in this issue
medical translating and interpreting
Day of Medicine
Friday, November 7, 2003
at ATA’s 44th Annual Conference

Educational Sessions
10:15-11:45am
Medical Interpreters as Advocates
Holly Mikkelson, Cynthia Roat, Jane Kontrimas,
Karin Ruschke, Shiva Bidar-Sielaff

1:45-3:15pm
End of Life and the Rise of Palliative Medicine: Issues and Terminology
Rafael Rivera, MD, FACP

3:30-5:00pm
Understanding the Power of a Medical Interpreter
Zarita Araújo-Lane and Vonessa A. Phillips

National Forum: Language and Healthcare in Crisis
6:00pm-7:30pm
Language and Healthcare in Crisis
A panel of national experts in language, medicine, legislation, and public policy will discuss the current legal struggles at state and federal levels over funding and support for language services in the healthcare sector.

Federal Executive Order 13166 mandating foreign language support, and efforts towards certification and standards.

Coordinated by the ATA Public Relations Committee; Sponsored by the American Translators Association and the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care.

Visit www.atanet.org/dayofmedicine.htm for more!
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American Translators Association
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E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org
The ATA Chronicle

Editorial Calendar

January
Focus: Social Sciences
Submission Deadline: November 15

February
Focus: Literary Translation
Submission Deadline: December 1

March
Focus: Marketing
Submission Deadline: January 1

April
Focus: Client Education
Submission Deadline: February 1

May
Focus: Agencies, Bureaus, and Companies
Submission Deadline: March 1

June
Focus: Public Relations/Professional Outreach
Submission Deadline: April 1

July
Focus: Translators, Interpreters, and Computers
Submission Deadline: May 1

August
Focus: Medical Translating and Interpreting
Submission Deadline: June 1

September
Focus: Interpreting
Submission Deadline: July 1

October
Focus: Legal Translating/Interpreting
Submission Deadline: August 1

November/December
Focus: Training and Pedagogy
Submission Deadline: September 1

Moving? Find an error with your address?

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 If you find that the information on the mailing label is inaccurate or out of date, please let us know.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

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

An Easy Reference To ATA Member Benefits

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

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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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ATA’s Customized Website Program
ATA and Two Radical Technologies (2RAD) have teamed up to provide ATA members an opportunity to build their own customized websites. Through 2RAD’s online creation tools—RADTown—ATA members will be able to set up their own online presence. For more information, please contact 2RAD at radtown@atanet.org or log on to www.atanet.org/radtown.

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About Our Authors…

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

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Tom Moore has been fascinated by the language and culture of Brazil since 1994. In addition to Portuguese, he translates from Spanish, French, Italian, and German. He is the music/media librarian at The College of New Jersey. Contact: querflote@yahoo.com.

Jeff Morton (MED, LMHC) is a clinician at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, with experience providing case management services and eligibility screenings to a culturally diverse population of seriously mentally ill persons. He also possesses several years of experience conducting crisis evaluations in an emergency room setting. He has served on several committees that address the cultural and linguistic needs of mental health consumers. He is a member of the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association and has presented on such topics as evaluating speech in a mental health setting and providing mental health treatment to newcomers from the former Soviet Union. Contact: jeff.morton@dmh.state.ma.us.

Robert Sette, a translator of Romance languages into English, resides in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He specializes in commercial and technical translations and teaches in the Professional Translation Certificate Program at the University of Pittsburgh. He is currently serving on ATA’s Board of Directors. Contact: robert.sette@verizon.net.

Elena Sgarbossa (MD) is a cardiologist who has worked as a doctor in Argentina, Italy, and, for the past 13 years, in Cleveland, Chicago, and Weston (Florida). After passing the U.S. medical licensing examination, she became interested in comparative linguistics and medical semantics and their effects on physicians’ decisions. In 1994, she published an article with Dr. Eric Topol entitled “Semantic Ambiguity, the Non-Nosology and Myocardial Infarction” (Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, 1994:47, pp. 441-446). She has authored and coauthored over 50 scientific articles, reviews, and textbook chapters. She serves as a medical reviewer for several journal editors (as a referee for submitted papers), and is a freelance medical editor and translator (English → Spanish; Italian → English; Italian → Spanish) for several companies and for the National Institutes of Health. Contact: esgarbossa@myacc.net.

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Rut Simcovich has been a freelance Argentine English/Spanish translator and interpreter since 1971. She is director of the Language Department at Centro Internacional de Conferencias, a company she founded in 1985. In 1996, she established the Rut Simcovich Interpreters’ School, emphasizing the role of interpreters and translators as facilitators of intercultural communication. In addition to being a member of ATA, she is the former president of the Argentine Association of Translators and Interpreters and a former member of the International Association of Conference Interpreters. She was the court appointed interpreter in the trial of the Argentine military “Juntas,” and currently works for clients such as the World Bank, the U.K. Embassy, and The Coca-Cola Company. Contact: rsimcovich@fibertel.com.ar.

Laura Esther Wolfson is a freelance interpreter for the United Nations and the U.S. Department of State. Her working languages are Russian, French, and English. Her recent book translation, Stalin’s Secret Pogrom, was published by Yale University Press and won the 2002 National Jewish Book Prize in the Eastern Europe category. She is a member of ATA’s Board of Directors. Contact: lauraesther@nyc.rccom.
From the President  
Thomas L. West III  
president@atanet.org

Notes from a Peripatetic President

The past three months have kept me on the road, and although the travel can be tiring, it has been a real pleasure getting to know translators in several different countries. In late April, I attended the annual meeting of the Swedish Association of Professional Translators (www.sfoe.se), which was held on the west coast of Sweden in Gothenburg. It was gratifying to learn that our Swedish colleagues have implemented a mentoring program (for which they got tips from Courtney Searls-Ridge, who heads ATA’s Mentoring Task Force). They are also stepping up their efforts in providing continuing education courses due to the heavy demand for training among translators in Sweden. I believe this trend at the international level confirms that ATA is on the right track with the continuing education requirements we have just implemented.

I spent the first weekend in May at the ATA Legal Translation Conference in New Jersey, which was certainly one of the highlights of my eight years as an ATA member. Although all the presentations I attended were outstanding, I particularly want to draw your attention to the ones by Argentine attorney/translator Ricardo Chiesa, because he has graciously agreed to teach a seminar at our Annual Conference in Phoenix this November. If you translate in the area of Spanish legal, you owe it to yourself to attend Ricardo’s courses, which are by far the most helpful sessions on legal translation I have ever attended.

Later in May, I traveled to Montreal to attend the annual meeting of the Translation Company Division of ATA. Canada is always an interesting place for translators to visit, since everything you pick up has been translated. By law, almost everything has to be in English and French. One of the interesting things for me as a translator was walking into a Montreal bookshop and finding a whole shelf of books on translating and interpreting between English and French. Although most bookshops in Toronto, where our 2004 conference will be held, are not as likely to have resources for translators, there is a very large French bookshop there that does, the Librairie Champlain (www.librairiechamplain.com). Keep it in mind.

Over Memorial Day weekend, I attended the annual conference of the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (www.najit.org). It was great to see familiar faces there and learn more about the issues facing our colleagues who primarily work in a court setting. Shortly thereafter, I went to Europe twice—both times on business for my company—and was again impressed by the interest in continuing education among translators there. Finally, in late June, I spent a weekend in Miami at the ATA Board Meeting, my 21st meeting since I went on the Board in 1996 and my last meeting as a member of the Board. Although I will get to express my thanks in person at our Annual Conference in Phoenix, I want to take this opportunity to thank all our colleagues who have served on the Board with me for their friendship and dedication to our association. As we say in Atlanta, y’all are a great bunch.

Harvie Jordan Endowment Fund to Award First Scholarship

Throughout his multifaceted career, Harvie Jordan fostered the development of a great number of translators and interpreters, many times in ways some of us did not fully recognize until he was no longer with us. Harvie’s sudden death on November 8, 2002, was an immeasurable loss for all of us who knew him and for all the groups in which he participated.

To honor Harvie for his lifelong contributions, carry forward his personal goals, and serve ATA’s Spanish Language Division, the Harvie Jordan Endowment Fund was created to provide financial assistance for continuing education for translators and interpreters. If you would like to help carry forward Harvie’s legacy, please consider making a donation to the fund by writing a check to: American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, Columbia Plaza, Suite 101, 350 E Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

Include the annotation in the memo section, Harvie Jordan Endowment Fund. The first award will be a $195 scholarship toward the registration for ATA’s Annual Conference in Phoenix in November. The criteria for selection and application forms will be published in the next ATA Chronicle.
ATA's next Annual Conference will be held November 5-8, 2003, in Phoenix, Arizona. Read on for a sneak preview.

