-length manuscript, probably taking years to develop, had been demoted to a “document.” They said doing so would make it seem like the agency thought the client’s work was insignificant, and would be disrespectful to the client’s mission of disseminating information gathered over many years of hard work.

“Are there any previous translations of the book, or do you have a bilingual glossary of lawn care terminology you have used in the past that you could lend us to assure consistency in the use of terminology?” Only two groups asked this question. What the other groups learned was that although there were no prior translations nor glossaries, there was a long-term employee who knew the terminology in the target language that the company’s president was going to use as a proofreader to make sure that the correct terminology had been used. The two groups who asked this question changed their bid contracts after the president offered this in-house employee as a resource person for terminology use. Having such a person would cut down on the time spent verifying terminology.

“Do we have an option of taking a one-time payment for the translation, or an option to lower the cost of the translation in order to get royalties on the sale of the book?” Only one group asked this question. The company president answered back that the agency was being hired only to translate the book, and would have to forego royalties. However, the president also stated that the agency’s contract would include a first-option clause, thus giving them rights to translate any re-editions of the book or to translate it into other languages.

“How will you send us the text to be translated, and in what format would you like to receive the translation?” All groups asked the second part of this question, to which the president answered back that the final version should be submitted in Word 2000 for a PC. Only one group asked how they would receive the text. During the course I had explained that translation was a “receiving/producing” task, and that there were many ways in which a text could be delivered (by mail, fax, electronic submission, etc.). In this case, the company president responded that the text would be sent in electronic format, in Word 2000, which prompted the team who had asked the question to immediately consider using TRADOS® to speed up the translation process and to establish a terminology database. Coincidentally, this was the same group who had asked about royalties, and knowing that they would have a first-option clause for future translations, they also knew that they would have the database for future translations.

Phases 3 and 4

The discrepancies in bids were tremendous, varying by $20,000 from the lowest to the highest. After having seen all the questions and answers and all the other bids, students
rejoined their groups to discuss the results. Each group stated that they would have different quotes because of all of the aspects of the job that they had not previously considered.

**Phase 5**

Not surprisingly, all six groups were able to reflect on the needs analysis. From this, they saw the loopholes in their planning process as recorded in their logs. They saw that they had under-planned in certain areas, and over-planned in others. They did a follow-up report on how their team roles would change according to what they had learned from the other groups, and how their approach to the translation would change.

**Learning Outcomes**

The students were surprised to see that the company president had not selected the least expensive bid. This is where the professionalism of translation providers played a significant role. I eliminated any agency who: a) directed their correspondence to me on a first name basis, b) sent their questions or correspondence via plain e-mail rather than in a file attachment which used their logo and letterhead, or c) had multiple people corresponding with me. My rationale for all three of these reasons was that it showed a lack of professionalism and respect for the client. For instance, one group sent me correspondence from three different people, which, from a client’s perspective, indicated that there was no internal direction, no teamwork, and that the final product might reflect the same.

The final step in this project was to show students all the correspondence from the agency that I had selected to do the translation. This agency responded to my original request for a bid by sending a letter on company letterhead (with their logo on it), which included an introductory statement about their agency and what services they offered, in addition to a statement thanking me for my request for a bid. They followed up with questions that indicated to me, as a consumer, that this agency had experience. As a result, I felt comfortable that they knew all aspects of how they could best serve my request. Their bid, which was in the middle range of bids I received, offered a discount on any future translations (this was the agency that would have received a first-option clause in their contract). Upon seeing the correspondence, the other groups agreed that this agency’s overall response to the bid was by far superior. It showed a team approach to the project, it acknowledged the client’s mission and needs, and it was professionally superior to the other groups’ bids.

**Conclusion**

Collaborative projects require an active engagement in learning. As professor, my role is to initiate the students into the linguistic awareness and engagement of an unknown discourse (i.e., translation). Through this group project, students formed learning communities of knowledge where their team efforts changed them from passive learners into creators of their own knowledge. This approach carries a dual benefit. Not only do students learn how to work individually and as a team, thereby enhancing their communication and translation skills, but the instructor also gains insight into how this learning is achieved (Goodsell, 4).

**Notes**

1. Students who have a level of proficiency to translate into the other languages that we teach in the department (Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Italian) may also take this class.

2. The certificate program requires students to take a total of 27 credit hours, of which 15 credit hours must be in the target language, terminology, and culture skills, and where French, German, or Spanish is the language of instruction. Students are also required to take an upper level course in writing English and complete a translation internship or an individual translation project.

3. At the 2001 MICATA conference I attended, a seminar discussed who becomes the owner of the database when computer-assisted translation is used. I suggested this as a research project for my students, since copyrighted materials were part of another project we did when we worked on TRADOS® in class.

**References**


In August 2001, I was hired as an assistant professor of Spanish, French, and translation/interpreting in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. I obtained my Licenciatura en lengua y literatura inglesa, traduccion e interpretacion at the University of Havana, Cuba, and had worked on and off at international events, both in Cuba and abroad, for several years, always trying to keep my “day job” as a professor at the Havana College of Foreign Languages and Havana University.

Once in the U.S., I worked as an interpreter for several years in medical and court/legal settings, eventually becoming certified as a federal court interpreter. I brought this experience to the University of Nebraska at Kearney, full of dreams and goals and still under the influence of my previous work, training, and love for teaching and translating. To my surprise, one of the first things that I noticed in Nebraska was the absence of translator/interpreter positions at hospitals, courts, and other settings where work with foreign languages, especially Spanish, is done regularly.

Upon further research, I found that not only were these absences caused by a lack of understanding among the general public as to the value of hiring qualified language professionals, but that this ignorance was resulting in potentially dangerous outcomes. For example, I found an article in the newspaper where a police sergeant and a correctional officer were praised for their “translation and interpreting” work with suspects, prisoners, and defendants’ relatives! In the article, both officers were described as “bilingual” and, of course, had “ethnic” last names. Unfortunately, stories like this are very common. In clinics and hospital settings, patients’ relatives, sometimes even their little children, are called upon to translate or interpret. There are other instances where people, such as office workers or even maintenance personnel, have been entrusted with critical translation or interpreting work simply because they happened to speak another language. Through my research, I also found that little has been done to correct the misperception that speaking another language automatically qualifies someone to provide language services...

...Little has been done to correct the misperception that speaking another language automatically qualifies someone to provide language services...

Another source of ad hoc translating/interpreting services comes from volunteers. There was one case I learned about involving a Spanish-speaking lady who was being given translation work. When I inquired from her if she was being paid, she confessed that she received no payment since she was not yet authorized to work in the United States! In the meantime, the lady told me she was learning the profession, and perhaps she could do such work for payment once her INS status was defined. Many laws, regulations, and directives are being violated in this respect on a daily basis?

The objective of this article is not to criticize individuals or institutions, but to strive to make the general public aware of the shortcomings and misunderstandings our profession is still experiencing in many parts of this country. Translators and interpreters must be made aware of the need to raise the status of our professionalism through achieving accreditation or certification. This fact will help to eventually do away with the situations I have just described.

There are many reasons for not acknowledging the need for professional translators. Such factors include a lack of knowledge about our profession, financial considerations (such as tight budgets, “frozen” positions for hire, etc.), the unavailability of certified translators/interpreters and, perhaps worst of all, ignorance regarding violations of the law and other regulations when untrained and unqualified people are called upon to do such important work (even though such individuals may have the best intentions and are really trying to help). Imagine the consequences for the foreign language speaker that could result from such unprofessional activities: imprisonment, incorrectly booking a suspect, the release of a true criminal, stiff or too lenient sentences, prescribing inappropriate medications or the wrong treatment, or even death!

In view of the realities described above, I rationalize that we must work to dispel the common myth that our profession is inherent with a certain sense of “glamour” that comes with working at conferences, international events, and well-known transnational organizations such as the UNO, OAS, NATO, and so forth. Our goals for training future interpreters and translators should be more pragmatic, down-to-earth, and achievable. The following discusses what is being done in this respect in the area of community translation/interpreting (CTI).
The University of Nebraska at Kearney is proud to be one of the very few undergraduate programs in the U.S. to have a longstanding program in translation/interpreting. Starting with the next academic year, this program will be strengthened by adding one semester of interpreting to the existing one, in addition to two semesters of general, medical, and legal translation. This will result in a total of four semester courses, including translation/interpreting from and into English and from and into a foreign language. Some of the students in the program are already taking two foreign languages, which could become a requirement for specializing as a CTI in the future.

What is a CTI? Regarding the role of interpreting, Mary Phelan states:

…the need for Community and Court interpreters has increased dramatically…Community interpreting will be the next growth area. There is a widespread need for community interpreting to be recognized, for courses to be set up at the university level, and for community interpreters to gain recognition (Phelan, 2001).

Further on, Phelan defines the concept, still referring to interpreters:

Community or public service interpreting is provided face to face and over the phone in the spheres of health, social services, the law, and education…Public service interpreting is the term used in the United Kingdom. Most other countries use the term community interpreting…In some countries community interpreting includes court interpreting. In others, court interpreting is regarded as a separate specialty. In the United States and Canada, medical interpreting is fast becoming a specialized area, too (Phelan, 2001).

For Schweda, “community interpreting” could be used as an all-inclusive term, but she adds that: “…court and community interpretation are often differentiated because court interpretation has enjoyed much attention and has greatly expanded (especially in the United States District Courts…)” (Nicholson, 1994).

I would add “translating” to the conceptual definitions above, since in some areas of the U.S. it would be utopian to train and hire interpreters who cannot translate and translators who cannot interpret. This very phenomenon was taken into consideration when devising plans for our enhanced undergraduate program at Kearney. One cannot afford the luxury to hire an interpreter/translator who tells his or her client in court, in a detention center, at a hospital, or at a social agency, “Sorry, but I can only interpret/translate into English. You will need someone else to interpret/translate into X language.”

In our case, and in areas like Nebraska, Iowa, the Dakotas, Kansas, and so forth, a CTI must be able to convey messages bilaterally and in all kinds of settings and scenarios. Since simultaneous interpreting is a subspecialty of the general field of interpreting (just as literary translation is one of translation), this type of training will be dealt with as part of the graduate program. Nevertheless, not all interpreters like or feel comfortable about doing simultaneous interpretation. This is the same situation that occurs with translators who do not attempt literary translation because it is difficult, complex, and does not pay enough. As a matter of fact, only at international events where English is not the lingua franca, and the budget is very generous, have I seen consecutive interpretation into English or a foreign language, or simultaneous interpretation into English or a foreign language, and so forth, performed by different interpreters.

Therefore, it is our duty, as translators, interpreters, language teachers, and language-related professionals, to help correct the situations outlined above. To achieve such goals, in my opinion, we must:

• Contribute to create a general awareness that personnel used for translation/interpreting must be professional, not improvised “helpers.” Such individuals, unfortunately, can do more harm than good, and create the opportunity for possible legal action against those who encourage such “free” services!

• Continue developing (and, in some cases, start developing) the specialty of CTI or even the specialist of the future: a professional capable of rendering his or her services in at least three settings (medical, social, and court/law enforcement). This is the equivalent of what, in other job markets, is referred to as a “multifaceted, multitask specialist.”

• Devise special graduate courses for the CTI who is already gaining on-the-job experience: bilateral interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, literary translation, computer-assisted translation, and so forth. This is especially necessary in areas in the Midwest and where specialized graduate courses, like those offered at a handful of U.S. universities (Masters in Translation, New York; Masters in Legal...
To find out more about any of the organizations described here, please visit their respective websites:

• Institute of Translation & Interpreting: www.iti.org.uk
• Irish Translators’ and Interpreters’ Association: http://homepage.tinet.ie/~translation
• Institute of Linguists: www.iol.org.uk

Encourage our graduates, young and old, who form part of the large army of translators and interpreters in the U.S., to become accredited and certified in order to add to the prestige and respect (and pay) which are long overdue in our professions. (Groups such as ATA and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators as well as, occasionally, some state courts, offer such tests.)

Recognition and due respect will only be achieved inasmuch as our important work and profession are known, sought out, and acknowledged by the very society we serve: doctors, judges, attorneys, managers, defendants, educators, social workers, and many others who, sooner or later, will require our services.

References


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International Certification Study: U.K. and Ireland Continued from p.14

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In the next issue, we will visit the second largest nation of South America and see the challenges faced by Argentine translators and interpreters. 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.

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Problems in Theatrical Translation: The Bilingual Text

By Phyllis Zatlin

Theatrical translation always poses special difficulties because of the desire to make the oral text readily accessible to the target audience. Those difficulties may be compounded when the source text itself is bilingual or multilingual. At one end of the spectrum of possibilities for bilingual plays are scripts with characters who ostensibly speak different languages, although their lines are written entirely in the spectator’s language. At the opposite end are works written in two languages without any expectation that the spectators will understand both. Between these two extremes, which may require relatively little modification on the translator’s part, there are numerous levels of linguistic games that the translator needs to address with imagination.

Two illustrations of monolingual plays with bilingual characters are José Rivera’s The House of Ramón Iglesias and Ignacio del Moral’s La mirada del hombre oscuro. Rivera’s play involves a Puerto Rican family living near New York City. The protagonist, Javier, has rejected Puerto Rican cultural values, including bilingualism, as inferior. The action in Ignacio del Moral’s play takes place on an isolated beach in Spain where a comically racist Spanish family discovers two Africans, one dead and one alive, who have washed ashore. One of the men, Ombasi, knows only a few words of Spanish and his dead friend, who also has a speaking role, apparently knows none.

Rivera, writing for a mainstream American audience, deliberately avoids the use of Spanish on stage. The spectators are to understand that Javier’s mother speaks only Spanish, “although we hear her words in English. Characters who do not speak Spanish cannot understand her” (Rivera, 197). Other characters, whether they understand her or not, speak English. The stage direction, “It should be clear that Dolores is speaking in Spanish throughout the play” (Rivera, 197), places the responsibility on the actors, through the use of gestures and facial expressions, to convey this bilingualism without actually using two languages on stage. In a situation like this, Susan Bassnett’s advice to theatrical translators is apropos:

Once we accept that the written text is not fundamental to the performance but is merely one element in an eventual performance, then this means that the translator, like the writer, need not be concerned with how that written text is going to integrate into the other sign systems. That is a task for the director and the actors. (Bassnett, 99)

Del Moral’s approach in La mirada del hombre oscuro is basically the same as Rivera’s. While the latter, as a bilingual living in a country with 25 million Spanish-speaking residents, might have assumed that at least some of his spectators would understand Spanish, Del Moral could make no such assumption in Spain about his audience’s familiarity with African languages. Therefore, the other actors must react to Ombasi’s Spanish lines as if they were incomprehensible. Repeatedly interspersed for comic effect in his lines directed to the family are the one word and two names in Spanish that he does know: “¡Viva España! ¡Butragueño!” In the original text, Ombasi’s Spanish is set off by italics and, according to the stage directions, are to contrast with his fluent native language by being pronounced “con un acento endiablado.” (Moral, 15)

In Dark Man’s Gaze, Jartu Toles’s translation of La mirada del hombre oscuro, the pseudo-bilingualism issue was easily resolved. All Spanish simply became all English, and the responsibility for conveying a lack of cultural and linguistic understanding remains with the actors. On the other hand, the reference to Butragueño did pose a problem. The translator opted to change this soccer figure to a Spanish tennis player who might be better known to American audiences. Thus, in his terrible accent, Ombasi repeatedly says, “Viva Spain! Sánchez Vicario!” A director staging the play might revise the name to that of the best-known Spanish sports star of the moment.

Far removed from the Rivera and Del Moral texts are plays specifically written for a bilingual audience. An excellent illustration is Dolores Prida’s Coser y cantar, “A One-Act Bilingual Fantasy for Two Women.” The Cuban-American author states in an important prefatory note: “This play is really one long monologue. The two women are one and are playing a verbal, emotional game of ping pong.” Prida strongly affirms that the “play must NEVER be performed in just one language” (Prida, 49).

In essence, the roles in this two-actor play, “ELLA, una mujer” and “SHE, the same woman” (Prida, 49), are not so much a divided self as they are two complementary halves of the character. Each speaks in her language...
of preference, reflects the culture associated with that language, and, throughout most of the action, pretends that the other character does not exist. Sometimes one character’s speech may provide a translation, or at least partially clarify the content, of what the other character said in the other language:

SHE: (SHE goes to her dressing table, sits down, takes pen and paper.) I’ll make a list of all the things I must do. Let’s see. I should start from the inside…. Number one, clean the house...

ELLA: (Still eating) Uno, limpiar la casa.

SHE: Two, take the garbage out.

ELLA: Dos, sacar la basura.

SHE: Then, do outside things. After running, I have to do something about El Salvador.

ELLA: Salvar a El Salvador. (Prida, 52)

More typically there is no connection between a line of dialogue and the one that follows. The opening speeches provide an example:

ELLA: (With contained exasperation.) ¿Por qué haces eso? ¡Sabes que no me gusta que hagas eso! Detesto que me interrumpas así. ¡Yo no te interrumpo cuando tú te imaginas que eres Barbra Streisand!

SHE: (To herself, looking for her watch.) What time is it? (Finds watch.) My God, twelve thirty! The day half-gone and I haven’t done a thing….

(Prida, 51)

The underlying assumption in Prida’s more or less equal use of two languages is that her audience will understand both. When the Spanish playwright Juan Mayorga wrote his two-character El traductor de Blumemberg, he had no expectation that his audience would understand the many German lines introduced in his text. Indeed, he has stated that, for him, the ideal spectator will not speak German. The actor playing Calderón, whose own few words of German should be spoken with a heavy Spanish accent, has the responsibility of conveying the meaning of Blumemberg’s fluent German lines through gestures and actions that clarify the context. The spectator must then fill in the blanks. Mayorga suggests that the strategy is similar to that of a telephone conversation within a monologue: the spectator hears only one side of the conversation, but yet grasps what has been said on the other end of the line (personal interview).

The original version of El traductor de Blumemberg was given a professional staged reading in Madrid in March 1994. It did not receive its first full production until August 2000, in Buenos Aires. Mayorga recalls that the Spanish audience did not have trouble following the text, even though they did not understand the German. The real problem in Spain is finding a cooperative actor who can deliver authentic German pronunciation with ease. That actor must also create Blumemberg’s accent in Spanish: Argentinean pronunciation with a German flavor. The character Blumemberg is a philosopher whose anti-Semitic, racist ideas supposedly influenced Hitler, the only reader of his last book. After years of exile in Argentina, Blumemberg has returned to Europe where Calderón has been hired by the unseen Silesius to translate the lost book into Castillian Spanish. In Argentina, where both Jews and Nazis sought refuge before or after the Second World War, one can assume that more members of the audience than in Spain would, indeed, be Spanish-German bilinguals. The role of Blumemberg was played by the German-Jewish-Argentinean actor Rubén Schumacher:

In El traductor de Blumemberg, Mayorga uses three strategies with respect to the lines in German and, to a lesser extent, in French. (In the opening scene, where the German writer and his Spanish translator meet on a train, Blumemberg is disguised as a blind French toy salesman.) For some expressions in the foreign language, the other character provides an immediate, consecutive interpretation, usually delivered as a question. For example, to Blumemberg’s “Travail,” Calderón thus responds “¿Trabajo?” (Mayorga, 3); to the former’s “Noch night,” Calderón’s rejoinder is “¿Todavía no?” (Mayorga, 27). At other times, the action clarifies the meaning. Such is the case in the following moment from the first scene in the train:

Calderon: Pues no estamos con luz eléctrica pudiendo…(Descorre la cortina de la ventana.)