Educational Sessions
ATA members and invited speakers will share their expertise through a strong lineup of educational sessions and preconference seminars this year. In addition to solid offerings in the language pairs traditionally well represented at the conference, I was pleased to see proposals for sessions on Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Hebrew, and Indonesian. Financial, legal, medical and technical terminology, interpreting, and literary translation are also well represented across languages. A cluster of sessions on translation and interpreting (T&I) for the entertainment industry has also been added. See for yourself: the Preliminary Program went out with the July issue of the ATA Chronicle (for complete session abstracts and speaker bios, visit the 2003 conference website at www.atanet.org/conf2003).

Our keynote speaker, Everette Jordan, is director of the new National Virtual Translation Center. A former National Security Agency linguist, he most recently worked on the Joint Congressional Inquiry into the intelligence failures that led up to the events of September 11, 2001. At our conference, Mr. Jordan will announce a major new initiative to marshal and coordinate this country’s language resources to respond effectively to future threats.

Again this year, the “Translation Support Tools Forum” invites a spectrum of software vendors to present their products to conference attendees in a panel/question-and-answer format designed to spotlight the relative strengths of each. Alan Melby, who chairs ATA’s Translation and Computers Committee, will moderate. Continuing its “Grassroots Activism” series, ATA’s Public Relations Committee will present our new PR campaign and preconference seminar on running productive meetings, offered free of charge again this year by ATA’s immediate past president, Ann Macfarlane.

Also of special interest to chapter, committee, and division officers and volunteers is “Jurassic Parliament,” a preconference seminar on making the most of your mentoring relationship. In addition to the annual meetings of ATA’s 13 divisions, Jessica Cohen and Haleh Vakhshori are hosting a session to explore the establishment of a Middle Eastern Languages Division. For “Interpretation and Justice,” ATA Board member Laura Wolfson has put together a panel to discuss the pending case of Mohammed Youssry, an interpreter charged with aiding and abetting terrorism.

Special Events
Veteran conference-goers Anne Vincent and Leah Ruggiero will host an orientation session for first-time attendees, offering strategies for making the most of the ATA conference: session-picking, making the scene of your choice, working the halls…and what’s up with those colored dots?

Also on Thursday morning will be a session on understanding the new eligibility and continuing education requirements for ATA’s accreditation program.

On Friday, ATA’s new Medical Division will host a Day of Medicine, featuring a panel discussion on medical interpreters as advocates. The day will culminate in “Language and Healthcare in Crisis,” a town hall meeting on the life-and-death issues of medical translation and interpreting and the legal struggle over funding and support for language services in healthcare. Organized by ATA’s Public Relations Committee and co-sponsored with the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, this event will bring together a panel of national experts in language, medicine, legislation, and public policy.

Extracurricular Activities
ATA’s division administrators are already planning extracurricular activities and outings. In addition to the Literary Division’s Beacons reading and After-Hours Café, the Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Nordic, Portuguese, Slavic, Spanish, Interpreters, and Translation Company divisions are all hosting social gatherings.

For the athletically inclined, ATA Board member Rob Croese has put together a round-robin tennis tournament, in which defending champion Beatriz Bonet will try to keep her trophy. Rob organized a similar event last year and five years ago in Hilton Head.

Hotel
Our conference space this year is a comfortable fit with an Old Southwest feel. Many meeting rooms

Continued on p.12
From the Executive Director

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

Board Meeting Highlights

The Board met June 28-29 at the Fontainebleau Hilton Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida. The Fontainebleau is a potential hotel to host the 2007 Annual Conference.

Here are some highlights from the meeting:

Accreditation. The Board continued its discussion on the changes to the accreditation program and addressed issues that had arisen since the last meeting—many from the membership. The Board also urged that these changes continue to be publicized to the membership in both the ATA Chronicle and online. Be sure to visit ATA’s website for complete information on the new eligibility and continuing education requirements.

Nominations. The Board accepted the slate of candidates for office for the November 2003 elections. The candidates are: Beatriz Bonnet and Marian Greenfield for president-elect; Alan Melby for secretary; Jiri Stejskal for treasurer; and Claudia Angelelli, Debra Kramasz, Jean Leblon, Virginia Perez-Santalla, Ines Swaney, and Jost Zetzsche for three directors’ positions. The candidates’ statements will appear in the September ATA Chronicle as well as online.

Divisions. The Medical Division is fully established following the presentation of its bylaws and petition. In addition, the Board approved a meeting for Division Committee Chair Dorothee Racette, the division administrators, and ATA officers to discuss division programs, finances, and the important role that divisions play within ATA.

Board Meetings. The Board approved a proposal to go to four board meetings a year from three. The tentative schedule is roughly the weekends closest to February 1, May 1, August 1, and the Annual Conference (which is usually around November 1). More information on this will be publicized as it develops.

Honorary Membership. Ted Crump, an Active/Life member, was made an ATA honorary member. Ted was recognized for his years of service as an officer on both the national and local levels. In 2001, he wrote and compiled the book Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government, which was published by ATA.

Judicial Interpreter Case. The Board

Candidates Announced

ATA Election • 2003 ATA Annual Conference
Phoenix, Arizona

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2003 ATA Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, to elect a president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and three directors. The candidates’ statements will be published in the September ATA Chronicle.

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

Candidacy statements and photos of the candidates will appear in the September issue of the ATA Chronicle. Official ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters prior to the conference. Votes may be cast: 1) in person at the conference; 2) by proxy given to a voting member attending the conference; or 3) by proxy sent to ATA Headquarters by the date indicated in the instructions enclosed with the ballots. The candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee are:

President-elect
Beatriz Bonnet
Marian S. Greenfield

Secretary
Alan K. Melby

Treasurer
Jiri Stejskal

Director (three positions, three-year terms)
Claudia Angelelli
Debra Kramasz
Jean Leblon
Virginia Perez-Santalla
Ines Swaney
Jost Zetzsche
From the Treasurer  Jiri Stejskal
Financial Results for 2002

The annual audit has been completed for the fiscal year 2002. Our new auditing firm, Langan & Associates, found our 2002 financial statements in good order and in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S. As I indicated in the treasurer's column in May, the association ended the 2002 fiscal year with a loss. The audited statement of activities shows a final figure of negative $202,366. There are three main reasons for the negative result, namely lower than expected attendance at the Annual Conference in Atlanta, higher than budgeted ATA Chronicle expenses, and a realized loss on sales of investments. The one-time investment loss was necessitated by the restructuring of the investment account toward a much more conservative position, as per our revised investment policy.

In order to close the gap and mitigate the risk of future losses, the ATA Board, in close cooperation with Executive Director Walter Bacak, approved and instituted a number of cost-saving measures. I mentioned the conservative estimates for membership growth and conference attendance in the May report. These will provide a cushion in the budget should we need it. In addition, we were able to cut costs on the production of the ATA Chronicle and have replaced the Preliminary Conference Program with a smaller booklet, a move resulting in considerable savings on printing and postage. Finally, thanks to the six-month shift we made with the fiscal year, we should have sufficient time to react in case the financial results of the Annual Conference, our second largest variable in terms of cash inflow after membership, do not meet our projections.

The auditing firm also made several suggestions on how the association can improve its operations. The suggestions, which are now being implemented, include improvement in bank reconciliation procedures, centralization of accounting policies and procedures, further investment diversification, and functional allocation of expenses. The firm also supports our objective of raising the level of reserves to an amount equivalent to four-six months of operating expenses, and it brought to the Board’s attention the fact that the state of New York is preparing new legislation that could affect certain nonprofit organizations, including ATA. Finally, the auditing firm made it clear that any surpluses or losses from the activities of the divisions do not accrue to each division, but are part of the financial position and operations of ATA as a whole. Therefore, the carrying over of division surpluses/losses from one year to the next will be discontinued in order for ATA to follow proper accounting procedures.

Our current financial situation appears to be back on track. We have already completed our interim fiscal period, which ran from January through June and served as a bridge between the old fiscal year system (coinciding with the calendar year) and the new system (July 1 through June 30, starting in July 2003). The results for this six-month period will be presented at the Phoenix conference and subsequently published in this column in an upcoming issue of the ATA Chronicle.

Attention Exhibitors
American Translators Association 44th Annual Conference

Pointe South Mountain Resort • Phoenix, Arizona • November 5-8, 2003

Exhibiting at the ATA Annual Conference offers the best opportunity to market your products and services face-to-face to more than 1,200 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 Drew MacFadyen, McNeill Group Inc.; dmacfadyen@mcneill-group.com; (215) 321-9662, ext. 37; Fax: (215) 321-9636.
ATA Officer & Director Nominations

By Robert Sette, chair, 2003 Nominating Committee

The ATA Nominating Committee appears to be fairly straightforward from a review of the association’s bylaws. The committee must “propose candidates for each elective position of the association.” Despite this simplicity of language, much work goes into the process of recruiting capable persons to run for office. It is not as though there is a mad rush of applicants when the call for nominations is issued each year. In fact, usually just a couple of volunteers trickle in. The Nominating Committee must work diligently to find members who have the mix of skills needed by the Board at a given time and who are in a position to volunteer the time required to serve as a leader of the association.

Significant consideration is given each year to the composition of the Nominating Committee. The committee should be diverse not only in terms of the geography of its members, but also in terms of the members’ working languages, their ages, and the capacity in which they are active in the profession (i.e., as freelancers, in academia, etc.). These same considerations, and more, come into play when selecting the slate of candidates, not to mention the bylaws requirement that members of the Board be active members of the association.

A previous article (“New Directions for ATA’s Nominating Committee,” by Kathy Foster, January 2003) adroitly summarized the new philosophy and approaches implemented by the 2002 Nominating Committee. The 2003 Nominating Committee continued to follow the same philosophy by focusing on two tasks: 1) seeking out candidates for this year’s elections; and 2) identifying and approaching potential candidates for future elections. This is very important for the future of the association, as good leaders do not just appear out of thin air, but rather are developed over time.

“...Good leaders do not just appear out of thin air, but rather are developed over time…”

In preparing this year’s slate of candidates (see announcement on page 9), we first evaluated the skills and experience of current and outgoing Board members to identify areas of expertise that may be under-represented. For this year’s slate, we drew on members actively involved in ATA chapters and divisions who have demonstrated capable leadership qualities in the areas we feel are needed on the Board.

One of the goals for the Nominating Committee each year is to propose two candidates for each position. This year, we are presenting six candidates for three vacant directorships and two candidates for the position of president-elect.

We are, however, presenting only one candidate for secretary and one candidate for treasurer for the following reasons. There was a feeling among members of this year’s Nominating Committee that it is important for each officer candidate (president-elect, secretary, and treasurer) to have had experience as a director on the Board before running for an officer position. Nevertheless, we did approach several ATA members who had not previously served on the Board to run as secretary of the association, but in the end they had some concerns about the additional volunteer time commitment required as a member of the Executive Committee. With this in mind, the committee feels that Alan Melby, having served two full terms on the ATA Board of Directors, is highly qualified to serve in the position of secretary. Jiri Stejskal, in his current term as treasurer, has worked closely with Headquarters to solidify the financial position of the association, and the 2003 Nominating Committee feels that continuity in this area is important for the association at this time. Thus, we are presenting a slate with secretary and treasurer running unopposed.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the other members of the 2003 Nominating Committee—Rudy Heller, Odile Legeay, Courtney Searls-Ridge, and Ben Tompkins—for their dedicated work and commitment. I also invite any ATA members who have feedback on the nominations process, or who are interested in finding out more about how they can become involved, to contact me (robert.sette@verizon.net) or any of the committee members.

For complete conference information, visit www.atanet.org/conf2003 today!
Continuing Education Requirements

We have read Tom West’s article on accreditation in the April issue and discussed it with some of our Russian translation colleagues. We have a few questions to ask and a few comments to make that we are sure will be of interest not only to ourselves, but also to many other ATA members.

In general, we agree that continuous education may indeed be required to elevate the status of ATA members. The devil seems to be in the numbers, though. It appears that in order to retain ATA accreditation, a translator will have to spend a significant amount of time, effort, and money—the latter not only from “additional work and expense,” as noted by Mr. Hamm, but also, and mostly so, in the form of lost earnings resulting from major distractions from our routine work process. No doubt you realize that most ATA members make their living as full-time translators or interpreters. (If this is not the case, then it should be, as follows from the name of our professional association.) Now, based on the proposed continuous education requirements, in addition to paying their membership dues, translators will need to: attend, annually, one or more seminars, workshops, or conferences; take/give educational classes (you are certainly aware of associated costs); perhaps become members of some other professional associations and, therefore, incur additional membership expenses as such; write a book or an article (is the level of effort really the same for writing an article as for writing a book?!) to obtain an additional two hours of credit; and so on and so forth.

Our question is, How about translation and interpreting? In other words, how about making a living? Like most committed professionals, we really are very busy, each translating an average of several thousand words daily, maintaining project glossaries, etc. Our first, and rather emotional, response to Mr. West’s article was, if this is really the case, we will probably have to leave ATA. From what we hear from some other Russian translators like ourselves, their response seems to be pretty much the same. What will the outcome be, then?

The real professionals, those who spend all of their time on actual translation and interpretation, will be forced either to leave ATA or, at the very least, lose their accreditation, while the proportion of those who regard translation and interpreting as a part-time occupation, a side job, or a hobby will begin to grow. Is membership reduction really what you seek to achieve? We don’t think so! We strongly disagree with the concept of sacrificing our primary professional work to other associated activities in order to maintain our accreditation in a professional association.

In addition, Mr. West’s article never mentions exactly how you envision enforcing these requirements and monitoring compliance. This, too, may prove to be an additional red-tape burden for ATA members.

The best way to improve professional qualification or obtain continuous education is through actual translation work. That is why we believe that, as an alternative to the proposed continuous education requirements, a translator or interpreter can provide proof that translation or interpreting is indeed a primary source of his or her income (say, constituting no less than 50% of income, as evidenced by Form 1040 or Schedule C of the tax return for freelancers or Form W-2 for in-house translators). Any other pertinent supporting documentation could also be used for this purpose—for example, a translator’s website advertising his or her services, and so on. There are also other ways to prove that a translator or interpreter is in business. For example, a letter from the client confirming completion of a certain volume of translation or interpreting work over a year, or any other proof of professional work completed. This, of course, does not exclude the continuous education option for those who choose to take advantage of it, voluntarily.

ATA should not manage its members’ affairs or prescribe how they should improve their skills. It is the market, and market alone, that must be the ultimate judge of whether a translator or an interpreter is qualified to do his or her job. We get our education so we will be able to work—not the other way around. If we work in our areas of specialization, and have worked successfully for decades, why should we seek any further academic training? According to its bylaws, ATA may offer an opportunity (“stimulation and support”) for continuous education as a professional improvement avenue—yet ATA should not be turning this opportunity into a precondition for retaining ATA accreditation. Please don’t allow this to happen!

Igor Bekman
Michael Ishenko
Igor Vesler

From the President-elect Continued from page 8

open onto terraces, and we plan to set up our continental breakfasts and coffee breaks al aire libre. The resort complex offers a golf course, tennis courts, swimming pools, and a waterpark with a three-story water slide.

The walkways are paved in Saltillo tile, so wearers of high heels please take care. Mornings can be chilly, but the fires in outdoor hearths make cozy places to relax and talk into the night.

One of my favorite things about ATA has always been the generosity and sharing among colleagues, and this group effort is the best example. For me, the Annual Conference is what ATA is all about. See you in Phoenix!
As the international community grows increasingly intertwined, localization is becoming crucially important and so is the need for translators who specialize in localization. Whether you are translating website content, training materials, or computer software, this seminar will provide the insight and training to enhance your skills for translating in the global marketplace.

Saturday, September 6
ATA will provide a full day of in-depth sessions, including a continental breakfast in the morning and a Networking Session following the final presentation. Presenters are Carla DiFranco, Software Localization Engineer for Microsoft Corporation Windows International, and Kieran Dunne, Assistant Professor at Kent State University.

Sunday, September 7
AATIA will provide a half-day of sessions on localization translation, including a continental breakfast. Presenters are Dr. Tim Altanero, Associate Professor of Technical Communications at Austin Community College, Tatyana Amoriko and Ronnie Oldham from Adams Globalization, and Dr. Frank Dietz, who specializes in technical translation and has translated over 30 computer games.

Registration Form

First Name Middle Initial Last Name ATA Member#  
Employer/School (only list employer or school if you want it to appear on your badge) AATIA Member#  
Street Address  
City State/Province Zip/Postal Code Country  
Telephone Fax Email  
Both Days, September 6-7 ATA/AATIA Member Nonmember Payment  
Early-Bird (before August 29): $180 - Save $15 $310 - Save $25 $_________  
After August 29 and Onsite: $265 - Save $20 $395 - Save $30 $_________  
Saturday, September 6-7 ATA/AATIA Member Nonmember  
Early-Bird (before August 29): $145 $260 $_________  
After August 29 and Onsite: $215 $330 $_________  
Sunday, September 6-7 ATA/AATIA Member Nonmember  
Early-Bird (before August 29): $50 $75 $_________  
After August 29 and Onsite: $70 $95 $_________  

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Card No. __/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__;  
Expiration Date:_________  
Name on Card:________________________Signature:________________________  

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For more information about the Localization Seminar or ATA membership, please visit www.atanet.org or contact ATA at (703) 683-6100 or ata@atanet.org.
Tribute to Kenneth Katzner

By Laura Esther Wolfson

With the passing on May 25th of this year of Kenneth Katzner, author of the essential English-Russian Russian-English Dictionary as well as Languages of the World and A Russian Review Text, the association has lost a valued colleague and friend. Mr. Katzner died at the age of 72 after a long struggle with lung cancer.