Blumemberg: (Reaccionando al ruido de la cortina.) J’aime mieux la laisser comme ça.

Calderon: (Corriendo la cortina.) Perdón, perdón. Claro, por los ojos.

(Mayorga, 2)

Spectators who do not understand Blumemberg’s line in French will nevertheless know that when Calderón immediately closes the curtain it is because the other man complained when he opened it to let in some light.

However, El traductor de Blumemberg does include some
passages in German that are never directly clarified for the benefit of spectators who do not understand them. Sometimes these lines can be guessed from the context, but at other moments, like those when Blumemberg is dictating from the book that now exists only in his mind, no effort is made to explain the meaning. Calderón merely keeps typing.

This silence does not mean that the content of Blumemberg’s book is insignificant. One main theme of the play is fascism and, by implication, the menace of neo-Naziism in Spain as elsewhere.3 Through Calderón’s translation, the mysterious Silesius wants to disseminate Blumemberg’s appalling ideas to new readers. From the perspective of translation studies, the other main theme of Mayorga’s text is of special interest. It provides an ongoing discussion of the author-translator relationship and the process of translation. Blumemberg wishes to control Calderón entirely, but gradually Calderón usurps the text with the intention of destroying it to protect the children who might be affected by its venom. The dialogue related to translation ranges from this broad, ethical question to specifics on how to approach the source text. The translator is understandably upset when he learns that he will not be able to read the book in its entirety before beginning his work. This translation will be done sentence by sentence as the author dictates his book from memory.

Mayorga has clearly marked the path to be taken by any translator of his play. The German, like the brief passages of French, should be retained in the original language. The translator’s task is thus limited to the Spanish. Whether American audiences would be as receptive to this kind of bilingual game as Argentinean and Spanish audiences have been is, of course, debatable.

In this respect, David Edney’s commentary on late 20th-century experiments in bilingual theater in Canada are of particular interest. Asserting that translation is not always necessary, he writes about collaborating in a bilingual production of Molière’s Les Fourberies de Scapin, “in which unilingual spectators from both language groups were unable to understand part of what was being said” (Edney, 234). Similarly, David Fennario’s Balconville, which features four francophone and four anglophone characters whose households have adjacent balconies, has been staged with no attempt to render dialogue in either language intelligible to unilingual speakers of the other language. Nevertheless, Fennario’s text has been performed successfully, without spectator complaints, in English Canada and in Great Britain (Edney, 235).

Since 1979, following the success of the experiment with Balconville, Edney reports that there have been other bilingual and multilingual productions in Canada. For example, La Troupe du Jour, a French-language company in the predominantly English-speaking city of Saskatoon, has mounted several bilingual plays. For Molière’s Scapin, the effect of the linguistic games was farcical, but at other times the Saskatoon company’s intent has been serious, political commentary. Romeo & Juliette, in which the Capulets are francophone and the Montagues are anglophone, reflects the potential tragic results of Canadian duality and its clash of cultures. In the case of these classic works, we may speak of free adaptations, involving some translation, rather than theatrical translation per se.

With reference to the bilingual text of Scapin, Edney describes a range of techniques, some of which we have already noted in Prida’s Coser y cantar and Mayorga’s El traductor de Blumemberg. Once again, when “languages are used in alternation, a speaker sometimes repeats in translation the words just spoken while answering or commenting on them in the other language” (Edney, 236). Without breaking psychological realism, English explanations were interpolated into the original French text. For example:

Argente: (Thinking he is alone) ‘Je voudrais savoir ce qu’ils me pourront dire sur ce beau mariage.’

Scapin: (Aside) ‘We’ve thought of something to say about this fine marriage.’

(Edney, 236)

Edney clarifies that the company also developed two overt theatricalist techniques for doubling: “the instant replay and the action loop” (Edney, 237). In the former case, the actors freeze, back up to their previous location, and replay the passage in the other language. In the second case, the strategy is less opaque. The actors move naturally to the previous location and repeat, in the other language, without a break.

The experimentation in Europe of Cuban-French playwright Eduardo Manet is somewhat related to the strategies defined by Edney for bilingual theater in Canada. Like Prida, Manet was born in Cuba, has lived in exile for most of his life, and writes primarily in his second language. Typically he plays bilingual, bicultural games in his theater. Like Mayorga, Manet often focuses directly on the role of translator or interpreter.
In his boisterous, Brechtian farce, *Un Balcon sur les Andes*, Manet creates a troupe of actors who, as political refugees from France in the 19th century, escape to Latin America. In the early scenes, they do not yet speak Spanish and therefore perform in French. A spectator, who learned French from prostitutes, volunteers his services and provides a running simultaneous interpretation for the benefit of the Spanish-speaking audience. Gradually, the actors themselves become bilingual performers. The meaning of the Spanish lines, provided for the fictional audience’s benefit, will be clear to the real French-speaking audience, but will be played for comic effect.

In another of Manet’s metatheatrical farces, *L’Autre Don Juan*, French actors are performing a translation of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón’s Golden Age comedy, *Las paredes oyen*. Ignoring time and space, Alarcón is acting with the troupe. Outraged by the director’s changes in the staging of his text, he begins delivering his lines in the original Spanish. The desperate director intervenes with consecutive and then simultaneous interpretation to French.

Another extended use of multilingual games is present in Manet’s *Lady Strass*. The action takes place in Belize. His three characters are Bertrand, a middle-aged Frenchman; Manuel, a young Guatemalan; and Mrs. Eliane Parkington Simpson, an elderly Englishwoman. The two men are would-be thieves who break into an apparently abandoned house, whose reclusive owner greets them with a drawn shotgun. The original text is written dominantly in French, but with a fairly steady stream of English and Spanish expressions. Spanish, in particular, is characteristically used for interjections and obscenities.

One may theorize that bilingual authors, like Prida and Manet, use both languages in their texts as a way of expressing their own divided self. In that respect, Manuel Sierra may indeed speak for his author. The Guatemalan is a native speaker of Spanish who must communicate in French. Spanish comes through when he is most puzzled, upset, or hostile. An example is the dialogue in the opening scene, when the two men are breaking into the home of the eccentric British lady:

Voix de Manuel: Tu es là, alors saute, **cojones**. Il pleut des cordes, je vais attraper la crève! (Manet, 10; underline is mine)

Or, when they first hear the voice of Eliane, who issues her warning in three languages:

Voix D’Éliane: Don’t move! Ne bougez pas! No se muevan! You are under surveillance! Estais siendo vigilados! Manuel: Qu’arrive-t’il, madre de Dios? (Manet, 10)

My favorite example, and no doubt that of Manet himself, comes when Bertrand and Manuel discover that they are trapped inside the house:

Manuel: Puta y reputa de la chingada de su madre! (Manet, 14)

As translator of *Lady Strass*, my inclination was to leave Spanish expressions in Spanish and incorporate French expressions of similar kind and frequency to compensate for the loss of English expressions within the original French text. However, when the play was scheduled for staging at Ubu Repertory Theater in New York City, Ubu’s artistic director, Françoise Kourilsky, requested that I delete all uses of Spanish and French. The now defunct Ubu Repertory, which for many years specialized in staging French and francophone plays in translation, had a firm policy of English and English only. Fortunately, from my point of view, play director André Ernotte, aided by bilingual actor Robert Jimenez in the role of Manuel, recommended a compromise. I was to leave the French out, but could put back some Spanish. As a result, the “puta y reputa” line evoked loud laughter, thus putting the audience in the proper mood for the comic aspects of the tragicomedy.

In theater, the bilingual author’s divided self may be represented linguistically, thus posing a...
particular challenge to the translator. But the challenges in theater can never be fully resolved by the translator alone. Deliberate multilingual games call upon the full and creative cooperation of director and actors, as well as a receptive audience.

Notes
1. Mayorga has kindly made available to me both the third version of *El traductor de Blumemberg* (manuscript dated March 2001) and an intermediate version. My analysis of the play is based primarily on the third version; page numbers in the text refer to this unpublished manuscript. This playscript is shorter in comparison to both the original text and the earlier revision; the use of German has therefore been somewhat reduced. The staging in Argentina was directed by Guillermo Heras at the Teatro Cervantes.

2. Mayorga initially learned his German in the classroom. He studied at the Goethe Institute in Spain, took courses in East Germany, and wrote his doctoral dissertation on Walter Benjamin. He has spent periods of time in Berlin and other parts of Germany. While he acquired his knowledge of German through the academic route, there are German-Spanish bilinguals in Spain: children of Spaniards who emigrated to Germany or Switzerland in the early 1960s to seek employment and later returned to their native country.

3. The xenophobia of Joerg Haider’s neo-Nazi party in Austria and of the extreme right, headed by Jean-Marie LePen, in France, as well as racist assaults in the U.K. have been well documented in the American press. Less publicized are the counterpart activities in Spain. By 1998, Paul Whitehall, working with Internet sources, had already established the existence of a movement that is smaller in scope in Spain, but that reflects the same ideology. An Associated Press release in August 2001, “Neo-Nazi Views Cross Borders,” emphasizes the ease with which the ideology of the far right travels because of the Internet and the open borders “that were supposed to encourage an exchange of democratic ideas.”

Works Cited


I'd just finished a translation that had kept me up for a couple of nights, and was feeling light-headed and punchy. Then the phone rang, and I let them talk me into another project.

There were two bulky stacks of papers, bulldog clips straining at the top. Photocopies of newspaper articles, hundreds of them, from a far-away land. I had no idea how many words there were in those stacks, but the translation was needed the day after tomorrow. A brutal marathon. But an excellent price. As I said, I was feeling punchy.

It was late on the second night, which was now four nights in a row with far too little sleep. I sat peering at my screen, eyeballs poaching in pools of lava, optic nerves like tracer bullets vanishing into the black void. The words came stumbling slowly, heavily, clumsily, up from the darkness and into the light. The room suddenly shuddered, like a ship run aground. I shuddered, like a ship run aground. I couldn't understand. I said, “excuse me?” He held up a thick stack of papers and said, “Tra-sle-chon?”

I nodded and held up my own bulky stacks. He smiled even more broadly and pointed at the sign over the door we were facing. “Okay,” he said, and walked on through. The sign said Ministry of Translation. I stepped over the threshold and saw several other doors across the room, one with a sign that said: “Hispanish Province.”

Beyond the door was a tunnel that led to a cavernous hall with an immensely high arched ceiling supported on gray-green metal girders that looked like butterfly wings. A watery light from somewhere else filtered through the grimy panes of glass above. It looked as though it was getting ready to rain. There were tellers’ windows all around the walls, each one with brass bars and a number across the top. People were coming and going from the windows in silence, handing in large disks, or collecting them and walking away. I saw that I also had a large disk in my hand and on it was written, in large letters, 1638-H/E-L. The window nearest me was 79-H/P-T, so I started walking in the direction of the number on my disk. It seemed to be the thing to do.

As I walked I noticed that some of the people around me were machines—that is, they were those amazing new models from robotics, but really high quality ones (you can tell). Actually, now that I looked more carefully, there were lots of them around, far more than I remembered. And, of course, they were all dressed in everything imaginable, since they were machine translators, or mach-Trans as we call them. I’d seen a few of the earlier models here and there, usually at Zodiac Eleven conferences, but I’d never seen such a large crowd of my new mach-peers all together.

I finally found 1638-H/E-L and got in line. The person in front of me turned around and I saw that she was an exquisitely crafted mach-Tran wearing jeans and a pea jacket. She smiled and a movie played briefly in her eyes. I was enchanted. “Literally traductions?” she enquired. It took me a second but then I got it and said, “Yes, I do literary translation. Poetry. And you?”

“Me too also!” she beamed. “Looky, Pamblo Nehruda!” She reached into an inner pocket of her jacket and pulled out some worn sheets of paper. “Paper!” she exclaimed proudly, and showed me her translation. It was the most appalling piece of work I’d ever read in my entire life, an insult to poets and their readers everywhere. I wept and she misunderstood and said warmly, “Thanks to you. Yours teardrop to comma a movement at it the waiting room.”

When at last I stood at the window, I looked through the bars at the machine’s head silhouetted against the light coming from the domed ceiling of his booth. He was a Mach-prO, one of the machine translators working for the Ministry. These guys were the latest thing. I cleared my throat. “Good evening, I’m here to deliver my translation.”

The Mach-prO slid his long fingers through the bars and wriggled them. “Lessee,” he whispered. He pulled my disk up to his face and scrutinized it closely. “Hhmmm.” He slipped it into a slot beneath the windowsill and watched a screen I couldn’t see. Suddenly he winced, then pursed his lips and shook his head, frowning. “Like a people!” he screeched. “Basic in never un-what-we-say!” He handed me my disk and a receipt in an envelope and said,

Continued on p.35
The Joys of Impartiality

By Arlene M. Kelly

Maintaining impartiality is one of the most controversial aspects of court interpreting, befuddling novices and non-interpreter colleagues alike. Many newcomers to the profession of legal interpreting may have interpreted for family and friends, or aided employers with clients on the telephone or over the counter. If so, they may have felt compelled to place the personal interests of relatives, friends, and employers above all else. It is difficult for interpreters to remain unbiased in these situations, especially when sharing a close link to the individuals they are trying to help. However, professional legal interpreters must leave behind or unlearn this behavior. Unfortunately, situations involving biased interpreting are fairly common in the legal profession, at times resulting in serious consequences.

On the whole, judges, attorneys, and service providers have little understanding of the duties of a legal interpreter. Since in the past these individuals may have depended on interpreting assistance from bilingual janitors, cleaning help, the relatives of their clients, indeed anyone who claimed to be an interpreter, they are often surprised when they encounter a professional interpreter. Some may react belligerently at first, because they have a misguided expectation that “their” interpreter will do their bidding. Many are not acquainted with the professional codes of legal interpreters, nor have they undergone training to learn how to work effectively with interpreters. Unfortunately, there are some interpreter agencies out there that do nothing to discourage their clients’ false perceptions regarding the duties and ethical responsibilities of a professional legal interpreter. In fact, there are those agencies that lead clients to believe that the interpreters on their staff will “help” them. It is an alliance I have seen at work, but of course this is totally contrary to professional court interpreter ethics.

The ability to maintain neutrality while working is at the legal interpreter’s core, securing all other talents and abilities. Neutrality, impartiality, and keeping one’s emotional feelings or political leanings out of the business at hand will ultimately reward the interpreter not only with a well-done work product, but also with the opportunity to work untainted by former alliances. To emphasize the importance of neutrality in a professional interpreting situation, the following outlines a hypothetical court case in which any outward show of partiality could have affected the interpreter’s ability to do her job effectively. The case described does not necessarily reflect any actual situation.

This scenario involves a young girl, probably in her early 20s, who, as the victim in this case, requested a restraining order against her foster father (the defendant), claiming physical and verbal abuse. The girl was extremely upset and asked that the interpreter help her with the affidavit (in this case, a written statement describing the events that provoked the request for a restraining order).

The girl stated that although she could speak English fairly well, she could not write English. In turn, the interpreter called on the victim-witness advocate to assist the girl, whose English seemed to be fine.

In a less ideal situation, a hapless, “helpful” interpreter might have written out the affidavit for the girl, opening the gate for future problems. This interpreter, however, remained present to assist in the event that communication between the parties proved difficult. In the weeks to follow, the same girl returned twice to complain that the restraining order had been violated. The local police had arrested her foster father both times on these violations. The second time the foster father was arrested, the judge decreed that he be held without bail until a trial could be held or a plea entered (in which the defendant admits to sufficient facts supporting the complaint against him, or changes his initial plea of not guilty to one of guilty). Subsequently, a trial was scheduled in a district court in Massachusetts for charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

It just so happened that a student was shadowing the interpreter on the day of the trial. While waiting for court to begin, the interpreter and student overheard people speaking the target language in the audience. It should be stated that the interpreter had never met any of the participants, except the victim. The interpreter went over to the group of people, two women and a man, to introduce herself and discover: 1) if they required an interpreter’s assistance, and 2) if they were involved with the case set for trial. Both women were excited and happy to discover someone speaking their language, however, the young man was more reserved. At this point, the participants in the case...
began to emerge: one lady was the wife of the defendant; the other was her sister. The young man was the nephew of both women, and had traveled from California where he was living and where the wife had been staying before the trial. Both women were very anxious to talk to the interpreter, and began to ask questions about the defendant and his possibilities for going home that day.

Here is another obstacle that interpreters must overcome: introductions. Defendants, their friends, and family members usually want to talk about the case and explain all the mitigating factors leading to their present situation. Calmly, politely, but firmly, the interpreter needs to begin to set the limits of her responsibilities. Explanations should be allotted to attorneys or prosecutors. The interpreter needs to make it clear that she has no advance knowledge of the outcome of a case. The interpreter cannot advise anyone concerning the competency of any attorney or the advisability of any action. The interpreter will transmit everything said, but only what is truly said, from one language to the other, including profanity, insults, and asides. There are to be no private conversations between the defendant and the interpreter without another officer of the court present.

At this point, one’s desire to be liked and accepted may receive a few blows. Oftentimes, people will react negatively when the interpreter refuses to discuss the case with them, perceiving this as an indication of the interpreter’s unwillingness to listen. Faces will scrunch into frowns and disparaging comments may be heard. This is all part of the normal state of affairs. Grin, smile, or remain passive, and bear it.1

Never tell a defendant that the case will be dismissed, that only fines will be paid, or that any kind of resolution will occur. Interpreters do not know. They usually do not have access to all the information about the charges in a complaint, details about the victim(s), or the past criminal activity of the defendant. Moreover, telling fortunes is not included in the job description for a court interpreter!

So, instead of responding to the doubts and queries of the non-English-speaking parties to the case, the interpreter in this scenario requested them to wait until either the defense attorney or the assistant district attorney were present. Shortly after that, the defense attorney appeared and a conference was held in the hallway. The interpreter introduced the student and asked permission for her to observe. Everybody agreed.

The defense attorney had previously spoken to the wife and sister using the nephew as an interpreter. All three needed instruction regarding proper court interpreting methods, notably the rule about not referring to the interpreter in direct conversation among the parties. It was explained that the speakers should talk to each other as if the interpreter were not there, without using the phrases: “Tell him/her that...,” “Ask her/him whether...,” and so on. Occasionally, the nephew would interject to clarify exactly what he thought his aunt (the wife) wanted to say. Aside from not speaking the other’s language and the intervention of the nephew, conversation between the wife and the defense attorney was hindered due to two other factors. First, the apparent medicated state of the wife, who admitted to taking prescribed tranquilizers, and, second, the slightly inebriated state of the defense attorney, who kept his hand over his mouth and turned his head away from everyone else when he spoke. When the defense attorney was speaking, he would frequently repeat certain words and phrases, sometimes even whole sentences, without waiting for a response.

When any party to a case appears incapacitated due to the consumption of substances, legal or otherwise, or for any other reason, such as illness, the interpreter is not responsible for taking any action or offering any opinions. Attorneys or probation officers may request breathalyzer or other tests to measure alcohol levels in the blood of defendants or others. Unless the situation makes it impossible to carry out his or her duties, the interpreter should take no action. If indeed the interpreter cannot perform the communication duties required, then other personnel will most probably be unable to function as well, and will undertake to remedy the situation if necessary. Such action was not required in the scenario described here.

This was the first time that the defense attorney had spoken directly to the wife using a court interpreter. The wife was being prepared to serve as a witness for the defendant, her husband, who was in custody. Progress with the preparation was extremely slow. Adding to this less than ideal situation, the victim literally swooped into the courthouse, setting the courthouse security and court officers on alert. When the victim saw the group with her foster mother (the wife), she screamed that she would not stay in the same space with her. Her exact words will not be reproduced here. The victim spoke very good English at that moment. She was quickly joined by a victim-witness advocate, who shepherded her to a separate waiting area.