In 1999, Mr. Katzner was the guest speaker for the Annual Susana Greiss Lecture Series hosted by ATA’s Slavic Languages Division at the ATA conference in St. Louis, an event he recalled with intense pleasure for years afterward. Speaking to a packed room, he described his work on the English-Russian Russian-English Dictionary, a project which took him 18 years to complete. In his lexicographic work, he took great pains to parse out the numerous meanings of each word, which, as he noted, are not always discrete, but sometimes blend into each other along a continuum. He was particularly concerned with demonstrating how to use specific words idiomatically in sentences. In his work, he consulted intensively with native speakers of Russian. His dictionary, while intended for native speakers of English, became popular with native Russian speakers, and, in a backhanded tribute, thousands of copies were sold across the former Soviet Union in a pirated edition with his name misspelled on the title page.

In a review of Mr. Katzner’s presentation in the Slavfile (winter/spring 2000), distinguished cognitive scientist, translator, polymath, and author of Gödel, Escher, Bach, Douglas Hofstadter wrote, “[Kenneth Katzner] was the man whose wonderful dictionary had been my staunchest companion...as I translated [Alexander Pushkin’s classic Russian verse novel] Eugene Onegin into English. So taken had I been with Katzner’s dictionary, and so dependent upon it, that I purchased four different copies so as to have it on hand wherever I might find myself—my bedroom, my study, my office, or my kitchen.”

...He took great pains to parse out the numerous meanings of each word, which, as he noted, are not always discrete, but sometimes blend into each other along a continuum...

Hofstadter ended his review by noting, “...a remarkable event that occurred at the end of his talk, which was perhaps a first in world history: a long, warm, standing ovation for the compiler of a dictionary.”

A 1952 graduate of Cornell University, Mr. Katzner later served in the U.S. Air Force and received intensive Russian language training at the Syracuse University U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology. After completing his military service, Mr. Katzner worked as an editor for Grolier Encyclopedia and later for Encyclopedia Britannica and The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. In 1964, he took on the assignment to compile the English-Russian Russian-English Dictionary, expecting it would take about a year. In fact, it took him 18 years. When he died, he was in the process of making additions and improvements for a third edition. Until his retirement from his job as a Russia specialist for the Department of Defense, he worked on the dictionary in his spare time.

Mr. Katzner also penned op-ed pieces, articles in scholarly journals, and articles based on his travels. In 1999, he launched the online company Wordfind with his wife, Betty Katzner. Wordfind produced and sold the CD-ROM version of his dictionary.

Of his work on the dictionary, he said: “Even in the computer age, when some say everything can be recorded with mathematical precision, with a dictionary there is simply no substitute for slowly and methodically adding to it and improving it—one entry at a time, a little bit each day—as you read the language, listen to others as they speak it, and make note of each new usage as it comes along. I’ll keep working on it for as long as I am able, but neither I nor anyone else will ever really complete the task. Language is infinite, and just as certain evanescent things cannot be captured on film, so the words that make up a language cannot be fully captured by a dictionary. We do the best we can but sometimes, I think, we only scratch the surface.”
Over the course of the past two years, we have examined the ways in which translators and interpreters earn their credentials in more than 30 countries on six continents. The following geographical regions have been covered in this series:

- Brazil (July 2001)
- South Africa (August 2001)
- Egypt (September 2001)
- Australia (October 2001)
- Czech Republic (November/December 2001)
- Canada (January and March 2002)
- Finland and Sweden (February 2002)
- Austria (April 2002)
- U.K. and Ireland (May 2002)
- Argentina (June 2002)
- Norway (July 2002)
- Denmark (August 2002)
- Japan (September 2002)
- Spain and Portugal (October 2002)
- Ukraine (November/December 2002)
- Germany (January 2003)
- Mexico (February 2003)
- Colombia, Uruguay, and Venezuela (March 2003)
- Belgium and the Netherlands (April 2003)
- Arab countries (May 2003)
- U.S. (June and July 2003)

The procedures employed in different countries vary widely, but there are certain discernible patterns common to all areas; some apply to credentialing in general, some are specific to the professions of translation and interpretation (T&I). On the general level, the purpose of credentialing is uniform across the board: to establish standards of professional practice; to elevate the status of the profession; to satisfy public demand for standards; and to extend the ‘shelf life’ of academic degrees…”

Credentialing Methods

Organizations throughout the world in all conceivable fields employ various credentialing procedures to establish a level of qualification for individuals or groups active in the particular area. In the U.S. alone, there are about 1,600 certification programs for individuals and over 200 accreditation programs for schools, institutions, businesses, and service providers. The following overview presents the basic credentialing methods used.

Certification: A voluntary process by which an organization grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualification standards.

Accreditation: A process by which an entity grants public recognition to an organization such as a school, institute, college, program, facility, or company that has met predetermined standards.

Registration: A process by which the possession of specific credentials relevant to performing tasks and responsibilities within a given field is verified.

Licensure: A mandatory credentialing process by which a government agency grants permission to persons to engage in a given occupation or profession by attesting that those licensed have attained the minimum degree of knowledge and skills required.

The confusion between “certification” and “accreditation” was addressed in the last issue of the ATA Chronicle. Even though the credentialing process for translators and/or interpreters is called “accreditation” in some countries (most notably in the U.S. and Australia), for the purposes of this study these programs fall under the category of “certification.” Certification can be further divided into the following subcategories:

- Full-scale professional certification;
- Knowledge-based certification;
- Curriculum-based certification; and
- Certification of attendance or participation.

All four subcategories are used in the field of T&I. A credential...
awarded to individuals who meet specific eligibility requirements and successfully complete rigorous assessments of their knowledge and skills is usually referred to as “professional certification.” This is the credential used by most T&I organizations throughout the world, including ATA. “Knowledge-based certification” emphasizes a relatively narrow scope of specialized knowledge and frequently focuses on specialty areas within a profession in which a professional certification already exists. Certificates for legal translators and interpreters, such as those offered by the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (see June 2003 ATA Chronicle), or certificates in particular areas (for example, patents or literary texts), such as those offered by the Japanese Babel Co., Ltd., are examples of knowledge-based certification. Curriculum-based certificates are common in the academic environment. Candidates receive this credential when they complete a course or series of courses and an assessment process. These programs range from short-term programs with an exit examination, such as the program offered by Berlitz in Mexico, to Ph.D. programs. Finally, a certificate of attendance/participation does not qualify as an official credential, since no assessment of knowledge and skill is required and recipients do not need to meet any professional standards. As an example, ATA issues such certificates to attendees of the association’s annual conference and its professional development seminars.

Registration and licensure are credentialing forms favored in civil law countries (i.e., in most of Europe and in Latin America). Such a credential is invariably granted by the government, and candidates become “sworn” or “authorized” translators and/or interpreters. These credentials may or may not involve an assessment of the candidate’s knowledge and skill, but they always include stringent eligibility requirements, especially regarding a candidate’s citizenship status, permanent residence, and age. Government certification is described in greater detail below.

**Credentialing Bodies**

As previously mentioned, translators and interpreters can earn their credentials through professional associations, government-sponsored programs, and academic institutions. Certification by a professional association is strongest in common law countries, whereas certification by a government body is usually employed in civil law countries. Academic programs exist in both civil and common law countries, and are particularly strong in countries where certification is not offered by the government or professional associations (for example, in China and Israel). Frequently, an academic credential serves as a prerequisite for membership in a professional association. In some countries, all three forms of credentialing coexist, such as in the U.S. As a general rule, however, in common law countries, credentials granted by professional associations carry more weight than those granted by the government, while the opposite is true in civil law countries.

Certification by professional associations, such as ATA, the Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council (through its 12 provincial and territorial bodies), or the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, is usually tied to membership in the given organization. The main qualification assessment of the candidates is then usually performed via stringent testing. In most cases, other requirements apply in addition to membership and the successful completion of a certification examination.

**Eligibility and Continuing Education Requirements**

The new set of requirements for ATA’s credential, namely the continuing education and eligibility requirements, was described in the July issue. In general, continuing education requirements are not as common in T&I credentialing as they are in other professions, so ATA is leading the effort in this area. Eligibility requirements are far more common and include the following (in various combinations):

- Membership, either in the organization offering the certification or in another T&I organization;
- Education;
- Experience;
- References or referrals from peers, clients, or employers;
- Mandatory mentoring program;
- Mandatory seminar on ethics or best practices; and
- Screening test in the language of the given country.

The first three are the most common eligibility requirements enforced throughout the T&I industry worldwide. Education and experience are usually coupled on a sliding scale, where more education requires less experience and vice versa. References are required by some professional associations, for example, in Ireland, Ukraine, and Argentina. Mandatory programs and seminars are currently used in Canada.

The screening test is a criterion least used by professional associations. In the programs described in this series, only the Arabic and
Translation Studies Division of the Center for Adult and Continuing Education at the American University in Cairo requires candidates to show proficiency in Arabic of at least Advanced+, as defined by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages. While the Center is really in the category of academic institutions (described below), the screening test is of interest to us here because ATA’s Board, Eligibility Requirements (ER) Committee, and Accreditation Committee recently gave a lot of thought to the possibility of introducing screening tests as one of the eligibility requirements for ATA’s credential. However, technical and logistical difficulties tipped the scale toward using the mainstream requirements, but the ER Committee will continue exploring this area.

Certification by the government falls into the registration/licensure category, which means that certain tasks can be performed only by “authorized,” “sworn,” or “public” translators or interpreters. This type of certification process is typically governed by legal statutes, which date back to the 19th century in some countries. This means that government-sponsored certification has been around for much longer than certification by professional organizations, the latter being introduced only quite recently. In the U.S., government certification applies to court interpreters, but many countries apply this concept to translators as well. For example, in Argentina, “certified public translators” are considered to be assistants to justice, and are the only ones authorized to act in an official capacity as court assistants, experts, and/or interpreters. Certified translations are required in a number of official contexts: personal documents, certificates and diplomas, public deeds, documents that are involved in legal actions, expert witness reports, and commercial documents such as contracts, financial statements, corporate documents, etc. A government-certified translation will also be required in circumstances involving other types of documents, such as medical reports or expert opinions that are part of a legal procedure, or an audit or a claim in an insurance company. Similar procedures are employed in other Latin American countries and most of Europe, particularly in the member states of the EU. In some countries (for example, Norway, which is not a member of the EU), the title “government-authorized translator” uses similar wording that carries the same weight as the title “certified public accountant.”

The procedures employed in government certification are quite uniform across the board in terms of eligibility requirements. The following set of criteria is used consistently in nearly all countries offering such a credential:

- Minimum age (18, 21, or 25);
- Citizenship;
- Place of residence;
- Legal competence of the candidate; and
- Clean criminal record.

Eligibility requirements imposed by the government are very different from those of professional associations. This is because the purpose of a government-sponsored credential is quite different from that of a credential bestowed by a professional association. Whereas a government-sponsored credential focuses on the moral integrity of the candidate and his or her capability to serve as an “assistant to justice,” the professional association’s credential focuses on the candidate’s linguistic competency. Most government certification programs, however, require a college degree and include a stringent examination of the candidate’s competence in the given language combination(s). On the other hand, in some countries (Belgium, for example), becoming a “sworn translator” or “sworn interpreter” simply means that the translator or interpreter takes an oath before the court, but no attempt is made to assess the candidate’s linguistic competency. Continuing education requirements are not common in government certification, but there are exceptions, the most notable of these being California, where such requirements are strictly enforced.

Credentialing by academic institutions has been described in this series on a somewhat random basis, but particularly when discussing countries that are either lacking any other form of certification or those in which other forms of certification have not achieved the desired level of credibility. An important aspect of this type of credential is that it is geared toward candidates who are just beginning their translation or interpretation careers. Certification by professional or governmental organizations, on the other hand, serves the needs of accomplished translators and interpreters. It should also be noted that certification by academic institutions is often a prerequisite for certification by professional or government organizations. Just like nonacademic certification programs, not all academic programs for translators and interpreters are created equal. Descriptions and, in some instances, evaluations of selected programs have been offered in this series for a number of countries, including the Arab-speaking countries, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, Mexico, Latin America, the U.K., Ireland, and Japan.
International Certification Study: Lessons Learned Continued

ATA’s Education and Training Committee is currently compiling a list of T&I academic programs worldwide, and further research and assessment of such programs is underway.

Where do we go from here?
The International Certification Study series is the first of its kind, and has filled a large gap in the industry’s pool of knowledge. At its inception in June 2001, the purpose of the study was to “learn more about certification and similar programs of non-U.S. professional organizations for translators and interpreters.” Emphasis was placed on the admission requirements to these organizations’ examination/certification programs, and to “explore whether reciprocal arrangements among organizations with similar areas of interest are possible.” In the course of two years, we learned a lot about credentialing procedures employed by professional organizations outside of the U.S., and ATA was able to apply this knowledge to its own credentialing program. We also learned about credentialing procedures used by various governments, an area which initially was not on our radar screen, but which seemed a natural complement to the investigation of credentials bestowed by professional bodies. When it comes to possible reciprocal arrangements, the study shows that while there is some interest, mutual recognition of credentials by professional organizations in different countries is not going to happen any time soon. An attempt is currently underway to establish criteria for mutual recognition of credentials within North America under the auspices of the recently re-established Regional Network of North America, but the author of this series believes that an international credential developed and administered by an international body, such as the International Federation of Translators (FIT), would be a more feasible and effective way of moving one’s credential across the border.

This study has been exploratory in nature and much work still lies ahead. Our series of articles will serve as groundwork for a more detailed and serious inquiry into the credentialing procedures used in the translation and interpretation industry worldwide. Its author was recently appointed by Betty Cohen, president of FIT, as chair of the FIT Status Committee, an international body whose mission is to examine the status of the translation and interpretation profession throughout the world. The committee members are: Marion Boers, of the South African Translators’ Institute; Mary Höcker, of the German BDÜ; Sveinung Løkke, of the Norwegian Association of Government Authorized Translators; Ann Macfarlane, executive director of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators and immediate past president of ATA; Roberto Puig, of Colegio de Traductores Públicos del Uruguay; David Wilmsen, of the American University in Cairo; and Huang Youyi, of the Translators Association of China. The FIT Status Committee intends to continue and further expand this study in order to map the situation of translators and interpreters worldwide and to work toward improvement in the status of our profession.

This article concludes the International Certification Study series. Past articles in this series are available online in pdf format to ATA members at www.atanet.org in the Members Only section. Nonmembers can request individual articles directly from the author at jiri@cetra.com. The entire series is scheduled for publication in book form for the November 2003 conference in Phoenix.

Notes

2. Pare, Michael A., ed. 1998. Certification and Accreditation Programs Directory: A Descriptive Guide to National Voluntary Certification and Accreditation Programs for Professionals and Institutions. Detroit, MI: The Gale Group. This 620-page volume, which describes voluntary credentialing in the U.S., is complemented by the Professional and Occupational Licensing Directory, which lists credentials required to practice a profession or occupation.


4. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

5. Academic credentials were described in several articles in this series, particularly in the countries lacking professional certification. As was mentioned in the June issue, T&I programs in the U.S. are described in Programs in Translation Studies: An ATA Handbook, edited by Gertrud Champe, recently published by ATA. Another ATA publication,
Professional Certification: What is it? Do I need it? How do I get it?

By Ann C. Sherwin

Note: The following was originally published in two parts in the Spring and Summer 2003 issues of the CATI Quarterly, the newsletter of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (an ATA chapter).

If you provide language services as a freelance, one question is inevitable: “Are you certified?” the caller wants to know. Most of us, after a spoken or tacit “No, but ____,” must fill in the blank with something like “I can certify my translations,” or “translators in this country are accredited, not certified,” or “interpreter certification is not available in my language.” Often the caller is simply looking for assurance that we’ll do a good job. Or maybe a supervisor has mandated the use of “certified translators,” with only a vague concept of what that means. Or an immigrant has unwittingly transformed the need to obtain certified translations of his documents into a search for the elusive “certified translator.” Since it is unethical to say one is certified if one is not, we take a deep breath and launch into the script that fits the occasion.

If you’re ATA-accredited in all the language pairs in which you offer service, you may soon be able to drop this script from your repertoire. In the past, clarifying or modifying impressions I had formed over 20 years of reading the newsletter of the Quarterly, the Summer 2003 issue ofCATI, and working in the field. I was gratified to find that my impressions were validated, and I gathered a wealth of commentary from which to draw for the article. My thanks to all who took time to respond.

What is professional certification?

The most concise, on-target definition of a “certified” translator or interpreter came from Pat Newman, a past president of ATA and long-time translation manager for a science and engineering laboratory. Let’s take it as our working definition: “One whose interpretation or translation competence has been tested and approved by a professional association or governmental body.” Though ATA’s credential is currently called “accreditation,” it falls within this definition. Therefore, for purposes of this discussion, please understand “certification” to include ATA accreditation.

A key element of any professional certification is testing. Most respondents to my survey, if they did not mention it explicitly, cited credentials here and abroad that are known to be based on testing. Some also named training as part of the equation, but two respondents mentioned only training in their definition of “certification.” Training can take the form of community education courses or one-week conferences and seminars, which, though useful, come only with a certificate of attendance or

By Ann C. Sherwin

Note: The following was originally published in two parts in the Spring and Summer 2003 issues of the CATI Quarterly, the newsletter of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (an ATA chapter).