The case was then called, and everybody except the victim and victim-witness advocate moved...
to the courtroom. The defense attorney requested that the case be called again in the courtroom later in the day in order to have time to speak with his client in the lock-up. The wife, sister, and nephew remained in the courtroom while the defense attorney, interpreter, and student descended to the lock-up to meet with the defendant.

The case had begun some months before when the victim claimed the defendant had beaten her. She had taken out a restraining order, a civil procedure, which required her foster father to leave the residence and stay away from her without telephoning or contacting her. While the order was in effect, the foster father returned to the house in violation of the order. He was arrested and charged with this violation. He subsequently violated the restraining order again while free on bail from the first violation (after paying a sum of money considered sufficient to secure his appearance in court for scheduled procedures).

While in the lock-up, the attorney wanted to explain the defendant’s trial rights, including the ramifications of an admission made by someone who was not a U.S. citizen. Although the defendant had attended a few months of school in his native country, he was functionally illiterate (he could sign his name, but could not read a newspaper in his native language). He also frequently called upon God to help him in his tribulations.

The circuitous aspect of the attorney’s conversational style continued, and did nothing to aid either communication or interpretation. The defendant unflaggingly misunderstood what the attorney tried to explain. The attorney always spoke in a formal legal register. This led the interpreter to feel as if she was facilitating communication between two brick walls, neither one ceding to the other’s onslaughts. A suggestion to the attorney to drop the register of his speech was ignored. The session lasted over 45 minutes.

It should be noted here that, although the interpreter normally should not interpose herself in any way, in extreme cases, when communication is at a standstill, a suggestion for improving the situation and enabling communication may be in order. However, the interpreter risks stepping out of her assigned role by doing this, and few situations would require such effort.

When the attorney left to check the status of the prosecution’s case, the student commented that she had the feeling of attending a slow-motion ping-pong game. The student was quite startled by her first experience with the legal system. The interpreter assured her that such convoluted cases are rather rare, but that the importance of remaining impartial was exemplified by the contortions presented in the current case. That the attorney had been drinking was clear, but it was not the interpreter’s role to call attention to that fact or remark on it, even if parties to the case do make comments. In fact, both the wife’s sister and nephew had complained about the lawyer to the interpreter and questioned his professional competence.

The initial overtures of the wife and her sister to tell all and bring the interpreter over to their side, allied against the victim, were politely rebuffed. The interpreter informed them that there was a difference between professional court interpreters and the friends and relatives who had been interpreting for them in the past. She explained to them that, in court, the professional interpreter does not take sides, nor does she remain in the presence of parties to the case unless she is there to interpret. Sometimes, court workers expect interpreters to care for or “babysit” the non-English speakers, but that activity does not form part of the interpreter’s official duties. Some court personnel, even judges, expect interpreters to sit with the defendants, which places the interpreter at risk of seeming partial. Interpreters should insist on separate seating from the general public whenever feasible.

 Unless interpreting or sight translation is in process, the interpreter should remain somewhat distant from the clients. In formal trial situations, this preserves the interpreter’s effectiveness as an interpreter and leaves no room for her to be called as a witness in the case. Once an interpreter has been called as a witness, she can no longer serve as an interpreter on the case. Once an attorney sees an interpreter alone with parties to a case, the attorney may call the interpreter to the stand to testify about any conversations with witnesses. In addition, attorneys will note the interpreter’s partiality, and this could hamper the interpreter’s freelance efforts to perform private jobs in the future and, in extreme cases, be sufficient for dismissal or for other sanctions against the interpreter. And the interpreter does the client no good by betraying impartiality. Although the
situation surrounding district court trials is not always as tense as for superior or federal court, the wise interpreter will guard against risking her position.

When the attorney returned, he informed the interpreter that the assistant district attorney wished to allow the victim a chance to speak with her foster father. Although the victim and the defendant could speak to each other in their own language, this called for simultaneous interpreting into English, unlike at a trial, where simultaneous interpreting usually occurs into the other language for the defendant, or back and forth between languages for witness testimony.

The content of the conversation encouraged the probation officer to recommend that the defendant be granted a continuance without a finding (CWOF) if he made an admission to sufficient facts (ASF). This sort of admission does not mean that the defendant pleads, or says, that he is guilty. To obtain a CWOF, the defendant must waive his rights to either a jury trial or a bench trial (held in front of a judge without a jury). The defendant then listens to the assistant district attorney read the police report and simply agrees that the information it contains describing his activities would be sufficient enough for a judge or jury to think that he was guilty. A CWOF represents the opportunity for a defendant to maintain a clean record, although it is not the equivalent of a direct dismissal or acquittal. Before the judge accepts or rejects the plea offer from the defense and the prosecution, the victim may speak to the court. The victim’s presentation can be made in writing or verbally. This is called an impact statement.

In this case, the victim wanted her chance to speak to the judge and the courtroom about her lack of proper care at the hands of her foster father, and about her medical difficulties. Oddly enough, there was no mention of physical or verbal abuse, or violence, on the part of the defendant. When the judge questioned her about the affidavit she had signed to request the restraining order which had given rise to the case, the victim claimed that the words were not hers but the interpreter’s. The interpreter immediately requested a sidebar (a conversation outside the hearing of all but the judge, attorneys, and stenographer) with the victim. During this conversation, the interpreter reminded the victim that she had no part in writing the affidavit, although the victim-witness advocate had assisted (which is part of the advocate’s duties).

As part of the trial preparation, the defense attorney had requested a records check on the victim, which the probation officer handed to the judge as the victim was speaking. The probation officer indicated to the court that there were several outstanding warrants (arrest orders) for the victim. Warrants can be outstanding when a defendant has failed to appear at a scheduled court date. In this victim’s case, there were several charges that remained open on her record at various courts. So the judge began to question the victim about them. The victim claimed that she had resolved all of them and that the warrants were mistakes. The judge ordered her to remain in the courtroom while the probation officer called the other courts to verify whether they wanted the victim to come to court herself, be taken into custody, or if, indeed, there was a mistake and the cases had been closed but the data not yet entered into the computer system. The victim returned to the audience where she sat with her foster mother, aunt, and cousin before fainting on the bench. An ambulance was called.

The judge proceeded with the colloquy (legal conversation) with the defendant, who had trouble understanding the high register of the judge’s formal language. One of the questions covered the defendant’s education. When the judge discovered that the defendant’s formal education was limited to less than a year, he lowered his register.

The defendant was awarded a CWOF and sentenced to time served. This meant that the judge and assistant district attorney were both satisfied that the time the defendant had spent in jail was sufficient enough for his deserved punishment. However, the defendant was about to learn that he would not be leaving jail, since the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had been told that he was in the country illegally. The INS issued a detainer ordering the state system to hold the defendant in custody until their representatives could arrive to take him to a federal institution. By now the victim regretted the fact that she had “dropped a dime” (informed) on her foster father, but she could not stop the process she had activated. Court officers requested the interpreter to remain until they had contacted federal authorities, so that she could explain to the defendant what would be happening to him. While the interpreter and student were in the lock-up anteroom, the victim arrived, shackled and...
escorted by a female court officer who had accompanied her to the hospital. The courts issuing the warrants evidently wanted the victim’s presence assured, and had requested that she be transported, for free, by the state authorities. Once the victim arrived at the lock-up facility, she was able to communicate with her foster father, so there was no longer any need for the interpreter to remain. As the interpreter departed, the victim and the defendant consoled each other from their respective cells.

How many pitfalls did this case provide for the unwary interpreter? Which way would the interpreter who wants to “help her people” turn? Would she have written the statement for the victim’s restraining order request? Would the interpreter have assured the wife that all would be well and that her husband would be released from jail, as she so dearly wished? Would the interpreter have said harsh words about the victim, after she swooped into the vestibule of the courthouse and shouted insulting statements at the wife, aunt, and cousin? Would she have grimaced at the smell emanating from the attorney’s breath? Would she have commented to the clients about the apparently unethical behavior of the lawyer? Would she have become impatient at the lack of communication between the defendant and his attorney in the lock-up? How about the defendant’s confusion during the colloquy; would the interpreter have edited the answers, smoothing them?

Novice interpreters frequently attempt to improve their countrymen’s or clients’ situations. One difficulty arises from their lack of knowledge about all facets of the case and the personalities of the people involved, as well as the demands of the legal system. Many novice interpreters resist the admonition from the code of professional ethics to remain neutral and impartial. They believe that the interpreter ought to “help” the clients through the steps of a court appearance. This position is patronizingly insulting to the clients and unwise. Of course, on one level, providing communication undoubtedly aids clients, but the help that the unwary, well-intentioned, but misguided, interpreter often wants to offer goes beyond the boundaries of proper professional behavior. For example, a well-intentioned interpreter just might have written the affidavit for the victim, taking down the victim’s words from dictation. There may be situations in which the interpreter could be the only person capable of producing a written statement. In that case, she should follow strict steps to insure that no future allegations of partiality can be leveled against her. Following the prescribed steps safeguards both the interpreter’s professional reputation as well as the fidelity of the information forming the basis of the case. In the situation above, the victim was nobody’s friend (not the interpreter’s and certainly not her foster father’s) at certain times throughout these proceedings.

Another pitfall in this case occurred when the wife kept questioning the interpreter about the probable outcome. Evidently, no one had informed the rest of the family that the victim had turned in her foster father to the INS. Even if they had known, they might not have realized the full consequences of such an act. The only one among them with legalisation in process was the victim, who had pressed her case on the basis of being abused by her foster father. Everyone else in her family, except the nephew, was in the country illegally. The interpreter had no knowledge that the victim’s actions would lead to the INS detainer on the defendant. She could have assured the wife that, depending on the disposition of the case, her husband might be home that day. They later discovered, of course, that the defendant would be going from state to federal custody. If the interpreter had assured the wife (and the defendant, for that matter) of the defendant’s freedom at the end of the case, there probably would have been no legal repercussions. However, this could have had an impact on the interpreter’s effectiveness in the future. Raising the expectations of the parties unduly would be morally wrong. It is never safe to assume anything when dealing with the legal system, and interpreters are not paid to be forecasters or fortunetellers. Making assurances to any party to a case concerning its outcome falls outside the boundaries of the court interpreter’s official responsibilities.

Of course, interpreters form opinions about the people with whom they work. Those opinions, however, serve no part of the interpreter’s duties to aid communication in the legal process, and will hinder their ability to give the non-English speaker equal access to the justice system. Eyes may widen in surprised response to a specific situation, the brain may shudder, but no comment should depart the interpreter’s mouth about anything that occurs. Interpreters may debrief among themselves or recount episodes occurring in open court when the case is over, but while the case is ongoing and the interpreter is on duty, no opinions should be expressed. Nor should any information from privileged conversations ever be revealed. That includes any asides, for instance, concerning the defense attorney’s sobriety or lack of it. If the interpreter
can smell the odor, then the assistant district attorney and others in the courthouse can as well. If steps need to be taken, there are court officials who will take them. The court interpreter’s duties do not include policing other professionals. (Of course, if there is a situation so grievous that the interpreter’s duties cannot be performed, it should be brought to the judge’s attention. In all honesty, I cannot think of a similar situation in which the interpreter would have to be the one to initiate action in a courthouse, but I will not assume that one might not exist.)

Finally, when the defendant encountered difficulty with the legal concepts and terminology being explained to him during the colloquy (the conversation through which the judge assures himself that the defendant understands his rights and the legal process that is being undertaken), this simply reflected his low educational level. Any person at that educational level, even one who speaks English, would encounter similar difficulties. If the interpreter were to raise the register when transmitting the speech of such a client, the client would be misrepresented. The client would appear to have a higher level of education than he claimed. In fact, the client would appear to be a liar! Thus, although an interpreter’s intentions may be good, they will backfire! Instead of improving a client’s predicament, the interpreter, by eschewing the code of ethics, worsens the situation. Simply following the code of ethics and maintaining professional neutrality benefits both interpreters and their clients.

Interpreters often work with people in extremely stressful situations, some of whom wish to skew the truth, distort it, or avoid it entirely. As long as the interpreter engages to act as each party’s voice, conveying the message of the speaker, the client, and the court, all will be well served. Once the interpreter strays from her professional responsibility, everyone concerned, including the interpreter and the client, suffers. By giving advice, an interpreter usurps the attorney’s role. By raising or lowering the register, an interpreter fails to interpret correctly, putting the client at risk. By gossiping or making extraneous commentary, an interpreter debases her profession, and this reflects poorly on herself.

Sometimes it may be extremely difficult to maintain impartiality, but an interpreter arguing with parties who present offensive opinions will not improve anyone’s situation. The interpreter will not be respected for neglecting her role. Clients will reject her services. The impartiality that appeared cold and inhumane at one time now develops the appearance of a welcoming mantle in which to be draped. Impartiality not only forms one of professional interpreting’s doctrines, it can also be a comfort and joy.

Notes
1. Other moments in which an interpreter’s inner strength comes into play are those when the client’s answers are non-responsive or nonsensical. Some onlookers assume that the interpreter is responsible for the content. With time, an interpreter learns to shrug off such assumptions, since they are outside the interpreter’s control.

2. There are judges who bar interpreters from sitting within the bar, since they have not, in most cases, passed the bar exam. This should not present a problem, as long as other seating is available that separates the interpreter from the general public.

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Rage Against the Machine Translation Continued from p.29

“Revisionated morning by morning!”
He nodded sharply. “Next in lineal.”
I said “Thank you” and “Until tomorrow” as always, and turned away. I walked to the end of the section and heard a phone ring. I looked to my right and saw a picture of my office. The phone on my desk was ringing. I answered. The videoscreen flickered and my wife appeared.

“Hi,” she said. “You look as though you just woke up.”
Character Delineation in Opera Translations: Examples from Wagner’s Ring

By Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman

In order to leave room for the music to do its share, opera librettos, in contrast to scripts for spoken plays, tend to have less delineation of character. This has led to a common misconception, even among translators, that all characters in opera speak in a mildly poetic, neutral diction that does not “distract” from the music characterizing them. However, most good opera librettos do individuate character by diction, and good opera translations must do the same.

Consider Richard Wagner’s Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring of the Nibelung), in which there are 34 different characters with solo singing lines. While stage action, costumes, and lighting, as well as the music, help an audience determine who is who, Wagner’s German libretto, written in alliterative verse, carefully gives the various characters very different speech patterns. These different speech patterns are especially obvious in Das Rheingold, the first part of the four-part Ring, because three characters, Alberich (a baritone), Loge (a tenor), and Fafner (a bass), repeatedly express the emotion of hatred. Since their emotion is the same, differences in speech content are minimized, more clearly revealing differences in speech patterns.

A Vulgar Dwarf

Alberich is the Nibelung dwarf whose hopes of ruling the world cause him to steal the Rheingold and forge it into a ring. He is the title character, the “Nibelung” of The Ring of the Nibelung. The price he has had to pay, the curse he is under (not to be confused with the curse he later puts on the ring), is the renunciation of love, which allows him to forge the ring.

When he first appears, the Rhine-daughters call him “der Garstige” (Ref. 1, Scene 1, 21), meaning the “nasty, loathsome, foul, vile, disgusting, filthy, obscene, indecent” one. Alberich is indeed vulgar, sometimes obscene, and he hates everybody. To the Rhine-daughters he says, among other things:

Ihr schmählich schlaues, lüderlich schlechtes Gelichter!
Nährt ihr nur Trug, ihr treuloses Nickergezücht?
(Ref. 1, Scene 1, 38-39)

...Most good opera librettos do individuate character by diction, and good opera translations must do the same...

He calls his brother Mime a “Schäbiger Schuft” (Ref. 1, Scene 3, 182). And his hatred of the gods also knows no bounds. He is ecstatic over the thought of enslaving them:

Habt Acht! Habt Acht!
Denn dient ihr Männer erst meiner Macht,
eure schmucken Frau’n, die mein Frei’n verschmäht,
sie zwingt zur Lust sich der Zwerg,
lacht Liebe ihm nicht!
(Ref. 1, Scene 3, 194-95).

There are two things immediately apparent about Alberich’s diction in these contemptuous speeches. One is his fondness for the “sch” sound, which he can spit out:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>schmählich</td>
<td>disgraceful, shameful, miserable, wretched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schlaues</td>
<td>cunning, sly, slick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schlechtes</td>
<td>rotten, bad, poor, lousy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schäbiger</td>
<td>shabby, wretched, mean, rotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schuft</td>
<td>scoundrel, rogue, villain, knave, skunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schmucken</td>
<td>neat, trim, pretty, handsome, cute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verschmäht</td>
<td>despise, disdain, scorn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these words have at least some pejorative meaning except for “schmucken,” a nonpejorative quality which Alberich says he will violently destroy. A literal translation of Alberich’s threats to the gods runs:

Beware! Beware!
because your men will yet serve my power,
your pretty women, who despise my protestations of love,
will be forced by the lust of the dwarf,
though love doesn’t smile on him!

The other obvious element of Alberich’s speech is that he expresses his hatred primarily by piling on pejorative words. There are no clever putdowns, just direct name-calling. In addition to the “sch” words, Alberich uses the vulgarly contemptuous terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lüderlich</td>
<td>bitchy, slut-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelichter</td>
<td>gang, rabble, riff-raff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickergezücht</td>
<td>nixie spawn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But Alberich also has a second way of expressing hatred; one that transcends his vulgar directness yet clearly proceeds from a consistent character. When Wotan demands that Alberich give him the ring, arguing that Alberich stole the gold from which it was forged and therefore has no right to it, Alberich’s reply starts by name-calling, but soon rises to a prophetic profundity:

Schmähliche Tucke! Schändlicher Trug!
Wirst du Schächer die Schuld mir vor,
die dir so wonnig erwünscht?
A Sly Fire-God

Loge is the god of fire, though of a different race from the other gods, with whom he lives in an uneasy alliance. His protector is Wotan, the chief god, who finds Loge’s tricks and cunning useful. Unlike Alberich, Loge is never vulgar and almost never expresses his hatred overtly. He is so slyly clever that the other characters sometimes miss the fact that he is insulting them. But there are times when he makes his sentiments clear, such as when he is talking to himself. But even here, as he expresses his hatred for the other gods, the worst names he calls them are “Blinden” (blind) and “blöd” (idiotic):

Ihrem Ende eilen sie zu,
die so stark im Bestehen sich wähnen. 
Fast schäm’ ich mich, mit ihnen zu schaffen;
zur leckenden Lohe mich wieder zu wandeln,
sie aufzuzehren, die einst mich gezähmt,
statt mit den Blinden blöd zu vergeh’n—
und wären es göttlichste Götter—
that wouldn’t seem stupid to me!
Bedenken will ich’s: wer weiß was ich tu’?

A literal translation of the above is:

They rush to [achieve] their end, those who imagine themselves to be so strong. I’m almost ashamed to deal with them; I feel a tempting lust to change myself again into tongues of flame in order to consume those who once tamed me, instead of idiotically expiring with those blind ones—and were they the godliest gods—that wouldn’t seem stupid to me! I’ll think it over: who knows what I’ll do?

Eventually, Loge will incinerate the gods at the end of the Ring. He makes good on his threats, while Alberich’s name-calling and threats to enslave the gods prove ineffectual. Notice Loge’s sly turns of speech: the indirection of “I’m almost ashamed” for “I am not ashamed”; the litotes of “that wouldn’t seem stupid” for “that would be intelligent”; the double meaning of Ende (objective, destruction). (The meaning of the German word suggests “destruction” more strongly than its English cognate. This is because the meaning “objective” is restricted in German almost entirely to literary usage.) All of these literary tropes give Loge’s speech an educated cast.