If you provide language services as a freelance, one question is inevitable: “Are you certified?” the caller wants to know. Most of us, after a spoken or tacit “No, but ____,” must fill in the blank with something like “I can certify my translations,” or “translators in this country are accredited, not certified,” or “interpreter certification is not available in my language.” Often the caller is simply looking for assurance that we’ll do a good job. Or maybe a supervisor has mandated the use of “certified translators,” with only a vague concept of what that means. Or an immigrant has unwittingly transformed the need to obtain certified translations of his documents into a search for the elusive “certified translator.” Since it is unethical to say one is certified if one is not, we take a deep breath and launch into the script that fits the occasion.

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completion. Training may also be offered by an employer as preparation for work in a particular company or agency. But even if we rule out these kinds of training, we are left with the question, Does a degree or certificate in translating or interpreting from a recognized institution of higher learning constitute professional certification?

I asked Dr. Michael S. Doyle, of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, whether graduates of his department’s long-established Certificate in Translating program or its new M.A. program in Spanish Translating and Translation Studies could be considered “professionally certified.” This was his response:

When I think of a “certified translator,” it is definitely along the lines of “ATA-accredited.” For me, earning an academic or workshop certificate simply means that the institution’s requirements (course work, grade-point average, etc.) have been met for that particular certificate. We say that our certificates in translating serve as preparation for taking (no guarantee of passing, of course) the ATA accreditation exams. But to be certified or accredited as a professional translator goes beyond the coursework and institutional requirements completed. It entails such recognition by a professional certifying or accrediting agency or association, just as occurs with accountants, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals.\(^2\)

Dr. Virginia Bennamnam, director of the M.A. Program in Bilingual Legal Interpreting at the College of Charleston (South Carolina), has a similar perspective:

Our programs are academic; that means academic graduate credit is awarded upon successful completion of either program. Our exit examination in the M.A. program offers two options. The first is a passing grade on an official court certification test, that is, the consortium or the federal interpreting examination, or one that is specific to a court jurisdiction. The second option is taking the exit examination at our institution. This examination includes a written part that tests much of what has been taught in our courses and an oral part, similar to the format of the court certification exams. This second option only allows the student to graduate with an M.A. degree. It is not a court certification examination. We do not offer a certification exam as part of the program. If the student opts for the first choice, that student can graduate with an academic degree and official court certification.

So while it is possible to exit the College of Charleston program as a “certified” court interpreter, it is not by virtue of one’s having completed the training, but by virtue of one’s having passed a test given by an independent certifying body.

Some buyers of language services regard passing the U.S. Department of State examination as a valuable professional credential. The test for translators is at least as hard to pass as ATA’s accreditation test. The State Department also has tests for escort (consecutive) and conference (simultaneous) interpreters, the latter requiring a higher level of skill. However, these tests are given only to candidates for actual employment or contract work in the Department.

Furthermore, and more importantly, the State Department does not certify any translators or interpreters, according to Shuckran Kamal, senior Arabic language translator in the Department’s Office of Language Services. After describing the testing levels for various positions in the Department, Kamal emphasized once again that “passing the test does not (repeat not) mean certification.”

I should point out that governments in the U.S. are not generally in the business of certifying people. They may test candidates for employment or contract work in a particular department or agency, as in the case of the State Department, but certification is normally awarded by independent professional organizations. A notable exception in the area of language services is court interpreter certification. But even the government-sponsored court interpreter certification programs profiled in the sidebar on page 22 are administered with the help of independent bodies under contract.

While some translation companies test and “qualify” or even “certify” their subcontractors, these credentials are of limited value in the general marketplace. That is not to deny their value as means for a translation company to determine whether a potential subcontractor meets its standards. Michael Collins, of Global Translation Systems, Inc., in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, says his company uses a short test of its own to screen applicants. “We do not really use the term ‘certified’ with translators or interpreters who work for us, unless they are court-certified interpreters,” says Collins. “In some cases, when asked by a client to supply the credentials of a given translator, we may indicate whether that person was certified/licensed in
you have, the more important credentials as a professional. The less experience helps establish your credibility news. Suffice it to say that certification of some kind."

One more aspect of our working definition of a certified translator or interpreter merits attention: “One whose interpretation or translation competence has been tested....” Certificates of language proficiency or credentials for foreign-language correspondents or teachers, for example, are not translating and interpreting credentials, even if translating or interpreting was included in the test.

**Do I need it?**

If you already have all the work you need and want, a wealth of satisfied clients who keep coming back and sending you referrals, you probably don’t need professional certification. Collins offers this view:

If a translator lists ATA accreditation, it is a plus because it indicates a personal investment by that person in his or her profession. However, the decisive factors are a person’s experience and how well he or she does on a short test given by us. After that, the translator’s work is subject to review by our editors, and that work must maintain a consistent quality standard for us to continue employing him or her.

In fact, most survey respondents mentioned experience, especially in the relevant subject area, as a critical factor in their decision to try a given translator or interpreter for the first time.

For beginning translators and interpreters, this is not welcome news. Suffice it to say that certification helps establish your credibility as a professional. The less experience you have, the more important credentials become, and in some cases they can be decisive. “For languages where ATA accreditation is offered, we do not consider any translator who is not ATA accredited,” writes Richard Paegelow, managing director of Inline Translation Services, Inc., in Glendale, California.

Dr. Jiri Stejskal, ATA treasurer and president of CETRA, Inc., also prefers ATA-accredited translators, if accreditation is available for the given language; if it is not, active ATA members are preferred over associate members. “For others, including translators living abroad,” says Stejskal, “certification by CTIC [Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council] or NAATI [National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, Australia] is preferred; otherwise, the decision is based on their résumé rather than a certificate.”

Newman looks for references from clients in the same general business as hers, ATA accreditation, college degrees in translation or interpretation, State Department credentials, a résumé showing long experience in the subject areas she is interested in, and sample translations with both source- and target-language versions given.

Most respondents mentioned formal education and training as a factor in deciding whether to try a new translator or interpreter, though some placed less emphasis on it. We have already established that training alone does not lead to certification, even if it results in a certificate. But training may be a prerequisite for taking a certification test—e.g., the two-day training required by the Consortium of the National Center for State Courts Interpreter Certification Program—and it is likely to help in any testing situation. Beginning in January 2004, candidates wishing to sit for ATA’s accreditation test will have to meet eligibility requirements that combine education and training with experience. The higher the level of education, the less experience is required.

Sounds like a Catch-22, doesn’t it? You need experience to get certified, and you need certification to get experience. But there is hope. Translator and interpreter training is a relatively new development in the U.S. Many of us got our start in the field just by diving in and doing it, thanks to a mentor, encouraging employer, or trusting client. Nevertheless, certification is a worthy goal for anyone serious about advancing in the profession, and especially the newcomer.

**How do I get it?**

Back to our working definition: A certified translator or interpreter is one whose interpretation or translation competence has been tested and approved by a professional association or governmental body. There are very few certification programs for translators or interpreters available in the U.S. on the national level. The ATA, with its 30-year-old accreditation program, is clearly the leading, if not the only body, in the U.S. that accredits or certifies translators.

Interpreter certification is largely limited to the field of court interpreting between English and Spanish. The U.S. Federal Court Certification also has exams for Navajo and Haitian-Creole, but there are no plans to administer them in the near future; rather, efforts are now being channeled toward the development of exams in additional languages. Some states certify court interpreters in other languages through the Consortium of the National Center for State Courts. The National Association of Judiciary

Interpreters and Translators recently established a certification program that tests a candidate’s competence in both translating and interpreting. For more information on these programs, see the sidebar on this page.

Formal certification for medical interpreters is available in the State of Washington, and programs are in the development stage in other states. In the Carolinas, medical interpreter certification still appears to be a long way off, though the need is widely recognized.

Professional certification for translators and interpreters is also available in other countries. Jiri Stejskal has been researching the certification available in other countries for the past two years and publishing the results in the ATA Chronicle. Each article features a particular country or region. ATA members can download past issues of the ATA Chronicle from the Members Only section of the association’s website at www.atanet.org. But first, you may want to click on the ATA Chronicle link, which lists the articles in each issue, to determine which issue you need. If you are not an ATA member or have difficulty downloading the file, Stejskal has graciously offered to help. He can be reached at jiri@ctera.com. Also see Stejskal’s articles about certification in North America in the June and July issues of the ATA Chronicle.

No Blanket Claims

Remember that certification is specific to the skill(s) tested (e.g., translating or interpreting, the latter in consecutive or simultaneous mode) and to language pair and direction. Any claim of certification by a translator or interpreter is meaningless unless accompanied by this information as well as the name of a verifiable certifying body. An uninitiated client might be impressed with someone whose letterhead or business card bears the blanket claim of “certified translator/interpreter,” thereby implying that it applies to all the language pairs in which service is offered. But this breach of professional ethics is likely to draw censure from the certifying body if it becomes known, and will diminish your credibility in the eyes of knowledgeable clients and colleagues in any case.