Like Alberich, Loge is capable of more lyrical speeches. But, unlike Alberich, Loge never transcends his basic speech pattern of sly indirectness.

A Greedy Giant

Fafner is one of the two giant brothers who build Valhalla, Wotan’s fortress/castle/hall-of-the-slain. It is Fafner who murders his brother Fasolt and then, transformed into a dragon, sleepily guards the ring and the rest of the Nibelung hoard of gold until he is killed by Siegfried.

Fafner’s speech pattern has none of Alberich’s vulgarity or Loge’s circumlocution. Of the three characters being considered, Fafner’s diction is closest to neutral. He is not afraid to directly express his hatred of the gods in their presence, but he does not resort to vulgarity and he is incapable of cleverness. He simply states that he wants the gods dead, and will achieve that result by taking Freia away from them:

Gold’ne Äpfel wachsen in ihrem Garten; sie allein weiß die Äpfel zu pflegen! Der Frucht Genuß frommt ihren Sippen zu ewig nie alternder Jugend: siech und bleich doch sinkt ihre Blüte, alt und schwach schwinden sie hin,
müssen Freia sie missen.
Ihrer Mitte drum sei sie entführt!
(Ref. 1, Scene 2, 106-07)

A literal translation of the above is:

Golden apples grow in her garden;
she alone knows how to tend the apples!
Consumption of the fruit gives their kind
eternal never aging youth:
however, their bloom will decline, turn
sickly and pale,
old and weak they will shrink away
should they lack Freia.
Therefore, she should be abducted from
their midst.

Notice the two different words that
Fafner and Alberich use to mean vir-
tually the same thing: “group, clan,
kind.” Alberich uses the vulgarly con-
temptuous “Gelichter,” while Fafner
uses the much more neutral “Sippen.”
And while there is some lyricism, ver-
bally and musically, in Fafner’s
description of the apples and the con-
sequences of the gods being deprived
of them, this speech is as lyrical as
Fafner ever gets.

Unlike Alberich’s ineffectual
name-calling, Fafner’s plan, like
Loge’s, would indeed destroy the
gods if it were carried out. But
Fafner’s plan is not carried out.

An Older Translation
Kenneth Jameson’s performable
English translation dates from 1896,
but reprinting has kept it in wide cir-
culation even today.

Here is Jameson’s translation of
Fafner’s speech:

Golden apples ripen within her garden,
she alone knoweth how they are tended;
the garden’s fruit grants to her kindred,
each day renewed, youth everlasting:
pale and blighted passeth their beauty,
old and weak waste they away
if e’er Freia should fail them.
From their midst let us bear her away!
(Ref. 3, 74)

Jameson does well with Fafner’s
simple, neutral speech pattern. As in
the German, Jameson’s Fafner directly
states his plan and its consequences.
When Fafner approaches lyricality,
Jameson supplies the poetic word
“blighted,” but otherwise sticks to the
ordinary words of his time.
Unfortunately, he uses word order
inversion and obsolete contractions and
verb inflections, all devices favored in
Victorian translation: knoweth, passeth,
waste they away, e’er. These have the
effect of making all characters sound
“poetic” and alike, both now and in
Jameson’s own period.

Jameson’s translation breaks down
completely when dealing with Loge’s
double meanings:

They are hastening on to their end,
who now deem themselves strong in
their greatness.
Ashamed am I to share in their dealings;
to flickering fire again to transform me,
fancy lureth my will:
to burn and waste them who bound me
erewhile,
rather than blindly sink with the blind—
e’en were they of gods the most godlike—
not ill were it, meseems!
I must bethink me: who knows what may
hap? (Ref. 3, 214-15)

Though Jameson obviously knew
that Loge’s speech was to be distin-
guished from Fafner’s and tried to
make it different, he thought that
Loge’s educated circumlocutions
required not just archaic inflections,
but an archaic diction. Words such as
“meseems,” “bethink,” and “hap,”
may raise Loge’s diction level, but
 tend to obscure the audience’s per-
ception of Loge’s sly ambivalence.

Thus, the only difference between
Jameson’s Loge and his Fafner is that
Loge is more archaic. This is not
Wagner’s difference, and it is not dra-
matically successful.

Furthermore, Jameson has some
very poor individual word choices.
For instance, “deem,” which leans
toward “think” and away from
“imagine,” fails to highlight Loge’s
insistence on a misperception. The
context deprives “end” of the
meaning “objective.” Leaving out
“almost” before “ashamed” changes
Loge’s meaning to the point of
changing his character. Loge is not
ashamed of sharing in the gods’ mis-
doings, both because he rarely shies
from misdoings of his own and, in
this particular case, because he
understands that he is helping to push
the hated gods toward their doom.

Jameson’s version also breaks
down when translating Alberich,
though not as badly as when trans-
lating Loge. Jameson has Alberich
say to the Rhinedaughters:

Ye shameless, shifting, worthless and
infamous wantons!
Feed ye on falsehood, treacherous watery
brood? (Ref. 3, 24)

To Mime:

Pestilent wretch! (Ref. 3, 132)

And to the gods:

Beware! Beware!
For first your men shall bow to my might,
then your winsome women, who my
wooing despised,
shall yield to Alberich’s force,
though love be his foe!
(Ref. 3, 142)

Though there are no errors in
meaning, as for Loge, and the
pseudo-archaic diction is, as for Fafner, less excessive, Alberich would just not say what Jameson has him say. In particular, “wanton,” and to a lesser extent “winsome” and “wooing,” simply represent too high a diction level, and are therefore incorrect (despite the alliteration with “worthless,” “watery,” and “women”). “Wanton,” as well as “brood,” are gestures in the right direction, but they are not vulgar enough. Fafner might use them, but not Alberich. Also, the “w” sound (or “v” in German) is much too soft to be characteristic of Alberich. In all the speeches cited above, Alberich alliterates only once on “w”: “wonning erwünscht” in the third line of his lyrical flight.

Accordingly, Jameson’s diction level is somewhat better for Alberich’s lyrical flight than for the direct expressions of hate, though the lyricism, in Jameson’s mind, unfortunately also requires an increase in the amount of pseudo-archaic diction:

As stated above, pseudo-archaic diction makes all the characters sound alike. But even if an audience can hear the difference between more and less, Jameson’s increase in the amount given Alberich for his more lyrical statements still does not individuate Alberich; it just makes Alberich sound more like Loge.

Also, despite the lyricism, Alberich is still direct. The one time in this speech when he refers to himself as “the Nibelung,” he immediately clarifies this with “I.” He does not refer to himself with the indirectness of the English “one,” as Jameson has him do three lines later. That is a speech pattern more characteristic of Loge.

Overall, it can be said that Jameson’s translation makes gestures toward verbally individuating character. However, these gestures are both not large enough and tend to be concealed by the strangeness of Jameson’s deliberately archaic diction, which makes more of an impression on the audience than any other single feature of his word choice.

A Newer Translation

Andrew Porter’s performable English translation dates from the mid 1970s. It was commissioned by the English National Opera and used by ENO for both live and recorded performances. It has also been performed by other companies, most notably by the Seattle Opera in the United States.

Here is Porter’s translation of Fafner’s speech:

Golden apples ripen within her garden, she alone knows how they are tended; that golden fruit given to her kinsmen each day renews youth everlasting; pale and grey they’ll lose all their beauty, wan and weak they will grow old, when that fruit is denied them.

And that’s why we’ll take her away!

(Ref. 4, 25)

Like Jameson, Porter partially succeeds with Fafner’s speech. The plain diction presents no problem for him. As would be expected for a translation dating from the second half of the 20th century, he does not use any pseudo-archaic diction. However, the speech lacks some of Fafner’s venom and directness. It sounds a little too poetic, perhaps because of two inversions in a row: “…pale and grey they’ll lose all their beauty, / wan and weak they will grow old…”

Porter fares much worse with Loge:

They are hastening on to their end, though they think they are great in their grandeur.

Ashamed I’d be to share in their dealings; I feel a temptation to turn and destroy them; change to flickering fire, and burn those great ones who thought I was tamed, rather than blindly sink with the blind, although they’re so gracious and god-like! I think that might be best!

I must consider: who knows what I’ll do?

(Ref. 4, 70-71)

Porter, like Jameson, leaves out “almost” before “ashamed,” and also deletes the litotes of the next to last line, changing “it wouldn’t seem stupid” to “I think that might be best!” The effect is to destroy Loge’s individual speech pattern. Because Porter’s Loge both inverts (“ashamed I’d be”) and is fairly direct, he sounds like Porter’s Fafner—so much so that it is debatable whether Porter even recognized the difference in speech patterns.

The character of Alberich also fares poorly with Porter. For instance, Porter has Alberich say to the Rhinedaughters:
Character Delineation in Opera Translations: Examples from Wagner’s Ring Continued

You shameless, slippery underhand, infamous wretches!
Shifty and sly, you treacherous watery tribe? (Ref. 4, 11)

To Mime:

Pestilent imp! (Ref. 4, 44)

And to the gods:

Beware! Beware!
For first your men shall yield to my might,
then your lovely women, who despise me
and jeer,
shall grant to Alberich’s force
what love could not win! (Ref. 4, 47)

Porter does not neutralize Alberich to the extent that he does Loge, but that is probably only because any translation reproducing any of the original German meaning must include enough pejorative words so that the audience gets some idea of the way Alberich speaks. But where Porter can neutralize Alberich, he does. The last two lines above are especially inspired in their wrongness. They must be disentangled before the audience knows that Alberich is threatening rape.

Porter’s translation of Alberich’s lyrical flight is no improvement:

Infamous schemer! Shameful deceit!
Thief, you blame me for doing that crime which you were burning to do!
Though you lusted to steal the gold for yourself,
you couldn’t pay the price that alone would suffice.
It serves you well, you smooth, sneering rogue,
that the Niblung, I, in shameful distress,
in a frenzied outburst, did win for myself,
by a curse,
the gold that smiles on you now!
And my sacrifice, all I suffered,
my criminal, curse-laden deed—
have they merely served to procure you a plaything?
Will you win the world by my curse?
Guard yourself, proud, cruel god!
If I have sinned, I sinned but against myself:
but against all that was, is, and shall be,
you are planning a crime
by laying your hand on the ring! (Ref. 4, 56-57)

While not inversions, phrases like “the Niblung, I” and “did win for myself” have a “poetic” cast which makes Alberich’s speech pattern too similar to those of Porter’s Loge and Fafner. Among the words and phrases with an incorrect diction level is “smooth, sneering.” That description better fits Loge than Wotan. Alberich calls Wotan a Gleisner “hypocrite.” “Frenzied out-
burst” sounds as if Alberich is referring to something he said rather than to a desperate action, and so loses some of Alberich’s accession of dignity. Alberich’s “ unholy” deed becomes merely criminal, and Alberich himself becomes one more verbally undifferentiated character.

Conclusion

Individuation of character is as important to an opera libretto as it is to a spoken play, and therefore also to translations of either. Lacking such character individuation, a translation is unlikely to succeed on the stage.

References

1 Wagner, Richard. 1985. Das Rheingold (in full score). New York: Dover Publications, Inc. (This is a reprint of the 1873 edition of B. Schott’s Söhne, Mainz. In the passages quoted above from this book, the German spelling has been modernized.)

2 Herman, Mark, and Ronnie Apter, translators. 1983. Das Rheingold/The Rhinegold. (German-English piano-vocal score published by the translators.)

3 Jameson, Frederick, translator. 1896. Das Rheingold/The Rheingold. London: Schott. (Despite the age of this translation, it is still in use because it has been reprinted many times, most notably in the Kalmus piano-vocal score, probably the most easily obtainable edition in the United States. The page references are to the Kalmus edition.)

Ms. e-Etiquette on E-mail Manners

By Nur Reinhart

It has come to the attention of Ms. e-Etiquette (no relation of that famous other doyenne except in spirit) that her services are sorely needed to remind gentle readers in the translation community of the proper etiquette for electronic communications. Ms. e-Etiquette is well acquainted with many of the fine translators and hard-working agency representatives in this vital industry. She appreciates their dedication to quality and service, their quest for timely delivery, and their eagerness to use electronic communications to enhance the timeliness of their services. However, Ms. e-Etiquette is also painfully aware that the adoption of a code of manners has not been as speedy as the revolution in electronic communication technology.

The result, as Ms. e-Etiquette observes, has been frustration, some missed deadlines, frantic last-minute efforts, and, Ms. e-Etiquette is loath to admit, even anger on the part of normally mild-mannered people. In the interest of promoting peace and harmony, she has taken it upon herself to compose a compendium of manners for the new electronic age. But Ms. e-Etiquette is going to spare you a diatribe on the universal bane of electronic communications: messages composed in a hurry and sporting more spelling and grammar errors than ads on AOL. Being a realist as well as a traditionalist, she has decided not to engage in futile battles.

Ms. e-Etiquette has been informed that a common occurrence in electronic communications in the translation industry is the daily proliferation of inquiries to translators and translation agencies regarding professional services and rates. She knows this is not problematic as long as the parties have been previously acquainted and current information is all that is needed.

However, in the case of a “cold call,” she wishes to set the record straight about proper etiquette. Ms. e-Etiquette hates to belabor the obvious, but she wishes to remind all involved that this relates to a very old social situation dating back thousands of years. When one wishes to be acquainted with a stranger, one needs to introduce oneself. That is why calling cards were invented. With the demise of that charming invention, we now have total strangers making inquiries without providing any information about themselves other than Johnny87965@anonymous.com.

Ms. e-Etiquette’s translator friends are critical of people inquiring about a translator’s rates, education, specialization, and the like without so much as a word about who they are, where they work, and whether their organization has been in business more than a fortnight. Ms. e-Etiquette has been shocked to learn that there are agencies with less than sterling reputations which freelancers wish to avoid like a bad case of the shingles. She has also been informed that such inquirers who demand information have, on many occasions, not bothered to answer translators’ subsequent queries about their companies’ backgrounds. She is tempted to say “Shame on them,” but she realizes such people probably have no shame.

On the other hand, Ms. e-Etiquette’s friends at translation agencies also complain about receiving cryptic messages saying “I need this by Tuesday,” which are signed by BigHarry@bigcountry.com. Much as they wish to accept more work, these kind souls would nonetheless like to know with whom they are working and whether reaching Big Harry to get payment might be a reasonably straightforward process.

Most of Ms. e-Etiquette’s friends at translation agencies have, by now, become used to receiving unsolicited résumés from translators via e-mail on a daily basis. They don’t mind these as long as the résumés are properly prepared in a recognized common format with accurate information on the translator’s education, experience, tools, resources, and contact information. It goes without saying that a short introduction should accompany the attachment of the résumé to offer reasons why the translator may be worth knowing. Having said this, Ms. e-Etiquette would like to remind those wily freelancers, you know who you are, not to disguise their unsolicited mass-mailed résumés with a catchy subject line such as “Free Caribbean Vacation.” A professional relationship that may begin with such a “gotcha” may not go further than the delete button.

Ms. e-Etiquette wishes to reiterate that the convenience of speedy electronic communications does not eliminate the vital role a telephone plays in our lives. Indeed, she firmly believes that in the case of assignments with short deadlines, the old telephone is more trustworthy than e-mail. Ms. e-Etiquette has been disturbed to hear of agencies who assign projects to freelancers via e-mail without first confirming the translator’s availability or even the translator’s bodily presence in the...
Ms. e-Etiquette regrets to report that deadlines have been missed and last-minute changes of plans have been required with considerable gnashing of teeth. She believes that it is certainly acceptable for busy agency representatives to send brief e-mail inquiries when there is ample time to determine the translator’s availability. Should the first one be unavailable, then another qualified professional can be found.

Of course, Ms. e-Etiquette recognizes the implicit trust and confidence shown by agencies toward the translators who are the recipients of such assignments. However, she also wishes to point out that these reliable souls nonetheless feel as if they have let down their clients when they discover projects languishing past their deadline in cyberspace. The lowly telephone, once the pride and joy of every household, could have saved the day. Ms. e-Etiquette trusts that her gentle readers understand that the “call first” rule applies to all last-minute revisions, changes, and other assignments which require a speedy response.

Ms. e-Etiquette knows that many translators have personal ties in foreign countries and are known to visit those countries frequently. In view of the fact that such visits sometimes require long absences, Ms. e-Etiquette wishes to urge her friends at translation agencies to rely on the trusty telephone, especially in the summer, in the name of speed and efficiency (much as that may sound like an oxymoron to today’s ears).

For the sake of fairness, Ms. e-Etiquette also reminds her translator friends that sending advance notices of planned absences to one’s longstanding clients in order to avert disaster represents excellent professional manners. It is even more endearing to suggest capable colleagues who may help out during such absences.

Ms. e-Etiquette believes that part of the problem may be related to the discrepancy that exists in the lives of freelancers and translation agency staff. She visualizes her freelance translator friends to be laboring in a home office, eating cold sandwiches at their desks to make deadlines. Some may not even have high speed access, so in their tireless efforts to finish a project, they may not know of the urgent need to change six words in the project done two weeks ago for a multinational conglomerate that wants the change that afternoon.

On the other hand, translation agency representatives, on a steady IV drip of espresso, may be calculating word counts, quotes, and deadlines while coordinating various projects among teams of translators, proofreaders, production people, and demanding corporate clients. In the interest of time, the translation agency representative, who is being pressured by the conglomerate’s executive, may be desperately sending e-mails to all the freelancers who translated this document into 26 languages from Albanian to Uzbek. Ms. e-Etiquette feels his pain, but predicts that a certain percentage of freelancers will never get the message because they are too busy to dial up and check e-mail constantly.

At the expense of sounding like an old fuddy-duddy, Ms. e-Etiquette feels forced to conclude that traditional good manners must still be utilized in the electronic age. She has seen tourists in foreign lands who, under the mistaken notion that being abroad justifies shedding good manners and inhibitions, have behaved badly only to receive the cold contempt and muttered criticisms of the natives. Much as cyberspace may feel like a foreign land to many, the old rules about good manners still matter. When making a cold call, make proper introductions first. Be courteous and professional. Include complete information to be taken seriously. Remember that the message represents the sender and consider whether that representation is favorable. Don’t assume that a message sent is a message received. Use the telephone to inform others of urgent projects and last-minute changes. Do unto others…but then Ms. e-Etiquette trusts that you still remember that one.

Special thanks to Michael Sum of Cincilingua and Lauren Rosato of Lexpress International for their valuable input.

ATA Translation Company Division: Third Annual Conference

The TCD will hold its third annual conference in Chicago, June 13–16, 2002. For more information, please send an e-mail to Steve Iverson, acting administrator, at steve@iversonlang.com.
Metaphor in Old French and Its Translation: Chrétien de Troyes’s Érec et Énide

By Michael Walker

Chrétien de Troyes’s Érec et Énide is, from several perspectives, a landmark work in both the development of French literature and of the Arthurian saga. The interpolation of Anglophone storylines and French narrative techniques (and corresponding linguistic devices), as well as the introduction of narrative concepts to literature hitherto found only in oral folk tradition, have ensured Érec et Énide a meaningful position within the evolution of the Arthurian legend (Carasso-Bulow, 1976).

It has been argued that Érec et Énide is most likely the first written rendition of the Arthurian legend in any language. Though there are ample precedents in written accounts of King Arthur, Chrétien’s efforts (namely, Érec et Énide and his other manuscripts) provided the first clear examples of a strictly fictional portrayal of Arthurian themes in a literary realm without any ambiguity as to the author’s intent to entertain readers (Altieri, 1976; Fritz, 1992; Lacy, et al., 1988). By removing the Arthurian saga and its cast of characters, places, and concepts from the exclusive frame of Anglo-Saxon cultural reference, Chrétien allowed less overt Greek and Roman influences to be felt in the text while bringing the plot into the orderly constraints of literature (albeit retaining its elements of the troubadour’s oral tradition). Numerous subsequent works in Middle English, as well as Sir Thomas Malory’s Le Morte d’Arthur, would be profoundly influenced by Chrétien’s approach to the Arthurian legend and his important developments in plot structure (Morris, 1982; Fowler, 1975).

By introducing the Arthurian legend into the French language, Chrétien de Troyes instituted a new linguistic locus for this saga. The impact of Old French is striking, not only in its effect on the actual narrative text of Érec et Énide, but also in how the legend is conveyed. The textual effects imparted by French on the trajectory of the narrative should not be underestimated. It must be remembered that at this point in the development of Western literature, especially in the case of a well-known legend, the author’s role was one more of storyteller than of story-writer, as opposed to the contemporary conception of the writer of fiction. As is often the case when a mythic convention is imported from one cultural and linguistic tradition into another, the Arthurian legend gained not only certain Francophone narrative details, but also a linguistic structure that is key to its communicative etiology. The linguistic structure of all Chrétien’s Arthurian works, but especially Érec et Énide, facilitates a strong semiotic vernacular which builds a dialogue between internal plot-based references and external language-oriented sources (Bednar, 1974).

The present study seeks to provide an examination of the conjunctive relationship between metaphoric structure, narrative effect, and aspects of translation in Chrétien’s works, using Érec et Énide as its primary example. Érec et Énide can be viewed as something of a meta-text (a product of stages of translation and interpretation), even if it is read in the original Old French and includes pronounced influences from other sociolinguistic conventions. Chrétien, being highly familiar with both Old French and Old English and coming from an educated minstrel’s background, knowingly applied semiotic devices derived from exterior sources to the French language in his rendering of Érec et Énide in order to produce a more engaging text. Moreover, he constructed an infrastructure within the text that allowed for a high degree of dynamic interpolation between metaphoric constructs and poetic framework. The dynamics of Chrétien’s narrative and the influence of his works on subsequent renditions of the Arthurian legend have led to a variety of approaches to translating his narratives out of Old French and into modern French, English, German, and other languages. This article seeks to delineate how the text of Érec et Énide represents a fluid, transitory manuscript.

Drawing upon the pioneering work of the linguist and philosopher Julia Kristeva on the development of the novel (i.e., Roman) form in the late Middle Ages (cf. Kristeva, 1970), this study examines the etiology of Érec et Énide as a text. Moreover, this article considers how the concept of a meta-text impacts and informs the practice of translating a work such as Érec et Énide.

As a poet based within the social atmosphere of the noble court, Chrétien acknowledged literature and language as a singular force, insofar as the former cannot exist without the latter...
criticisms by scholars that his works are often redundant in their sequential narratives, Chrétien’s narrative style can be viewed as an advanced foray into the possibilities of literary language use in French. Parallels to Chrétien’s efforts can be found in sacred and secular works written in Middle English (Chaytor, 1950). Such developments in English were probably in part inspired by Chrétien’s efforts. In fact, Chrétien appears to have accomplished a great deal in terms of linguistic development through his Arthurian works. He was adapting oral stories from another language into his own and doing so at a time when French literature was mainly focused on shorter sacred works rather than epic secular romances (Lacy, 1980).

**Period Language, Society, and Linguistics**

As Gábor Bezeczky has noted, language formulating the structural composition of a narrative is often the primary source of metaphorical constructs. He also noted that not all such constructs are universal, since many are language-dependent (Bezeczky, 2000). Bezeczky follows Max Black’s epistemological approach to metaphorical constructs in literature (cf. Black, 1955), pronouncing an extended concept of the metaphor’s functionality as a poetic device within the narrative voice. This is an idea that is far from new, dating back to Aristotle’s definitions of metaphor. What is most interesting about Bezeczky’s views on metaphorical effect and narrative is that he does not see the metaphor as simply a component within the greater structure of the narrative, nor as a supernatant force detached from the narrative. Instead, the metaphor is an integral part of the narrative’s composition, and the most acute realization of tautological truth in the organization of plot sequence.

While Bezeczky confines his examination to literary discourse in terms of narrative, his arguments beg to be extended to the realm of linguistic dialogue. For instance, even computer languages contain differences between literal positions and ones that find their primary value within their effectiveness as secondary references or pointers to other terms. The concept of any language as being deterministic may be broadly exposed at the level of its trie-based (trie = dictionary tree) hierarchies (Daciuk, et al., 2000). English, French, German, and other Germanic and Romance languages exhibit consecutive growth trajectories within their ontological hierarchies at early points in their linguistic evolution (Collinson, 1959). Therefore, it can be postulated that these languages provided for a high correspondence of metaphorical usage and narrative typology. (Narrative typology, insofar as these languages are concerned, would require obvious differences in the metaphorical application of certain terms within the scope of narrative versus in the scope of nonmetaphorical directive discourse. Therefore, the types of narrative produced would have a distinct relationship based strongly upon their use of metaphorical constructs.)

In many ways, the sociolinguistic development of Old French ran parallel to that of Old English, but with some essential differences. Old French became a widely used literary language more rapidly than Old English, though many documents (both sacred and secular) were still written in Latin. In contrast, official documents were more often prepared in Old English than in Latin, since the church was not yet manifest to a point where Latin, which carried with it obvious reminders of Roman occupation, was fully accepted via its sacred merits. Old French had a more natural and less politically motivated relationship with Latin (cf. Campange, 1996). A greater number of folktales and myths were actually imported from the Roman tradition directly into French, whereas most oral folktales in Old English were derived from Celtic and Welsh influences (albeit with necessary cultural translation) into Old English. In Old French, the tradition of the fabliaux developed alongside the minstrel heritage of lyrical folk songs. These were brought into the realm of the court (and hence to literate people with a concern for the preservation of these songs and poems) more readily than their English equivalents (Aspland, 1979). Thus, the evolution of French poetics and the assured sustentation of legends was very different from the way in which Old English prose and poetry evolved around the same period. Alas, the origin of the legends preserved in French via literary transference is a matter beyond the scope of this article, but indeed one with its own controversies.

Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum Britanniae* serves as the paramount example of a British historical document from the 12th century about the Arthurian saga. However, the divisions between factual history and unsupported presumptions, and perhaps even outright fictional additions on the part of the author, places this work in a curious position. In any case, Monmouth’s *Historia* and William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta regum Anglorum* exemplify the typical characteristics of historiography in Britain. Written in Latin, these works were produced for the sake of posterity rather than for contemporary dissemination. These works were valued for their historical
relevance, not their entertainment potential (Echard, 1998). William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta regum Anglorum* was written as a guide for future rulers and as a chronicle of legal developments of the time. Modern scholarship often classifies this work as a general history of the Norman and pre-Norman British kings. *Gesta regum Anglorum* serves as an interesting linguistic comparison to strictly legalistic works written in English around the same period.

The intermittent continuation of the use of Latin in 12th-century texts illuminates the relationship between language, sociocultural functionality, and agency, and how the transmission of Roman ideas into Anglo-Saxon and, later, Norman British rule affected decisions in historiography (Sawyer, 1998). Conversely, around the same time the French language benefited from a closer relationship, on social and linguistic levels, with Latin. In fact, the transference between the two languages was more active and far less cloistered, allowing Latin manuscripts to have a greater, more immediate impact on French oral and literary conventions. Therefore, the importation of narrative concepts out of Latin could be presupposed to carry more of the source language with them than the same scenario would entail in the case of Old English. Moreover, a definite interest and effort in extrapolating narrative concepts from Old English and importing these into French would be required to achieve any high level of correspondence, linguistically speaking, between these languages (van Coolput, 1986).

When French literary sources from the late 12th century are contrasted with contemporary English, German, and Latin documents, it is readily apparent that different lyrical, and thus narrative, trajectories were formed within French as opposed to the Germanic languages. These patterns have, to a certain degree, their precedents in Latin, and many can also be readily traced back to Greek. What is less clear is why Old English and Middle English incorporate Welsh influences in terms of literary and historical information while foregoing a high acuity of transference between Welsh as an oral language and English as a literary language. The most probable explanation is that political motives and profound linguistic differences in the syntax of English and Welsh prevented Welsh from being absorbed into the developing English literary traditions (Dubois, 1943). The Upper Germanic languages, specifically Old Norse, display a grammatical and syntactical correspondence that is to be expected, given their associated genetic roots, but these languages also display strong commonalities in their formulaic traits, suggesting a similar evolution of oral tradition (Aker, 1998).

While few definitive conclusions can be drawn, it is possible to surmise that differences in artistic conventions (for instance, the importance of the minstrel song in France and other Romance-language-speaking nations versus the higher prevalence of a non-sung oral tradition in the Germanic lands) played an equally important role in the development of folk language types within the scope of narrative function. Stephen S. Evans’ recent scholarship of British poetry would suggest this situation in the preliterate folk poetry of the British people (Evans, 1996).

**Chrétien de Troyes, Poetic Language, and History**

Chrétien de Troyes lived and wrote in Champagne during the latter portion of the 12th century, although neither his date of birth or death has been firmly established. He was attached to the court of Countess Marie de Champagne at Troyes from 1160 C.E. to 1172 C.E as a *cler lisant*, or learned poet. It was during this period that he most likely wrote his best-known works. Marie was the daughter of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and had both substantial cultural exposure and the social agency to promote the type of work that Chrétien produced. Without her patronage, his output would have assuredly been much less in quantity and probably also different in genre (Lacy, 1980).

Chrétien, it can be presumed, began his poetic career within an environment that was conducive to his oratory skills. He carried many of these oral conventions and effects over to his application of rhetoric in narrative. In the oral tradition, narrative often depends on its immediate ability to convince, persuade, or seduce the listening audience into an involvement and active belief in its trajectory. The French language, from its earliest origins onward, has always employed a deep resonance with the lyrical effects of sound and extended meaning (Argod-Dutard, 1998). In the case of the fabliaux, strong and ample usage of verb/subject/verb/object structural formats allowed for a parallel cadence of robust vowel sounds and lessened flowing consonant sounds. This cadence propelled the oral recitation of these fables in a manner similar to how a song would be lightly sung (Boutet, 1985). Chrétien, like other early French poets, continued this presence of resonance in his romances and other prose poems. This is apparent in the following example from Chrétien’s *Perceval, ou le Conte du Graal*:
Que ja an puise eschaper vive. 
Li vaslez ne prise une cive 
quanque li roiis li dit et conte, 
ne de son duel ne de sa honte, 
de le reîn ne li chaut il.

(Chrétien de Troyes, Perceval, ou le Conte du Graal; 
“Arrivée de Perceval à la cour”: 
Ins. 364e.966-970)

Here, the sense of not only rhyme, but inherent rhythm, is manifest in both the repetition of vowel sounds and the sharp affliction of consonance present in the beginning and ending of each line. The final line carries the ascending velar in “reîn” and “li” and the descending velar in “il.” If this passage is read aloud with the proper pronunciation of Old French, the plosive sound in “puise” and in “prise” makes the aural correspondence between these two words evident as well.

In the Grail Romance, especially the Old French Vulgate Cycle, the use of aural synteny is prominent as a mechanism for guiding and pacing the reader’s comprehension of the text, much as minstrels would have utilized various oral and musical techniques for the same purposes while performing. The importance of this feature should not be discounted as simply a manner of enhancing the entertainment value of the story told, but also as a mechanism for reconfiguring the reader’s orientation towards the text, as the reader would have come to it with certain preconceptions. In the case of the Grail Quest, these preconceptions to the literate person of the period would have included formations carried over from Latin as a textural language and from extended liturgical sources in Latin (Karczewska, 1998).

Another concern in terms of aural and tonal properties in Chrétien’s works is that of multiplicity and patterns. Chrétien repeats both poetic allocations and narrative information quite frequently and often with deliberate effect. He also utilizes a complex yet subtle rhyme scheme at certain points where decisive narrative actions are placed. This is exemplified in the following passage:

Ja n’estoient pas descendu 
cil que j’ancontrai an le lande, 
et vos volez que je descende! 
Ja par mon chief, n’i descendrai, 
mes fêtes tost, si m’an irai.

(Chrétien de Troyes, Perceval, ou le Conte du Graal; 
“Arrivée de Perceval à la cour”: 
Ins. 364e.985-989)

Here, the nominative case is utilized. The perfective aspect of “descende” and its intransitive forms, “descendu” and “descendrai,” formulate the infrastructure of the entire verse. The agglutinative morphologies presented here reinforce the repetitive conjunction of the event described in the passage, while also responding to the momentum of the verse itself.

Such structures are crucial aspects of Chrétien’s writing and, in the case of Perceval, ou le Conte du Graal, a substantial factor in establishing his authorship, or at least partial authorship, of the work (cf. Lacy, 1980). In any event, Le Conte du Graal is an ensuing work to Érec et Enide. In Érec et Enide, the versification is not quite as well developed nor as dependent on localized rhyme schemes, however, it provides a consummate example of how Chrétien’s handling of rhyming octosyllabic couplets could enable the metaphor. In fact, he seems to concentrate more on the use of metaphor in this work than in his other Arthurian works.

As Karl Uitti has expressed, Chrétien de Troyes took elements from not only the Anglo-Saxon and Latin sources of the Arthurian legend and their linguistic analogs, but also from other Latin, French, and Germanic sources (Uitti, 1983). The German court clerc Ulrich Von Zatzikhoven wrote the romance Lanzelet in Middle High German subsequent to Chrétien’s contributions to the Grail Romance (ca. 1200 C.E.). Consequently, Von Zatzikhoven could have derived his concepts and narrative etiology from some of the same sources Chrétien may have utilized. However, ample scholarship exists to rule out a direct influence of Chrétien’s works on Von Zatzikhoven, although the similarities in plot constructions between Lanzelet, Érec et Enide, and Lancelot, ou le Chevalier de la Charrette (also by Chrétien) are uncanny in their strength and persistence.

Von Zatzikhoven, for his part, identified his romance as deriving from a welschez buoch, or French romance, which would further implicate this etiology. What is more, there is considerable evidence stemming from the structure and format of the 13th-century Welsh tale Gereint to indicate that some now-unknown Old French and/or Middle German romance existed, perhaps as an oral history alone, that was known to the leading French and Germanic courts. It is possible that this now-unknown tale was introduced into the Welsh tradition, providing a cycle of narrative substance into literary form that ironically both originated and ended in Wales (Loomis, et al., 1992). Such a tale, if extant prior to Chrétien’s efforts, would have almost certainly informed his works as well. This situation would also help explain the correspondence between Lanzelet and Chrétien’s romances.
The Language and Metaphoric Structures of Érec et Énide

The presence of a divergent and not completely identifiable nor attributable range of sources and precedents for Chrétien’s Arthurian romances makes the interpolation between Chrétien’s use of poetic structure and his narrative intent all the more consequential in light of his use of metaphor. Nowhere is this factor more essentially wrought than in Érec et Énide, for it is Chrétien’s first Arthurian work, at least out of those which have survived. Érec et Énide is also the first overt example of the romantic notions of courtoisie, fin’amor, and chevalerie in the English, Welsh, German, Latin, and French traditions of the courtly romance. The role of metaphor in Érec et Énide is essential and progressive. However, these metaphors are often interlaced within the poetic structure. This creates a crucial problem for the translator trying to render Chrétien’s Old French into contemporary English, German, or any other language while preserving the nuances (which are vital to the success of Chrétien’s metaphors) infused in his poetry.

Poetry is usually challenging to translate, but Érec et Énide is exceptionally so due to the singular, impassive nature of Old French and the complexity of Chrétien’s narrative. When the text is translated and removed from the lyrical constraints of Old French, the metaphorical structure of the verse is impaired, although the patterns of rhythm remain readily apparent, as the following passage and its translation attest:

QUANT la bele pucele estrange
Vit toz les chevaliers an range,
Qui l’esgardoient a estal,
Son chief ancline contre val,
Vergoingne an ot, ne fu mervoille,
La face l’an devint vermoille;
Mes la honte si li avint
Que plus bele assez an devint.

(Chrétien de Troyes, Érec et Énide; Ins. 1751-1756)

When the stranger maiden saw all the knights arrayed [and] looking steadfastly at her, she bowed her head in embarrassment; nor was it strange that her face blushed all crimson. But her confusion was so becoming to her that she looked all the more lovely. When the King saw that she was embarrassed, he did not wish to leave her side.

(Ibid. author’s translation)

Here, the translation of the Old French into contemporary English further complicates the problem of reworking the syntax of the verse. The additional difficulty of word choice becomes more challenging, as the French is imparted with indicative (i.e., denotative) words that have no correspondent terminology in English that carry the same level of metaphorical weight.

For example, “chevaliers an range” holds both the literal meaning of “knights armed,” but also the more lyrical significance of the dress of the knights and of their pageantry. A more accurate, though not textually faithful, rendering in English might be along the lines of “knights in all their finery,” but this solution introduces the need for the presence of a pronoun that is not in keeping with the syntax of the Old French. Chrétien, had he desired to simply state that the knights were prepared for battle, could have selected several other words other than “an range,” but the option he devised performs two essential narrative functions. First, it balances the rhyme scheme. Second, it hints at the regal tone of the next line (“Qui l’esgardoient a estal”). The practice of providing an introit to a complex line of metaphorical harmony via a preceding line is something that Chrétien does time and again throughout Érec et Énide.

Appearing slightly further in the first part of the romance, the following verse exemplifies Chrétien’s reliance on exacting word choice to carry forth narrative intentions:

Beisiee l’a come cortois
Veant toz les barons li rois
Et si li dist: “Ma douce amie!
M’amor vos doing sanz vilenie.
Sanz mauvestié et sanz folage
Vos amerai de buen corage.”

(Chrétien de Troyes, Érec et Énide; Ins. 1835-1840)

Here, the selection of “barons” for “knights,” instead of the previous “chevaliers,” reorients the connotative conception of the knights as noblemen instead of cavalier horsemen. The king’s proclamation to the maiden follows in line 1,837, filled with no mere gallantry but royal decree by default. A possible translation: “My sweetest dear, my love I give in all my honorableness.” Caution must be exercised when translating this passage, as a more literal approach could result in something along the lines of, “my dear, I give you my love in all honesty.” This rendering is faithful to the words and their meanings, but does nothing to capture the mellifluous quality of Chrétien’s poetics. Such verbatim translations may in fact be the reason why scholars who are only familiar with the English version of Érec...
Dialogue appears to Chrétien to be a useful mechanism for moving the narrative out of descriptive stasis and into the realm of, literally, pronouncement and thus non-actual description. All dialogue in Chrétien’s romances functions to reiterate his belief in the worthiness of fin’amor. Knightly courtesy is, after all, a considerable contribution of Chrétien’s works, and probably one of the aspects of his work most desired by his patroness, Marie of Champagne (Topsfield, 1981). 

Chrétiens’ descriptions of the knights may seem sparse in some places compared to modern narratives with their gloss of detail, but he makes much from the economy of words he employs. Later poets working in French, German, and English took note of the parameters of descriptive style Chrétien established, and utilized similar constraints within their own works (Lacy, et al., 1988). His early description of Érec, for instance, is focused on the attributes of the knight. Although little directive detail is provided, the reader still obtains a clear portrait of the knight and is thus prepared to follow his actions in the ensuing verses. 