Now then, if your career could use a boost, review your qualifications and consider doing what it takes to earn professional certification, either through one of the programs listed in the sidebar or through other avenues mentioned in this article. You might even check into opportunities in your state for helping to develop a certification program—especially if you specialize in medical interpreting, where the need is great.

Notes

1. The entire document is available at www.atanet.org/bin/view.pl/24113.html.

2. Except where otherwise noted, all direct quotations in this article come from e-mail correspondence with the author in April or May of this year.

ATA Members

Check out Life and Disability Insurance through Mutual of Omaha
800.223.6927 • 402.342.7600
www.atanet.org/mutual.htm

Where can I get more information?

American Translators Association (ATA) Accreditation
Information on one of the most widely recognized professional credentials for translators in the U.S., available in 24 language pairs, is available from ATA (www.atanet.org; (703) 683-6100; ata@atanet.org).

Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification
A program of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of justice. Certification for Spanish is available in 29 states, some of which also certify in other languages. For details and links to websites of the individual state programs, see www.ncsconline.org/D_Research/CourtInterp.html. Note: If your state is not a member of the Consortium, you may be able to take the examination in another state for a higher (nonsubsidized) fee. However, member states may restrict their programs to state residents because of the high demand.

Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (FCICE)
A program of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, administered by the NCSC (see above). Currently, only the Spanish examination is being administered, though Navajo and Haitian-Creole certification exists. Contact: www.uscourts.gov/interptprog/interp_prog.html; (916) 263-3494; FCICE-spanish@cps.ca.gov or marijke_van_der_heide@ao.uscourts.gov.

National Judiciary Interpreter and Translator Certification (NJITC)
A new credential (2002) offered by the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators to members and nonmembers. Currently available only for Spanish +English. Candidates must pass both a written and an oral examination to earn the credential. Contact: www.najit.org; (206) 367-8704; headquarters@najit.org.
Blinding Me with Science: Volunteer Interpreters Split (Linguistic) Atoms

By Amanda Ennis

Note: Portions of the following originally appeared in the June 2003 issue of NOTA BENE, newsletter of the Northeast Ohio Translators Association (an ATA chapter).

On May 11, over 1,200 high school students from nearly every state in the U.S. and 39 countries, from Russia to Argentina and everywhere in between, converged on the Cleveland Convention Center to celebrate great scientific experimentation and research at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). Over $3,000,000 in prizes and scholarships were awarded to students with the best projects in 14 different categories.

Many of the students coming from abroad spoke English well, but others needed help during the all-important interviews with the judges, where judges came around the exhibit areas to ask the finalists probing, in-depth questions about their projects before making the final decisions about who would receive special prizes and awards. The ISEF organizing committee swung into action in January 2003 to recruit a whopping 151 volunteer interpreters to assist with these interviews. One German interpreter was requested, so I thought, “Why not?” and signed up.

Fast forward to the morning of May 14, Judging Day. I maneuver my way through the throngs of students and parents in the main atrium to an out-of-the-way second floor room where the interpreters have been instructed to gather. The large room is nearly full. We don neon-green ISEF T-shirts that scream “I am a volunteer! Outta my way!” and receive black ISEF tote bags and envelopes containing an ISEF lapel pin, a certificate of appreciation and thank-you letter (nice touch!), and $10 for incidentals. After going to another room and getting name badges and spiffy black “Interpreter” ribbons that give us full access to all parts of the building, we go to the lounge where we are supposed to be matched with the finalists we will be helping. I quickly find two other German speakers who heard about the event and just decided to show up and two Turkish interpreters, one of whom works at NASA and decided to take the day off to help out. The group is excited to be here and eager to get started.

“…Thanks to the hard work of more than 125 interpreters, ideas took center stage, regardless of the language or country in which they were originally conceived…”

Unfortunately, the interpreter coordinator soon bursts our bubble: “Sorry, but we don’t have any Turkish students here, and the German students say they don’t need an interpreter.” The NASA guy looks crushed and wanders off to look at the projects before he leaves. We three German interpreters try to cheer ourselves up. “Well, sure, they think they can get through these interviews without us,” we nod knowingly, “but we’ll see what happens when the judges are standing there and they get tongue-tied.” We meander down to the cavernous, hangar-sized exhibit floor to familiarize ourselves with the German projects, just in case, and to look around while the floor is relatively empty. Did you know that chocolate bars contain traces of lead? Or that consuming French fries increases the level of a carcinogen (whose name I no longer remember) in your body? Or that caffeine improves short-term memory? I pick up all this and much more while browsing through aisle after aisle of student projects.

After a delightful lunch, paid for by ISEF, the first judging period begins. I hurry down to Physics Project 307 (a.k.a. “Bionics—A

Marat Suleymanov (R), a Russian interpreter with 12 years of experience, assists Vanya Kouzel of Minsk, Belarus, in explaining Kouzel’s method for tracking underground biogas flows to ISEF judges. (Photo: Amanda Ennis)
Technical Realization of Crawling”),
where Daniel Illhardt and Tanja Zimmermann, two 18 year-olds from eastern Germany, are fidgeting nervously as they wait for the first judge to arrive. I show them my ribbon. “I’m an interpreter!” I yell above the din and offer to jump in and help if they get stuck. Moments later, a judge appears and begins asking about their project, which has to do with replicating the movements of a snail using mechanical means. Daniel is doing reasonably well, while Tanja flounders around a bit. I wait for her to make eye contact with me and let me help, but she presses on and the pair manages to complete the interview to the judge’s satisfaction without assistance. After two more judges come and go, asking similar questions, Daniel and Tanja indicate they are fine, and I reluctantly move on. The other German student, 19 year-old Matthäus Kloc, is presenting a chemistry project entitled “A Carbon Nanocontainer for Atoms and Molecules.” I stand to one side and listen as he tells a judge how his research could be applied to deliver drugs to the exact point in a patient’s body where they are needed. I roll my eyes in frustration as I hear the young man’s excellent English and realize my presence is utterly superfluous. It turns out Matthäus’s father works in Princeton, New Jersey. Ah, well, that explains it.

Rather than calling it a day, I decide to observe and interview other interpreters working the event. I speak with a total of 21 interpreters and learn the following:

• Twelve were interpreting for the first time in a formal environment.
• All interpreters I observed interpreted consecutively. None performed simultaneous interpreting.
• Seven heard about the event and were recruited because they or a family member worked for one of the companies sponsoring the fair. Four Brazilian Portuguese interpreters were recruited through the Brazilian Charitable Foundation of Cleveland.
• Most creatively recruited interpreters: one saw a flyer at the Solon Public Library and another visited a booth ISEF set up at a John Carroll University job fair!
• Eight said they needed to interpret “90-100%” of what the judges and finalists said, while four indicated they were only needed “for the rough spots.” Others fell somewhere between the extremes.
• Eighteen said they engaged in some form of advance preparation before starting to interpret, for example, reading through the student’s English-language materials, having the student explain his or her project in detail, etc.
• Only two worked professionally as full-time interpreters.
• All interpreters said they were enjoying the experience and would interpret again if asked to do so.

Did the students feel their interpreters were doing a good job? “I knew in advance that interpreters would be available,” student Andres Espejo Cozzi said (through his interpreter). “It improved my confidence. The interpreters are doing a good job helping me communicate, but they don’t always say things just the way I said it. And the noise levels in here are a problem.” Some interpreters admitted to giving their charges a little extra attention: “I ’prepped’ my student in advance and reminded him not to forget certain things,” said Tatyana Ulcherko, a Russian doing graduate work at Cleveland State University. A Brazilian Portuguese interpreter sitting nearby admitted, “Sometimes I added a little extra to the student’s answer to impress the judge.” Another Russian interpreter, Sergio Lebid, also said he added to his student’s answers, noting thoughtfully, “It’s hard to present the student in the best possible light under these circumstances. The
seven-minute limit [on interviews] is unfair.” On the other hand, some interpreters felt the need to shorten their students’ answers: “The students can get a little preachy about their projects,” reported Dr. Rosario Cambric, a Spanish interpreter. “Sometimes they provide more information than necessary to answer the judge’s questions.”

How did the judges feel about the interpreters’ work? I asked Dr. Brian Bagatto, a University of Akron physiology professor and ISEF judge, if it was more difficult to judge projects where he had to use interpreters to conduct the interview. “It’s not more difficult,” he replied, “just slower. I didn’t water down my questions or ask different types of questions than I asked the English-speaking students, but I did pause for a second to rephrase my questions for clarity. I was satisfied with the answers I received, but sometimes I thought the interpreters gave extra information beyond what the students said.” His only suggestion for improvement would be “extra time to work with interpreter-assisted projects. Another 10 minutes or so [per slot] would have been really nice.” ISEF judge Russell Ezolt, an immigration lawyer from North Olmstead, concurred with Bagatto: “Language was not a barrier. The interview is a little more cumbersome, but you don’t lose anything in the process. Do you make a few changes? Yes. Do you adapt a little? Yes. Is it a problem? No. I think it’s wonderful that the international students are here. Cutting them off because they don’t speak English would be incredibly small-minded.”