As can be seen in the example below, the reader gets a sense of Érec’s character not so much through a description of his visual appearance (beyond certain crucial material details such as his ermine cloak), but through his demeanor via the connotative meaning of his outward traits.

**Érec et Énide** hold it in contempt for its supposed repetition and lack of inspired prose. 

*Après les siut a esperon* 
*Uns chevaliers, Érec ot non.* 
*De la Table Reonde estoit,* 
*Mout grant los an la cort avoit.* 
*De tant come il i ot esté,* 
*N’i ot chevalier plus loë;* 

*Et fu tant biaus, qu’an nule terre* 
*N’esteïst plus bel de lui querre.* 
*Mout estoit biaus et preuz et janz,* 
*Et n’avoit pas vint et cinc anz.* 
*Onques nus hon de son aage* 
*Ne fu de greignor vasselage.* 
*Que diroie de ses bontez?* 
*Sors un cheval estoit montez,* 
*Afublez d’un mantel ermin* 
*Galopant vint tot le chemin,* 
*S’ot cote d’un diaspres noble,* 
*Qui fu fez an Costantinoble.*

(Chrétien de Troyes, **Érec et Énide**; Ins.81-98)

The knight Chrétien provides is young, yet as gallant as any who sat at the hallowed Round Table, adroit in his ermine cloak and his noble silk coat from Constantinople. These last details would have had a greater impact on Chrétien’s intended audience than a modern reader (ermine was not readily available and silk from the Near East would have come at a princely sum). Anyone of noble birth at the time would have recognized that Érec was a knight from an especially prosperous family. Thus, Chrétien constructs a form of reverse metaphor in this passage, providing literal details, but within the scope of having such details denote an extended lineage and history. This verse *commences* (that is, it sets forth) the knights and their king on a special journey, a quest of sorts. The geographical, worldly bearing of Érec’s accoutrements provides the needed backstory to the forestory yet to come. The reader can almost imagine a red line stretching across distant lands rendered on a map, illustrating how Chrétien’s current journey is but a continuation of the type of travel knights men embarked upon on a regular basis. The textual construction of this passage further develops the theme of excursion. To apply a concept developed by Hélène Cixous, this is a *text that departs*, that winks itself away via its own verbal construction (Cixous, 1997).

Such constructions are commonplace throughout *Érec et Énide*, though in some instances, such as the example above, they are much clearer than in others. In all cases, however, the real beauty of Chrétien’s prose is found in its poetics. Some of his metaphors, when translated out of Old French, appear without any great sustenance. A few even appear banal or trite to the modern reader. Yet there is much more to the semiotic formation of a text that speaks on a metaphoric level than is apparent from an examination of each metaphoric element as an individual construct. For Chrétien, much of the delight imparted by a tale such as *Érec et Énide* is found in the interdialogue between rhyme and analogies of metaphor. In describing a maiden, Chrétien resorts to devices that, in literal translation, seem somewhat stereotypical. Such is the case in this statement on the maid’s physical appearance:

*In truth I say that never Iseut the Fair had such radiant golden tresses that she could be compared with this maiden. The complexion of her forehead and face was clearer and more delicate than the lily.*

(Chrétien de Troyes, **Érec et Énide**; Ins. 424-428; author’s translation)

The original Old French passage is much more lyrical and Chrétien’s use of poetic structure appears immediately eloquent and masterful. Moreover, the clarity of his comparisons to Iseut and the lily are deeply aligned with the extended semiotic meanings of these metaphors:
“Por voir vos di qu’Iseuz, la blonde/ N’ot tant les crins sors ne luisanz,” read lines 424 and 425. These words signify the blondness of both the maiden at hand and the celebrated Iseut, imparting the luminance of the fair maid’s hair with the use of “luisanz” and “blonde.” She is not pale (i.e., pâle), per se, but “Cler et blanc”: white as white may be at its porcelain best. The amount of lustrous detail Chrétien conveys in these mere five lines is astounding. Outright, the maiden is compared to an incomparable personage, but beyond this device is the tenor of the language employed. Chrétien utilizes words that are specific and mundane, but that in this application are stunning in their pristine, unmitigated direction. With such words, Chrétien elevates his prose, a matter made all the more lucid by the rather ordinary choice of language in the preceding and following lines. For example, lines 448-449 simply render Érec’s reaction to viewing this beautiful maiden as, “Érec d’autre part s’esbas, Quant an li si grant biauté vit.” He is amazed at her beauty, but no metaphor is squandered in overstating this. Érec has already had his turn at the limelight, and is thus pulled from its glow for a moment so the poet may fully regale a new spectacle.

Narrative flow is promoted by the degree of attention Chrétien has lavished on details such as those just described. As the plot of the story is exposed from the onset of the narrative, elements of fascination will be manifest not so much in the unexpected turns taken by the macro-plot, but by the insertion of new and isolated conflicts that the protagonists faces. Chrétien moves resolutely from a very clear expository prose into a more mellifluous and romantic voice, only to return again to his unclouded, prosaic style of narrative whenever it best serves the advancement of the plot.

To fully appreciate this trend, it is useful to return to the influences available to Chrétien. The troubadour tradition in France, especially in Champagne, was well established (Chrétien even wrote songs within this genre). The oral conventions of Old English and Welsh were known to Chrétien and, as Ulrich Von Zatzikhoven’s Lanzelet seems to attest, a great deal of exchange existed in the late 12th century between Anglo-Saxon, Welsh, French, and Germanic narrative traditions. At the same time, Old French was growing out of its Latin roots in a manner that encouraged the proliferation of lyrical narratives in the romantic form in Old French instead of the classical Latin. Linguistic structural aspects of Latin would certainly live on through the French language (and do to this day, though not as prominently as in Romanian or even Spanish or Portuguese). But for a clerc such as Chrétien, perhaps the most meaningful contribution of Latin was the ability to formulate rhyme schemes that often depended on noun-noun or verb-verb analogs without, in most cases, the interjection of pronouns and adverbs. Old French was able to provide the same basic structural working modes as Germanic languages insofar as its flexibility in transitive cases and register, but the language also imparted a Latinate lyricism.

Conclusion
Translating Chrétien’s Old French is largely contingent upon an acute awareness of how Chrétien constructed his narratives and how his usage of language both reflected and deviated from contemporary literary usage of his time. During the period in which Chrétien wrote, the chasm between the emerging sphere of written fiction and the daily world of spoken language was beginning to spread wider than in earlier times, signifying what Julia Kristeva has considered as the emergence of the novel as a literary form. While Chrétien certainly made strong efforts to include and adapt oral conventions of the clerc lisant into his romances, he seems to have been very aware of the limitations of this tradition. Chrétien was able to use the poetic agency to depart from fixed and static ideas of oral narrative by referencing other languages and mining their ability, through their syntax, to reflect a sequence of events differently than Old French. Therefore, when one is translating Chrétien, one is not simply translating from Old French to a recipient language, but is instead dealing with a meta-source bearing many composite influences from other languages and multiple layers of narrative (i.e., story) and dialogue.

The combination of Chrétien’s use of rhyming octosyllabic couplets to produce a framework that could be brought down to a micro-structure, in addition to the cyclical use of metaphors based on rhyme schemes throughout the broader parameters of the plot as a narrative vehicle, was an innovation for Old French prose. Was this structural composition used by authors elsewhere in the 12th century? Perhaps, but there is little evidence to indicate this. In most instances, the fusion of stylistic attributes from a variety
of historical and linguistic conventions is readily obvious (Campbell, 1998). Chrétien evidently knew how to produce very clear prose that led the reader from one action to another in a sequential manner. When useful, he employed narrative mannerisms that did not deviate from his poetic structure, yet left behind the patterns set by his usual prose style. His use of adjectives, in particular, produce a means of recognizing the differences in his narrative application of metaphor. Where non-metaphorical localized description is required, Chrétien wrote in a manner that employed the most obvious and powerful adjectives available: those that left no ambiguity in their meaning. In contrast, when he required a separation of a localized event from the broader narrative, he indicated this shift by connecting his adjectives together via extended metaphors that depended on both paradigms set forth in the poetic structure and the interrelationship between metaphorical identities.

Chrétien’s development of rhetoric consistently introduces reiterations of narrative intent using metaphorical constructs based on rhetorical ideas. He denotes time-based action clearly, and also suggests the course events may likely take. He is very open with his reader insofar as he allows for detours from the main direction of the plot. In one instance, he could not have been any more direct in his resolve, stating “Yders n'i vost plus arester/Sa foi li covrier aquter;/Maintenant sor son cheval monte./Por quoi vos feroi long conte?” (Érec et Énide, Ins. 1081-1084). Indeed, though he can certainly tarry if given the option, why should he make the story needlessly long? Érec et Énide is served well by this approach, and establishes many of the stylistic and semiotic mechanisms that Chrétien will further develop in latter works. Without the semiotic import assigned to metaphors (the involvement of the metaphor in a larger nonliteral discursive function), Chrétien would be left with mundane prose. The translator may learn from Chrétien’s experience in working with narrative as a meta-text, and undoubtedly such knowledge may be utilized in the translation of other complex narratives, whether found in Old French or any other language.

The author wishes to acknowledge the support of the Savannah College of Art and Design and the Københavns Universitet, in addition to the comments and assistance provided by Dr. Teresa Griffiths, Dr. Marie Timberlake, Megan Masana, and Chris Tial. This article is dedicated to Christopher R. Connelly.

References


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**Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame Accepting 2002 Nominations**

The Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame (TIHOF) is now accepting nominations for 2002. The TIHOF was founded September 30, 2000, to recognize the achievements of, and pay tribute to, the men and women who have helped penetrate cultural and linguistic barriers between the world’s peoples. Language specialists the world over observe International Translators Day every year on September 30, the Feast Day of St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators and the TIHOF’s first honoree. Each year on this date the TIHOF will honor additional outstanding practitioners of the art of translating and interpreting.

Nominations for historical or contemporary figures should include a biography and/or an essay on the nominee (700 words or longer) with optional illustrations. Please send entries to nominate@tihof.org by August 1, 2002. Nominations will be judged by a panel drawn from various translator and interpreter associations. New honorees will be announced on International Translators Day, September 30, 2002, and published on the TIHOF website (www.tihof.org), with proper credit given to essay authors and translators. Submissions will become the property of the TIHOF. Nominees not inducted at the 2002 ceremony may be considered for future years.
Becoming accredited is certainly a plus for any translator. As a former candidate (I passed the test in 1996) and now a grader (for two years), I will try to pass on a few tips to those of you who are considering taking the exam for the first time. A large majority of the candidates fail the examination. Not all of them are actually below the standards of the accreditation. They may have overlooked some instructions, or made careless errors they would not do in real life, or it was just one of those bad days when everything goes wrong. Life is certainly full of small and big frustrations; failing the accreditation exam does not have to be one of them. I will try to describe the points that I consider important, hoping it will help. I will primarily deal with the English-French combination.

Know Your Capacities and Limitations

A number of articles and recommendations appear regularly in the ATA Chronicle listing the qualities and skills required of a good translator. If you have not paid attention to them, dig into the archives and read them. These articles often stress the same points. You certainly know already that being totally fluent in both languages is only one of the prerequisites. Not many people, especially on this side of the Atlantic, have received a proper training in translation per se, unless they took classes to be interpreters, translators, or teachers of a foreign language. If you have never had any academic training in translation, take a practice test to get acquainted with the kind of document you will have to translate, in addition to the way it is graded, and see if you have a chance of passing the exam. Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure are all heavily marked on the exam, and you have to do the work by hand without the benefit of a computerized spell and grammar check. You may be surprised to discover that your knowledge of French grammar and usage is not good enough, even though you are a native speaker and already established as a translator. You may have betrayed the original text and made more major errors than you thought.

Do What it Takes to be Up to the Standards

If you really want to learn how to translate and be accredited, you may want to consider taking a correspondence course. The most reputable in France is the CNED (Centre national d’enseignement à distance). It helped me and thousands of students to pass exams such as a “licence” and later the “CAPES.” You will find a preparation for almost any kind of exam and degree existing in France. Go to this website: http://telesup.univ-mrs.fr/. In a very long list, I found this preparation which may interest some of you. Here is the entry:

**P8402 Anglais: entraînement à la version: niveau avancé 1**


Being faithful to the meaning of the source text is exactly what you need to do to pass the accreditation exam. If you do not already use one, buy a good grammar reference book and also the Bescherelle to review your conjugations. I would also add La linguistique comparative du français et de l’anglais by Vinay and Dalbernet (published by Didier), or some more recent handbooks about French and English translations to learn about translation techniques.

Be Prepared for the Conditions of the Exam

Be fully aware of what to expect the day of the exam. Read attentively the information that is found on the ATA website and which accompanies the letter confirming your exam sitting. For example, some candidates do not realize they will have to write their translations manually until they find out in the exam room. In order to be ready for this situation, try to practice and write a couple of paragraphs by hand. You can use a pencil and an eraser and draw arrows to correct your first draft, provided it is clear for the grader. The general aspect of your test has no influence whatsoever on the grading; only the quality of the French and its accuracy compared to the English are taken into account.

Think of the kind of advice you would receive if this were a final exam for a college course, such as have a good night’s sleep, eat the right things, etc. Do not bring a full bookshelf of dictionaries. Personally, I took the bilingual Robert & Collins, a small English-French scientific dictionary, a paperback business dictionary, the little red book (I mean the indispensable Bescherelle) to check conjugations and irregular verb forms, and a pocket dictionary of synonyms. It is important to look for synonyms so as to find the term best adapted to the context.
Do Not Fall into These Traps

Omissions

Too many candidates overlook a whole sentence or even a paragraph. This will lead to an E, or 2 E (major errors), depending on the importance of the passage which has not been translated. A single word, like an adverb, may be very important and should be rendered. For instance, in the phrase “in almost all the cases,” do not forget to translate almost.

Mistranslations

They can result from a misunderstanding of the meaning of the source language and lead to a faulty rendition in the target language. Let’s consider this English sentence: “This symbol is placed next to any additional information that supplements the instructions above it.” It was translated: “Ce symbole attire l’attention sur des suppléments d’information applicables aux instructions situées au-dessus.” If this had been part of an exam text, I would have put an “E” (major error) for the translation of “placed next to,” and an “e” (minor error) for the translation of “additional information that supplements.” Remember to be faithful to the meaning of the source text.

Grammar and Syntax

Pay particular attention to long or convoluted sentences. They may result in incorrect French. Check the conjugation of a verb, match adjectives with their nouns and subjects with their verbs, and come back to the sentence and read it again after completing the whole passage. A “fresh” look at it can reveal flaws you did not see when you wrote it down the first time.

French Usage and Incorrect Terminology

Too many candidates have lost touch with their native tongue and its idiosyncrasies (unless they never knew about them). For instance, French does not use capitalization in the same way as English. For instance, we do not use uppercase for adjectives of nationality: an Italian monument = un monument italien. We would write “l’examen d’accréditation” (with a lower case “a”) if we had to use it in a French text. Some ordinary, frequently used words, like the adjective “new,” can be tricky. “A new cartridge” can be either une cartouche neuve or une nouvelle cartouche, depending on the context. Une cartouche nouvelle does not sound right, even if it is grammatically correct. Of course, these would be considered minor errors, but too many of them can have a devastation effect on the final grade.

The same word can have different meanings, and the candidate has to pick the right one. Take a word like “element.” It can be élément, composante, or facteur in French. “Government” and “governmental” are too often incorrectly translated with a French cognate, whereas they mean “officiel” or “public” in French in most cases. Another word comes to my mind: “millenium” became “millénaire” (with an accent on the “e” to frenchify it, I guess), because the translator did not know about or did not think of the French word “millénaire.” Keeping up to date with the terminology of the target language is essential.

Literal Translation

Some people think they would rather be safe than sorry and opt for a literal approach. This results in awkward and often obscure French: “ils choisissent l’approche littérale,” which is not always accurate. Take this example from a text I edited some time ago: “The managers and executives of this company were bringing in the device on their own initiative…” Here is the translation I found: “les gestionnaires et dirigeants de la compagnie [sic] avaient apporté l’appareil de leur propre initiative.” This is almost word for word and does not exactly convey the meaning of the English. “Manager” is often translated as “responsable, chef de service, supérieur hiérarchique,” depending on the context.” “Bring in” means “introduire, lancer,” implying that the object is something new and unheard of. This translator had missed all these nuances.

Too Freely Translated Phrases

This way of translating can be risky as well, and I would recommend a middle of the road approach. For example, you do not have to say “une maison datant du siécle des Lumières” to translate “an 18th-century house,” or “ Ils en eu pour leur argent” to translate “their wish was fulfilled.” Let’s not get carried away too far from the English text!

Conversion of Imperial Measures

Remember that you do NOT have to convert these when you translate the passages for the exam. You certainly have enough to worry about without using your calculator or trying to figure it out in your head. You only have to use “pouces” to translate “inches,” “pieds” for feet,” and so forth. I found some extravagant results like “3 millions de mètres
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).

Getting Started: A Newcomer’s Guide to Translation and Interpretation, compiled by Sandra Burns Thomson, is a compilation of articles from ATA publications and serves as a straightforward guide for newcomers to the professions. 72 pages; $15 (ATA members), $25 (nonmembers).

Order Today!
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E-mail: ata@atanet.org

Fax your order form to ATA at 703.683.6122

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Tax & Shipping: Virginia residents add 4½% sales tax. Shipping is included for domestic orders. International orders, add $20 postage per order.

Tax/Ship

Total
I n July 2001, Indiana-based Mead Johnson Nutritionals announced that it was recalling 4.6 million cans of Nutramigen Baby Formula due to misleading Spanish instructions on bilingual labels. Company officials said that formula produced with the misleading directions could have caused illness or even death.

A translation error? Not exactly, said our contact, although language did come into play. “When we redesigned our labels, instructions for the concentrated version of the product were inadvertently mixed up with those for the ready-to-use powder form,” explained spokesman Pete Paradossi.

The mix-up, which concerned only Spanish instructions on the back of the label, went unnoticed during proofreading. Had the same mistake occurred in an all-English text, it might well have been caught.

Not until a Spanish-speaking consumer phoned to ask about the discrepancy did the error come to light. The company moved quickly to issue a recall notice and set up free bilingual helplines to field consumers’ questions. Happily, it has received no reports of infant illness or death. Mead Johnson Nutritionals could not put a price on the recall, but it looks to be hefty. “We are talking about millions of cans,” said Mr. Paradossi ruefully.

There is nothing like a health scare to focus corporate attention, especially in the litigious United States. While Mead Johnson says it is generally satisfied with the translations it buys from a supplier in Chicago, it confirmed that all translation and label production processes are undergoing a stringent review to ensure that it is not caught out again.

Botched Bilingual Label a Formula for Recall

**Reaching Out to Consumers in Paris**

Troubled U.K. retailer Marks & Spencer announced massive cutbacks in 2001, ultimately closing down its stores in continental Europe. In *The Independent on Sunday* (December 23, 2001), the last manager of the M&S flagship store in Paris recalled the company’s early days in France. Even then, it was not all smooth sailing, noted Guy Bodescot. He cited confusion in the mid-1970s when Marks & Spencer management in London refused to provide French translations on its labels. The head office relented only when sales staff reported Parisians were purchasing packets of dried flowers in the home furnishings department and using them, unsuccessfully, as herbal teas. Not that the first round of translations supplied by London set things altogether straight: the store’s own brand of marmalade was guaranteed to be *sans préservatifs*, which means, literally, “without condoms.”

**Cadaver in the Cooler in Austria?**

Home from the supermarket, an Austrian consumer got a start when she took a closer look at a package of deep-frozen *focaccia* bread. This pizza alternative is popular in Italophile Austria, says Brigitte Scott. Yet a translation glitch on the box she bought, produced by Fooditalia Firenze s.r.l., raised eyebrows all around.

Instructions for preparing the dish are rendered serviceably in Italian, French, English, German, and Spanish. The problem appears in the storage instructions for home freezers, where the original *Conservazione domestica* slides into an awkward *Domestic preservation* in English and bizarre *Konservierung Das Dienstmädchen* (literally, Conservation The Maidservant) in German.

**Whodunit?** The obvious suspect is unedited (and mistyped—the “m” is left out of *Dienstmädchen* on the box) machine translation, which relies on replacing words rather than analyzing meaning. Yet this was no open-and-shut case: The Onionskin has seen similar, and worse, produced by non-translators working with dictionary in hand.

When we phoned, a Fooditalia Firenze representative told us that the trail was cold. The prime (human) suspect was no longer with the company, which has itself changed hands since the boxes were designed and printed. She assured us that a review of translations on all of the company’s packaging materials would start shortly. Foul play seems unlikely: the incriminated package was *vegetariana*.

**Smoke Got in Their Eyes**

The English version of a German website dedicated to fine cigars and pipes recounts Nuremberg-based Vauen’s 150-year history in awkward yet understandable prose. The phrase “5 generations of passionate pipemakers” has a jolly ring to it, despite spluttering Disney-character overtones.

But the French version is definitely not for kids: *5 générations des faiseurs des pipes par passion* translates roughly as “five generations of (male) specialists in blow jobs.” With passion, no less.

As Vauen founder Ernst Eckert turned in his grave, great-great-grandson and current chairman Alexander set the record straight for The Onionskin. Employees at Vauen take great pride in their craft, which is pipe making, full stop. The flawed text had been produced and displayed by a pipe dealer without Vauen’s knowledge or permission.
Distributor Cyber-Cigar-Direct confirmed as much through manager Herr Jaudzims, who confessed that the French text was the work of his daughter, with the help of a dictionary. A native German speaker who studied French in school, Ms. Jaudzims is not a professional translator.

Most slipshod translations investigated by The Onionskin result from poor planning, tight budgets, or both. This time money was definitely the obstacle.

“We are a small company,” Mr. Jaudzims told The Onionskin, “and we have no budget for translation.” He assured us the Spanish version was better—he’d done it himself, and he speaks Spanish like a native (well, almost). However, professional translators who visited that version did not agree. “Gibberish,” said Carmelo Cancio, a Spanish translator and communications specialist in southwestern France.

According to Mr. Jaudzims, Cyber-Cigar-Direct is an exclusively Internet-based distributor, selling premium wares to customers around the world. It has no plans to modify the translations, he told us (“Geld! Geld!”).

When word got out via online discussion groups, language professionals streamed to both sites (www.cigar-pipe.de/FF/fppc1t1.htm and www.cigar-pipe.de/ES/fppc1t1.htm) and returned in stitches. Here’s hoping some of them are into smoking paraphernalia. A surge in sales could generate cash to commission a professional translation and restore the honor of the Eckert family.

Translation Volunteers Reach Across Borders
Sleeping sickness in Burundi, food security and armed conflict in Sudan, torture in Chechnya, and the plight of displaced people in Zaire are just a few of the harrowing subjects that translators tackle through Traducteurs Sans Frontières (TSF).

Based in Paris, this network of professional translators volunteers time and language skills to assist humanitarian organizations such as Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and Amnesty International.

As its name suggests, TSF is modeled after MSF, founded in France. MSF delivers emergency medical assistance to populations in danger in more than 80 countries, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

The TSF network was born after a chance meeting between an MSF representative and Lori Thicke, general manager of Paris-based translation agency Eurotext. “MSF had already given our company some paid assignments, but we admired their work so much that at a certain point we offered to waive our fee,” explains Thicke. “And when we thought about it, we were convinced that many translators, like MSF’s medical volunteers, would be prepared to make a contribution in kind to such a good cause.”

Her intuition was right: to date over 30 translators have answered the call, producing some 50,000 words a month. The beneficiaries are delighted.

“Traducteurs sans Frontières is a huge help,” says Caroline Serraf, who is in charge of translations at MSF. “Our budgets are tight and we are very strict about holding running costs to 5% of our FRF 500 million annual total. Every penny saved is used for projects in the field.” About 85% of MSF’s funds come from private donations, with the balance provided by international donors.

Karen Tucker, a French-English translator based in Ohio, is one TSF volunteer. “I have enormous respect for humanitarian associations like Médecins sans Frontières,” she told The Onionskin. “And until TSF, I never realized that my translation skills could make a direct contribution to their work.”

A former journalist, Tucker also enjoys tackling the international issues featured in her volunteer assignments.

Drawbacks? “Few volunteers are specialized enough to take on our very technical work, which is still done by volunteer doctors and engineers,” says Ms. Serraf. Timing can also be a problem, since volunteers, quite naturally, tend to check in only when their regular workload lightens. “We are an emergency aid organization, so our work is determined by crises,” she notes regretfully.

Deadlines can be extremely tight. For instance, when MSF called for parliamentary hearings in France after the fall of Srebrenica (where some 7,000 people were massacred), TSF volunteers translated 8,500 words of testimony from MSF personnel literally overnight. MSF was the only non-governmental organization present in the enclave at the time.

Editors are also needed, says Serraf, since translations provided by TSF are unedited.

Language combinations depend on current events and crises, although MSF says that 80% of its work is French-English. Yet into-French translators are also required at present, along with Portuguese, Albanian, and Romanian. For more information, contact tsf@eurotexte.fr.

Continued on p.64
Harrap’s Unabridged French–English, English–French Dictionary (2 volumes)

Publisher: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd.
Publication date: 2001
ISBNs: 0245 50434 6 (France) 0245 60661 0 (U.K.)
Price: Euros 74.70 (approximately $65)

Reviewed by: Françoise Herrmann

Harrap’s Unabridged bilingual dictionary of French and English (in two volumes, one for each direction of translation) is the most recent, and largest, of the Harrap’s collection of bilingual dictionaries. Weighing 12 pounds with 425,000 words and expressions, and 750,000 translations (compared to the 305,000 words and 555,000 translations of the Shorter, and the 60,000 translations of the smallest of Harrap’s bilingual dictionaries, the Mini), the Unabridged is indeed the heavyweight champion of a series of six bilingual dictionaries offered by Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd. in Scotland.

Sporting a cover with the familiar bold crimson letters “HARRAP’S” on a black background, the Unabridged celebrates 100 years of Harrap’s “grand dame” of lexicography, the four-volume Standard Dictionary, and is intended as a “worthy successor” to this work. Designed according to the modern principles of “user-friendly” lexicography and linguistics, this dictionary aims far beyond the boring, repetitive entries of its forerunners. This dictionary is a treasure chest containing a wealth of information, and a real delight to use.

Here is an example of boxed summaries to facilitate consultation and to target a desired translation for the French term “Bien” and the English term “Get.”

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albeit essential, alphabetical listing of terms and their translations. Among the new and traditional features of the *Unabridged*, you will discover: a genuine concern for layout and ease of consultation; the inclusion of dedicated and interesting cultural commentary to illuminate definitions (adding an encyclopedic dimension); outstanding attention directed to the standard linguistic variations of both English and French, along with informed and useful indexing of terms according to various register types; and an ever-constant effort to capture new terminology and to include varying degrees of specialization. Such novel and traditional features of the *Unabridged* are sure to please all lovers of print dictionaries, especially those for whom bilingual dictionaries are indispensable tools of the trade.

The first novelty embodied in this dictionary is driven by a concern for ease of use and navigation. To facilitate consultation of the dictionary and its 750,000 translations, the *Unabridged* is formatted with a three-column, color-coded layout. The color blue serves to highlight all headings and to point to grammatical divisions within an article. The rest of the text appears in black print. Additionally, grey, boxed summaries are supplied for terms with multiple meanings and numerous translations. For example, the ubiquitous English term “get,” for which no less than 250 translations are listed, is indexed with a boxed summary referencing the various semantic dimensions of the term, which also supplies a shortcut to targeting the desired meaning and translation of the term. Conversely, in the French volume, the term “bien” is similarly listed with a shortcut summary index pointing to the varied semantic dimensions of the term (see Figure 1).

The second novelty of the *Unabridged*, the inclusion of cultural commentary in an encyclopedic form, is driven by modern principles of lexicography. This dimension is apparent in various ways. First, there are small, boxed articles inserted in the listings that supply additional explanations for some culturally loaded terms and expressions. For example, the English entry for “gate” includes a small, boxed summary article devoted to the suffix “-gate.” This additional inserted article highlights the origin of the suffix in “Watergate,” and explains the generative property of the suffix used to refer generically to scandals such as “Dianagate,” “Monicagate,” “Contragate,” “Irangate,” etc. Similarly, the French entry for “quai” contains a small additional boxed article explaining how government offices are often referred to by their street addresses. Hence, the State Department, Police Headquarters, and the French Academy are referred to and located respectively at “Le Quai d’Orsay,” “Le Quai des Orfèvres,” and “Le Quai Conti” in Paris.

Also included with these expanded encyclopedic commentaries are invaluable translations of major works of art, literature, theater, and film. You will find, indexed accordingly with small corresponding icons, the official translations for such works as Perrault’s (literature), Tchaikovsky’s (music), or Disney’s (motion picture) *Sleeping Beauty*: Bolt’s (theater) and Zimmerman’s (motion picture) *A Man for All Seasons*; not to mention Da Vinci’s (visual arts) *The Mona Lisa* and Emily Brontë’s (literature) or Wyler’s (motion picture) *Wuthering Heights*. With similar processing of the titles of major works in the French-to-English direction, the inclusion of these translations is sure to save you a world of time that would otherwise have been spent consulting library catalogs, or the web, for official translations.

Finally, in the expanded encyclopedic mode of the *Unabridged*, you will find a series of useful annexes:

- A comparative chronology of cultural and historical events in the U.K. and France, ranging from 55 B.C. to the Y2k +1;
- A guide to composing correspondence in various modes and media, including e-mail;
- A comparative chart of military ranks covering the U.S., British, Canadian, Swiss, and Belgian armed forces;
- A list of abbreviations and their expansions, including translations (novel and really useful features) and;
- A new listing of expressions, termed “Allusions,” referring to famous contemporary phrases that have “immediate connotation for native speakers and form part of their cultural baggage.” Thus, in the “Allusions” section you will find cultural explanations and translation for such English phrases as “Not tonight Joséphine,” “Read my lips,” and “Catch 22.” Conversely, in the French section, you will find explanations for such phrases as “Les deux mon capitaine!,” “Le compte est bon,” and “Faire avancer le schmilblick.”

All of the annexes of the *Unabridged* are particularly useful.
However, the translated abbreviations annex is one of a kind, as abbreviation listings generally omit any existing translations, preferring instead to remain exclusively explanatory. Thus, you will discover in the English-French direction not only that DTP stands for “desktop publishing,” but that the corresponding French abbreviation is “PAO” (publication assistée par ordinateur). Similarly, you will see that the “WYSIWYG” interface design principle (pronounced “wizzywig,” at least in the U.S.) stands for “What you see is what you get,” and that the least in the U.S.) stands for “What you see is what you get,” and that the French translation is “PAO” (publication assistée par ordinateur).

Conversely, in the French-English direction, you will find that the French abbreviations for NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement), POW (Prisoner of War), and LCM (lowest common multiple) correspond to, ALÉNA (Accord de libre-échange nord-américain), PG (commando), and PPCM (le plus petit commun multiple), respectively. This translated list of abbreviations is exceptionally useful.

Beyond the novelty of color codes, shortcut summaries, and the inclusion of an encyclopedic dimension to circumscribe cultural meaning, the Unabridged, with 425,000 words and expressions and 750,000 translations, is both a quantitative and qualitative linguistic feat. As an experienced publisher of bilingual specialty dictionaries in areas such as finance, business, telecommunications, and even slang, Harrap is particularly well positioned to integrate specialized, up-to-date terminology in what primarily represents a general bilingual dictionary. Thus, you will find the Unabridged inclusive of 50,000 specialized terms in domains as varied as finance, nuclear physics, sports, and botany.

Adding to the breadth and considerable depth of the Unabridged is Harrap’s concern for linguistic variation. You will find clear indexing of English terms according to standard variations found in American, Scottish, Irish, British, and Australian English. You will also find indexing of French terms according to standard variations for Belgian, Swiss, and Canadian French (including Acadian). This concern for linguistic variation is particularly useful for the American context, since you will not want to lose sight of the fact that the Unabridged is a British product. You will definitely be glad to know that in the U.S.: a “lorry” is a “truck,” a “dustbin” is a “garbage can,” and that “knickers” are “women’s underwear.”

Likewise, among thousands, the term “toll-free call” is indexed as American with translations “numéro vert” and “appel sans frais” indexed respectively for Canada and France. The French term “sapeur-pompier” is listed with translations “firefighter” and “fireman,” indexed as American and British, respectively. Similarly, for the term “e-mail,” translations are listed according to standard variations, “courriel!” in Canada and “courrier électronique, email and mèl!” in France. Finally, considering Edinburgh is the publisher’s home, you will definitely find the Scottish delicatessen “haggis” listed (of all culinary quirks, and as a vegetarian nightmare) with a clear, albeit lengthy, explanatory translation: “plat typiquement écossais fait d’une panse de brebis farcie (d’un hachis d’abats et de farine d’avoine très épicée).”

Add still more to this qualitative feast, and you will find terms also indexed according to various register types, such as formal, familiar, vulgar, archaic, humorous, old-fashioned, technical and nontechnical, and officially recommended. Thus, for the English term “drug dependency,” you will find the translations “toxicomanie” and “pharmacodépendance,” the latter indexed as “specialized.” Similarly, for the French term “épiderme,” you will find the translations “skin” and “epidermis,” with the latter indexed as a specialized term. In general, multiple indexing of terms for register or for standard language variation, in addition to standard polysemic indexing, is particularly useful in helping to target a translation and reduce the possibilities. And it is especially useful for translators who work in circumscribed domains, both in terms of content and audience.

Finally, in terms of keeping up with novel terminology, in addition to the 50,000 added specialized terms, you will find in the Harrap’s Unabridged some interesting inclusions. In English, the terms “Infobahn” (autoroute de l’information), “infoaddict” (accro de l’Internet), and the expression “to build a better mouse trap” (élaborer un meilleur produit) have been included, though there is no listing for the American term “chad” and its derivatives (“pregnant chad,” “hanging chad,” “dimpled chad,” “swinging-door chad,” and “tri-chad”—all lexical stars of the 2000 presidential elections in the U.S. [New York Times Magazine. Safire, 2000]). Conversely, in French you will find “W3” (a standard abbreviation for the World Wide Web) and “Webmestre” (the non-borrowed translation of the term “Webmaster”).

Considering those features of the Unabridged that have been
reviewed above, this latest and largest of the Harrap’s bilingual dictionaries comes as a most welcome and useful tool for translators. For print lovers, this dictionary truly responds to the need for reliable, voluminous, and up-to-date terminology in the most pleasing manner. However, for those (Generation X, Y, Z, and others) who are already deeply acculturated (beyond return) in the digital world, the hope is that such fine and superb scholarship will take the leap back to the origins of user-friendliness, navigational nimbleness, hypertext virtuosity, mega-size corpuses, and new-age, post-enlightenment, www-based encyclopedias so that such unquestionable excellence in lexicography can be propelled with appropriate (and legitimate) tools to further expand its own stated goals. Especially considering that Harrap has already successfully ventured in the domain of digital technology for support of its lexicographic endeavors with the bold, endearing, and superb Harrap’s Shorter on CD-ROM. In the interim, and providing that you have both room and muscle, enjoy! This is the newest and most complete of the Harrap’s bilingual French-English/English-French dictionaries.

Reference

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Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government
Compiled by:
Ted Crump
Publisher:
American Translators Association
Publication date:
2001
ISBN:
0-914175-11-4
Price:
ATA members $30; Nonmembers $50

Reviewed by:
John F. Bukacek

Ted Crump, one of the foremost experts on foreign language services in the U.S., has compiled an outstanding survey of foreign language needs within the federal government. This report provides unique insight into the translation and interpretation requirements and capacities of government agencies and departments (including the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches).

This report is an expanded update of Crump’s 1985 survey, Translations in the Federal Government 1985. That 40-page publication covered 19 federal agencies with either in-house or outsourced translation or interpretation activity. The current report, with 175 pages covering more than 80 departments, agencies, and offices that utilize the services of foreign language experts, is a far more comprehensive and detailed survey of the status of translation and interpretation in the federal government.

This report provides hard data by examining the extent to which the government’s foreign language needs are being met by in-house language specialists or outsourced procurement. It also takes a look at how language needs and requirements within the federal government have changed over time, as well as the impact of national study priorities, federal legislation, and foreign developments on the status of translation and interpretation services. With the support of the National Foreign Language Center, the Interagency Language Roundtable, and the Society of Federal Linguists, Crump identified knowledgeable contacts within the various government agencies and queried them with a standard written questionnaire or through direct personal interviews. In some cases, information was gathered through telephone calls and via the Internet. One can only imagine the tremendous time and effort that went into compiling this report. Once again, Crump has made a tremendous contribution to the translation and interpretation professions.

This report provides a wealth of information. Descriptions of the types of foreign language activity within the federal government are given along with contact information. Data on translation volume for various language combinations, as well as information on quality control procedures and training, are available for some agencies. Some information concerning the intelligence agencies was classified, and therefore unavailable. Due to the different degrees of specificity and quantity of information provided by each agency, data in this report will vary. The information was gathered, reviewed, and officially approved over a period of two years and six months. Consequently, some of the information does not necessarily reflect the up-to-the-minute situation. Also, this report went to press prior to the September 11 terrorist
attacks. Since then, obviously, a number of branches of the federal government have had to re-evaluate some of their foreign language needs.

This is a monumental report, and is a valuable resource that should be on the desk of every professional translator and interpreter.

Medical Dictionary:
English-Spanish-Portuguese
Authors:
Dr. Irmgard Nolte-Schlegel and Dr. Joan José González Soler
Translator:
Dr. Peter Reuter
Publisher:
Springer-Verlag
Publication date:
January 2001
Price:
$24.95 (new)
ISBN:
3-540-41469-X
(Softcover, 343 pages, trilingual edition. Contains over 4,200 entries. Although named as a dictionary, the book is more properly described as a glossary, since trilingual equivalents are given with no definitions. Contains no bibliography, index, or footnotes.)

Reviewed by:
Arlene M. Kelly

A quick search for more information about the authors of this dictionary was disappointing. The lead author, Dr. Irmgard Nolte-Schlegel, compiled another trilingual dictionary (glossary) with the same title in German, Portuguese, and Spanish (ISBN: 3-540-41980-2). Nothing else was found for the second author.

Although Dr. Peter Reuter, the translator, does not appear among the present membership of ATA, I was able to find a tad more information on him than I could on the two authors. His German-English dictionaries have garnered rave reviews in prior issues of the ATA Chronicle. In a commentary for one of his books, we learn that he has been compiling information for his database since 1989. In fact, one of his works has 30,000 entries and subentries, with 50,000 translations! If only that were for Portuguese-English medical terminology as well as for German-English! Dr. Reuter’s expertise in German and English would explain some of the oversights for Portuguese (and Spanish, although the latter was not under the microscope here).

This publisher, Springer-Verlag, has a long history of producing scientific reference works. The original bookstore/publisher opened in Berlin, Germany, in 1842. Among early publications were translations of American literature into German. For those who are interested, the website is www.springer.de/press/about/history.html (for the catalogue) or www.springer-ny.com (for the U.S. site).

The Medical Dictionary affords us the unique opportunity to consult “from-Portuguese” medical terminology directly, instead of, as is often the case, arriving in that direction only after being forced through a series of detours. According to the preface by Dr. Irmgard Nolte-Schlegel, “This dictionary was born of necessity.” After she moved to Portugal to practice medicine, Dr. Nolte-Schlegel felt the need of a reliable reference for medical terminology. She began taking notes and consulting with colleagues, eventually producing her Medical Dictionary. I, for one, am grateful that she took the time and effort necessary to compile and produce this groundbreaking reference book.

Anyone who has attempted to translate medical documents from Portuguese to English has encountered the dearth of reliable resources. Basically, this is the first dictionary or glossary dedicated to “from-Portuguese” multilingual medical terminology. For the other direction (from English to Portuguese) there are three major sources: Dorland, Stedman, and Ruiz Torres. The Internet provides several monolingual sources, including the European Union multilingual medical glossary, which provides popular continental Portuguese terms. Another possible resource includes descriptive medical texts, such as Where There Is No Doctor, that include Portuguese translations.

The Medical Dictionary provides us with a general resource where we can start with Portuguese instead of yo-yoing to and from and back again. Quite simply, this handy reference does begin to fill a void that has yawned abysmally. All three languages are organized alphabetically, and it is very easy to consult.

The dictionary’s main goal, which it achieves splendidly, is to help all those connected in some fashion to the medical profession. Formal medical terminology is provided with equivalents in Portuguese, Spanish, and English; this is quite helpful
for translating medical documents from Portuguese. However, popular, colloquial, or slang terms related to medicine are not included. Nor is there a distinction made between Continental and Brazilian Portuguese (even though this is one of the claims made in an informative piece about the dictionary.)

There are a few omissions and some inconsistencies that could be corrected in a future edition. For example, “emergency room” is not an entry. If it were included, sala de emergência would be the expression listed for Brazil and sala de urgência would be listed for Portugal. Another omission, “ground floor,” which would generally be helpful in a hospital setting, would be rendered as térreo (Brazil) and rés-do-chão (Portugal). Another expression, “to hurt,” which may have been too colloquial, was not included. In Brazil, a common word for that is machucar, while in Portugal pisar would be more commonly used. “Squeeze” and “bloodshot” are some of the other words I wish had been included.

Another term needed should be “tape-worm.” In Portuguese, this term would officially be referred to as tênia (the popular rendering is solitária).

The vast majority of entries are well done, however, there are some exceptions. For example, the Portuguese equivalent for “carry” is given incorrectly as aguentar (which would be better translated as tolerate). The term “pallor” is given as enfiamento, but the correct term is palidez (“threading” can be the figurative term for “pallor,” so enfiamento is a choice, although not the best one). In addition, the term “weight” was left off of gain, but this is a simple oversight.

Considering the overall benefits of the Medical Dictionary, the few oversights cited above do not diminish its intrinsic value. This dictionary offers a great beginning to more and improved references for multilingual medical terminology that include Portuguese. One can only hope that the same authors or others will continue the work, and provide an even more comprehensive glossary or dictionary for Portuguese medical terms.

As it is, the Medical Dictionary provides some welcome relief for translators. The lack of popular terms and regional distinctions somewhat lessens its value for hospital interpreters who deal with the public as well as the medical professions. At just under $25, this dictionary is well worth the investment.

References


(The first English version of this book was translated in 1977 from the original Spanish edition, Donde no hay doctor.)

Arlene M. Kelly holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Florida at Gainesville with an advanced certificate in Latin American Studies. She teaches legal interpretation and interpreting methods and techniques for the Legal and Medical Interpreting Program at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts. She interprets Portuguese and French for the U.S. Federal Court and Portuguese for the Massachusetts State Courts. Contact: xingukelly@aol.com.

Looking for a freelance job or a full-time position? Need help finding a translator or interpreter for a freelance job or a full-time position? Check out ATA’s online Job Bank in the Members Only section of the ATA website at www.atanet.org/membersonly
Last March 9th and 10th we were eyewitnesses to a very sad scene in this profession, or so it seemed at the time. The Translation Inquirer and his wife went to Maryland for a conference unrelated to languages, and were startled when the Washington Post informed us of the imminent loss of the huge Victor Kamkin bookstore, which, for generations, has been the information source for scholars, spies, linguists, Russophiles, etc. This remarkable enterprise began on 14th Street in Washington, but some years ago had relocated to a barn-like space within a big building squeezed between the parking lot of a small shopping center near Rockville, Maryland, and the B&O Railroad.

Within that enormous area rented by the Kamkin company, there were well over two million Russia-related books of all sorts, so that the place had more the look of a research library with long, intimidating-looking metal stacks, than of a modern bookstore. The variety of dictionaries alone boggled the mind. But because of financial weakness due mainly to the end of the Cold War, the owner was about to evict Kamkin from the premises (with all the books to be taken to the county incinerator, because, as I stated above, the squeezing of this building into a small space meant there was no sidewalk or other area in which to place that many books!). But at the last minute, a Maryland congresswoman and a high official from the Library of Congress arranged for the books to be saved and transferred elsewhere for storage in an orderly way. We spent a mere $75 buying books that were being discounted at 40% on that final weekend; other customers filled whole shopping carts with books, in what they thought would be a final chance to take a biblioholic overdose. The line to the checkout counter ran hundreds of feet back into the main store. Thank God it ended well!

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

**New Queries**

(E-D 5-02/1) In working on a document regarding developmental aid, a ProZ subscriber ran into line ministries, evidently a type or part of the state administration in some southern African countries. She first wants to know what the concept refers to, and then wants good Dutch to express it.

(E-G 5-02/2) From the semiconductor world, we see the apparent neologism p-well, which is defined thus: A p-well is formed, extending from the major surface into the substrate. A drain region is formed by implanting a dopant of n-type conductivity, such as phosphorus, into p-well adjacent channel region. It can evidently be defined in German as a “Source-Bereich einer nichflüchtigen Speicherzelle,” but can something more succinct be found?

(G-E 5-02/3) What sort of object might a “Wangentisch” be? The context sentence provides some idea of configuration, but does not bring one any closer to a translation: “…gegenüber einem rechteckigen bzw. quadratischen Stollentisch, bei dem die Füße aus vier Stollen bestehen, weist ein Wangentisch den beiden Enden jeweils nur einen breiteren, mittig plazierten Fuß auf.”

(G-Sp 5-02/4) “Putzbau” is rendered structure, but that seems of little help in finding good Spanish for “Putzbauweise,” a term seen by a Lantra-L member in the following context sentence: “Zwei einander gegenüber-stehende Pavillons, die 1899 eröffnet wurden, bildeten in der Mitte des Karlsplatzes eine Stadt-bahnhaltestelle. Das von Otto Wagner entworfenen Ensemble ist eines der schönsten Beispiele des Wiener Jugendstils. Im Gegensatz zu den anderen zeitgenössischen, in Putzbauweise ausgeführten Stationgebäuden ließ Wagner die beiden Pavillons aus vorgefertigten Stahlgerüsten errichten.” Rendered-structure style does not sound right, and its Spanish equivalent is just as unlikely to be satisfying. What would be more satisfactory?

(I-E 5-02/5) A ProZ correspondent, working in the context of banking, wondered what “bruciante” and “PP.UU.” referred to in the sentence “Flag utilizzabile in caso di protesto” and “PP.UU.” does not sound right, and its Spanish equivalent is just as unlikely to be satisfying. What do they refer to?

**Replies to Old Queries**

(E-R 2-02/6) (Mandarin Chinese): Irina Knizhnik says that in its narrow meaning, the English term can be expressed in Russian as Северные метражи китайского языка. If what is meant is the language of communication in modern China, this should be referred to as нутунха or simply китайский язык.

(E-Sp 3-02/x) (footage, as in movies): Jan Gibboney states that she has used “metraje” as an adequate translation of this term.

(G-E 2-02/8) (“abgewandt” vs. “entgegen”): For the full text of...
Refreshing Reaction in Russia

For Russian consumers, Ikea’s “Svalka” drinking glasses could easily have joined the list of product names that sound fine at home, but do not travel well. The glasses are sold throughout Western Europe under the Svalka name, which means “refresh” in Swedish and…”landfill” or “dumpster” in Russian. Yet a quick check with Ikea Russia confirmed that the houseware giant’s eagle-eyed local team nipped the problem in the bud. In November 1999, an in-house copywriter in Moscow transformed Svalka to a neutral Sval’k.

“We try to keep the names as close as possible to the Swedish original,” Ikea Russia’s Irena Vanenkova told The Onionskin. “But where there are bad associations, we either change a vowel or remove, change, or add a consonant.”

The more countries and language combinations a company trades in, the higher the risk of a linguistic stumble. Ikea has 159 stores in 29 countries representing 17 different languages. Packaging production is centralized, with the same designs used worldwide. Product names are entered into the corporate database long before sales start, which gives teams in each country plenty of time to discover unfortunate choices, says an Ikea International executive.

Insiders still recall “Prick by the meter!”—the bold banner that greeted Canadian consumers when Ikea opened its first store in that country. Prick was a polka-dot fabric that has since been discontinued.

Correction:

In the March column (page 46) under French Bank Victim of Old School Try, “Budgets for the program total EUR 7.5 billion, or approximately $6.5 million,” should read “$6.5 billion.”

The Onionskin Continued from p.56

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Yet a quick check with Ikea Russia confirmed that the houseware giant’s eagle-eyed local team nipped the problem in the bud. In November 1999, an in-house copywriter in Moscow transformed Svalka to a neutral Sval’k.

“We try to keep the names as close as possible to the Swedish original,” facing away, although that could probably be expressed in clearer terms.

(G-E 2-02/9.a) (“Dachauffanggerüste”): Again from Sibylle Frnka, a guess that the term describes a type of scaffolding that is used to catch or deflect materials taken off the roof (i.e., old roofing tiles, etc.). The device may have its own roof of sorts, or maybe a chute. She found an article in Bauwelt that describes a company’s metal scaffolding. It features a sort of safety fence or railing that can be added on vertically, “for use as Dachauffanggerüst.” Whatever it is, it’s probably scaffolding with added safety features, not the “rickety and scary structures” mentioned in the initial query.

It truly does not take a village (even a global one) to make a good Translation Inquirer column, but I truly do need more queries and responses to provide the balanced coverage most readers have come to expect. What can YOU contribute for the next time this column appears? Think about it.

The Translation Inquirer Continued

With thanks to Tony Bulger, Konstantin Lakshin, Brigitte Scott, Tom West, and Lori Thicke.

For Long-Term Planners

Future Annual Conference Sites and Dates

Atlanta, Georgia
November 6-9, 2002

Phoenix, Arizona
November 5-8, 2003

Toronto, Canada
October 13-16, 2004
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 Brook 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.

When a Word Is Incorrect in the Original

One reason why computers are unlikely to be capable of more than extremely rudimentary translations for the foreseeable future is that we humans are so prone, intentionally or unintentionally, to use the wrong word. When faced with an incorrect word, translators have several options, depending on their own proclivities and the intended audience for the translation. Among them are: correcting the word in the translation, with or without a footnote; translating the incorrect word literally; and translating the effect of the incorrect word, especially if it is funny.

Consider three lines spoken by Bottom, acting the role of Pyramus, in the play within the play at the end of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream:

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.
Since lion vile hath here deflower’d my dear:…

Few people in a contemporary audience would know that Bottom had misspoken the first line, which should be “Not Cephalus to Procris was so true.” But some would probably have heard of “Leander,” even if they could not remember who he was, and so would at least suspect that Bottom had said something wrong in the second line. There is no question about the third line. The stage action makes it plain that Bottom should have said “devour’ld” rather than “deflower’d,” and, lest a modern audience not double up in laughter as Shakespeare intended, modern directors often have the character of Peter Quince audibly correct Bottom from the wings, though this is not in the original script. Knowing all of this, the same translator might translate each of the three lines by a different method: correcting the names in the first line with or without a footnote; leaving “Limander” as is, but providing a footnote that it is Bottom’s mistake for “Leander”; and providing a corresponding mistranslation and joke for the third line in the target language.

Usually, in a literary translation, the translator must alert the reader to the use of wrong words because the incorrect usage was intended by the author. Conversely, in a nonliterary technical engineering or medical document, when the wrong word occurs, presumably unintentionally, the translator must again indicate that fact to alert the reader that something questionable has been said which, to avoid possibly disastrous consequences, must be verified, clarified, or corrected by consulting the original author.

But what about ordinary discourse? In the March 6, 2002 edition of my local newspaper, the Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, Morning Sun, there is a letter to the editor discussing the constitutional requirement of governmental neutrality towards religion. One sentence reads:

They can adhere to the tenants of their beliefs without interference from school officials.

Too bad the writer did not state that government neutrality requires all such tenants, whatever their beliefs, to pay the same rent.

How should a translator deal with this? If the target audience is one that wants to know what American newspapers are like, it would be a mistranslation to silently correct the error, since American newspapers are full of such errors every day. It is also doubtful if a footnote would suffice to convey the error’s unintentional hilarity. Therefore, in addition to the explanatory footnote, it would be a very good thing for the translator to come up with an analogous, nonliteral “error” in the target language.
ATA Chapters, Affiliated Groups, and Other Groups

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• The Professional Services Directory of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association (NCATA) has gone online. It lists NCATA members and the services they offer, together with additional information that enables translation and interpretation users to find just the right language specialist for their projects. Bookmark www.ncata.org and check out the NCATA directory. If you maintain language-related webpages, you may want to include a link to the directory. NCATA is always interested in comments and suggestions.

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info@scatia.org • www.scatia.org

New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)
P.O. Box 4051, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051
Tel: (212) 334-3060
RX73@aol.com • www.nyctranslators.org

Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA)
Coordinator,
Minnesota Translation Laboratory
218 Nolte Center
315 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Tel: (612) 625-3096 • Fax: (612) 624-4579
Laurence.h.bogoslaw-1@tc.umn.edu

Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)
3617 S 1400 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
Tel: (801) 973-0912 • Fax: (208) 441-5390
ellingge@qwest.net • www.utia.org

Affiliated Groups
Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MITIN)
P.O. Box 852
Novi, MI 48376
Tel: (248) 344-0990 • Fax: (248) 344-0992
izumi.suzuki@suzukimyers.com
www.mitinweb.org

American Literary Translators Association (ALTA)
The University of Texas at Dallas
MC35, P.O. Box 830688
Richardson, TX 75083-0688
Tel: (972) 883-2093 • Fax: (972) 883-6303
ert@utdallas.edu
www.literarytranslators.org

Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AAITA)
P.O. Box 13331
Austin, TX 78711-3331
Tel: (512) 707-3900
president@aitia.org • www.aitia.org

The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
345 S Hwy 101, Suite D
Encinitas, CA 92024
Tel: (760) 635-0273 • Fax: (760) 635-0276
ccia345@earthlink.net • www.ccia.org

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
P.O. Box 804565
Chicago, IL 60680-4107
Tel: (312) 836-0961
webmaster@chicata.org • www.chicata.org

Other Groups
This list gives contact information for translation and interpretation groups as a service to ATA members. Inclusion does not imply affiliation with or endorsement by ATA.
Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
3054 S Xanthia Street
Denver, CO 80025
Tel: (303) 743-7719
presidentcta@cs.com
• For more information about the online directory, newsletter, accreditation exams, and professional seminars, please visit www.cta-web.org.

Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA)
606 John Anthony Drive
West Chester, PA 19382-7191
Tel: (215) 222-0955
cytran@compuserve.com

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

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

The Kentucky Translators and Interpreters Association (KTIA)
P. O. Box 7468
Louisville, KY 40257-0468
Tel: (502) 548-3988
E-mail: vapues@insightbb.com

Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)
712 Cornfield Drive
Arlington, TX 76017
Tel: (817) 417-4747
www.dfw-mita.com

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3025
New York, NY 10176
Tel: (212) 682-9581 • Fax: (212) 687-4016
headquarters@najit.org • www.najit.org

New England Translators Association (NETA)
27 Wachusett Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476
Tel: (781) 648-1731 • neta@coetrans.com • www.netaweb.org

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

The Translators and Interpreters Guild (TTIG)
962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Tel: (301) 563-6450 • (800) 992-0367
Fax: (301) 563-6020
info@ttig.org • www.ttig.org

Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society (WITS)
P. O. Box 1012
Seattle, WA 98111-1012
Tel: (206) 382-5690
www.witsnet.org

International Groups
FIT
Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators (FIT)
2021 Avenue Union, Bureau 1108
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2S9
Tel: (514) 845-0411
Toll-free: (800) 265-4815
Fax: (514) 845-9903
info@ottiaq.org • www.ottiaq.org

Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia (STIBC)
Suite 514, 850 W Hastings Street, Box 34
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
V6C 1E1
Tel: (604) 684-2940 • Fax: (604) 684-2947
office@stibc.org • www.stibc.org

ENGLAND
Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI)
Exchange House
494 Midsummer Boulevard
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 2EA England
Tel: +44 (0) 1908 255905
Fax: +44 (0) 1908 255700
info@ITI.org.uk • www.itl.org.uk

Note: All announcements must be received by the first of the month prior to the month of publication (For example, September 1 for October issue). For more information on chapters or to start a chapter, please contact ATA Headquarters. Send updates to Mary David, ATA Chronicle, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; Mary@atanet.org.
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By translators. For translators.
carrés,” when it said “1 million square feet,” for instance. Another reason to avoid converting measurements is that an error will be marked if you convert incorrectly.

I could go on and on with minor errors like spelling and punctuation mistakes, etc.

Some well-established translators fail because they are losing touch with their native language. They should read at least a newspaper or magazine a day. It is really easy to surf the web and find interesting articles. I often look at www.LeMonde.fr and its “Questions de français” section. You will find a host of questions and answers and interesting references to paper or electronic dictionaries. I also use two excellent search engines: www.nomade.fr and www.voila.fr to get to many French sites, like the Académie française (www.academie-francaise.fr), when I need to research the exact meaning or usage of a term.

The accreditation exam will evolve and will certainly become more like the actual conditions in which we work, once some technical problems are resolved. Until then, we have to take it as it is now. I sincerely hope these insider tips will be helpful. You may know that a French superstition is expressed by saying a five letter-word, starting with an M (which cannot be printed here) to someone taking any kind of exam. So, I will stick to “Bonne chance,” and I mean it.

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**Upcoming Exams**

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*Please direct all inquiries regarding general accreditation information to ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100. Registration for all accreditation exams should be made through ATA Headquarters. All sittings have a maximum capacity and admission is based on the order in which registrations are received. Forms are available from the ATA website or from Headquarters.*

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**Congratulations**

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

**French into English**

- William C. Rice, Warren, RI

**Spanish into English**

- Sara J. Alvarado, Mejicanos, San Salvador, El Salvador
- Cami J. Licea, San Antonio, TX

**English into German**

- Gerd Lindlar, Scottsdale, AZ

**English into Portuguese**

- Márcio H. Badra, Sao Paulo, Brazil

**English into Spanish**

- Martha E. Galindo, Coral Springs, FL
- Maria M. Pesce, Los Angeles, CA

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

**Active**

- Erling Dugan, Ventura, CA
- Christopher L. Field, Cambridge, MA
- Alexia Levitin, Plattsburgh, NY

**Corresponding**

- Beatriz Chavez, Yuma, AZ

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

- E. C. Rice, Warren, RI

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**Accreditation Forum Continued from p.53**

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