Hear, hear, Mr. Ezolt. Thanks to the hard work of more than 125 interpreters present that day, ideas took center stage, regardless of the language or country in which they were originally conceived. Furthermore, beginning interpreters got a chance to showcase their skills and network with potential clients while performing an invaluable community service.

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International Certification Study: Lessons Learned

Continued from page 18


6. Civil law countries are those in Continental Europe and in Latin America. The common law countries are England, the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. There are also mixed jurisdictions: Quebec, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Scotland, and The Philippines. (Source: Tom West, “Common Law and Equity,” presentation at the ATA Legal Conference in Jersey City, May 2-4, 2003.)

7. See the opening article in this series in the June 2001 ATA Chronicle, page 9.


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From the Executive Director

Continued from page 9

approved a motion to issue a statement regarding the case of Mohamed Yousry, a judicial interpreter of Arabic who has been indicted for allegedly aiding and abetting terrorism. The official statement, to be published in the September issue, lays out the case, states that ATA is following the case closely, and describes the functions of the judicial interpreter, on which the case may hinge. More information will be posted online.

The minutes of the meeting will be posted in the Members Only section of ATA’s website (www.atanet.org/membersonly). Past meeting minutes are also posted on the site. The next Board meeting is tentatively set for November 8-9 at the Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. As always, the meeting is open to the membership.
Evaluating Speech in a Mental Health Setting

By Jeff Morton

Even when clinicians and clients speak the same language, it is often quite challenging for clients to express their issues or problems. Clients may not be familiar with clinical terminology, have a limited vocabulary, be unable to articulate emotions, or may lack the insight needed to self-identify issues. Understanding this, the clinician does not limit his assessment to the content of what the client says, but also attempts to gather information from how the person expresses himself. One can imagine that determining a person’s mental health needs and issues becomes even more challenging when the information concerning emotional and/or mental distress is being communicated across cultural and linguistic barriers and through a third party.

The first time I worked with an interpreter, I was fortunate to have someone who possessed many years of experience interpreting in mental health settings. At the time, I must confess, I did not recognize what the interpreter’s skills brought to my clinical interview. And then it happened. An inexperienced interpreter was sent to assist me with a client’s evaluation, and the difference in quality was quite remarkable. This new interpreter did not provide the cultural and linguistic information I needed to properly frame my assessment, and even seemed a bit frightened of the client. I think what was most frustrating about this interpreter was that I knew she was paraphrasing the client’s responses.

After working with an unskilled and inexperienced interpreter, I realized that interpreting was about much more than just finding the most appropriate words or phrases to communicate the client’s responses to the clinician. Essentially, the clinician relies upon the interpreter to be an expert in the linguistics of the client’s language. The most effective interpreter will not only be able to convey what is said, but will also give the clinician an idea of the mindset of the client by conveying how the person expressed the information (intonation and emphasis). Because trained interpreters have a native proficiency of the client’s language, they will be able to pinpoint any significant variation in speech patterns, which could provide valuable information to the clinician (for example, stuttering or slight hesitations in speech could indicate that the client is scared or holding something back). The interpreter will also be able to educate the clinician regarding any cultural or religious influences that may affect the client’s responses (for example, a client’s distrust of the clinician because of his belief that only God can heal him). For these reasons, it would seem important that there be some professional standard in place to help physicians and clinicians hire the best possible interpreter for the job. The clinician-client relationship should not be jeopardized due to an untrained interpreter.

Some organizations, such as the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (www.mmia.org), have developed standards of practice and are working on a certification process for interpreters. Although to some this might seem to add an extra layer of red tape to the process of becoming an interpreter, I believe it is essential for people to understand that interpreting is a trained skill and not just something they can do if they happen to be multilingual. For specialty areas such as mental health, it would be most helpful if there were an interpreter certification or licensure that required a curriculum of training in such topics as speech analysis, speech pathology, mental health disorders, and linguistics. And, in keeping with the times, I would also suggest that interpreters be trained in Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

During an interview, how clients express themselves is as important as the content of what is being said. Consider the following example of how intonation can make a difference:

**Parent:** “Do you want to go out for ice cream?”

**Child:** “Yes!” (excitedly)

**Parent:** “Will you clean your room first?”

**Child:** “Yes” (in a more reluctant manner)

**Parent:** “Did you understand it when I said we will not go for ice cream unless that room is cleaned?”

**Child:** “Yes!” (angrily)

**Parent:** “Did you break my favorite vase!”?

**Child:** “Yes.” (sheepishly)

Similarly, in an interview clinicians are constantly looking for any subtle clues that will help them identify their clients’ symptoms, understand their clinical needs, and formulate the most accurate diagnosis. Understanding the
illness and the issues involved is essential if clinicians are going to be able to provide and/or recommend the most effective treatment.

Any information that may help the clinician form a reasonable hypothesis of what may be causing a client’s symptoms is important. The clinician is like a sleuth who observes and listens to everything the client is saying in an effort to gather as much information as possible to determine the cause of distress. For example, is the illness the result of mental illness or a medical condition, is it being complicated by a developmental disability or exacerbated by some stressful event in the person’s life, or a blend of many co-occurring issues? These are just a few questions the clinician seeks to answer through the interview process.

Consider the following example:

**Clinician:** “Why did your family bring you to the emergency room?”

**Client:** “I don’t really know. [Loudly] I think people are plotting against me! [Whispering] Listen! I was silently sitting in my domesticity, the day that preceded today, when I saw these bright white orbs ghoulīng at me through the… [To the interpreter] Not like your eyes—they are beautiful! They are brown like my mother’s…she was a wonderful wife…well sometimes she wasn’t so nice, ‘cause she would lock me in my room…but you seem very nice…and so beautiful… [screaming] STOP IT!”

How would you have interpreted the person’s response to the clinician? The interpreter’s tendency might be to repair some of the nonsense words, assuming the client simply mis-spoke (such as saying “wife” instead of “mother”). The inexperienced interpreter may omit the embarrassing flirtations, condense some of the verbose wording (i.e., change “the day that precedes today” to “yesterday”), and focus on communicating the client’s portrayal of the strange vision and his recollection of how his mother punished him as a child.

Although the content of the potential hallucination and what the client may see as a past abusive home environment are both important pieces of information for the clinician, equally important is how the client conveyed this information. The tangential nature of their speech, the fragmentation of their stream of thought, their flirtations, the creation of words, and their use of jargon and unusual or unconventional words are all very important in assessing the mental health issues and needs of clients.

The following are just a few of the questions the clinician may be considering while listening to the person:

- What was the emotional tone (prosody) of the person’s response?
- Was the emotional quality of the speech consistent with the person’s self-reported mood?
- What level of comprehension does the client possess?
- Was the person’s speech unusually rapid or slow, or did it have an arrhythmic cadence? (This can be especially difficult for the clinician to determine in light of cultural and linguistic speech variations.)
- Were there any significant delays in the response that might indicate a disruption in the thought process?
- Was there continuity between what the clinician asked and how the client responded, or did the client become distracted and stray from the question?
- Did the person use contextually appropriate words (such as using “domicile” instead of “apartment,” or “the day that precedes today” instead of “yesterday”)?

In addition to being mindful about conveying all the information the client provides (no matter how nonsensical it might seem at times), it is also helpful if the interpreter can inform the clinician of any notably odd or unusual elements of the person’s speech. Consider the general categories described below:

**Prosody**

With the exception of organic issues that might affect the emotional tone of a person’s speech, there should be some consistency between the person’s self-defined mood and the prosody of his speech. The effective quality of the person’s speech may be diminished in intensity, restricted, constricted, or blunted. In extreme cases, the tone of the person’s speech may even be entirely flat and absent of any emotional quality.

At the other end of the spectrum, however, the person’s emotional expressiveness may possess an exaggerated or increased level of intensity in the context of what is being discussed, as with someone whose emotional tone is vituperative and invective, excessively dogmatic, or histrionic.

**Cadence**

Typically, the clinician is also listening to determine whether the client’s speech has a natural rhythm or melodic flow, or whether the person is using modulations of tone, pitch, and syllabic stress in an appropriate manner to provide emphasis. You can imagine how challenging it can be for a clinician who is not familiar with the client’s native language to identify what may be
an irregularity or what might be attributed to a cultural and/or linguistic variation. For example, I once had a Russian-speaking client who often spoke very slowly. How slow was not apparent to me until I began learning the language myself. Once I better understood the client and his native language, I began to realize that he spoke more slowly when he was feeling paranoid and afraid. Although he was responding to my questions (out of fear I might do something to him), he was speaking slowly because he was trying to come up with a response that would satisfy my question without divulging too much information.

Although there are a multitude of reasons why a person’s speech may be unusually fast, slow, sluggish, pressured, excited, casual, relaxed, monotone, or even flat, it is important for the clinician to be aware of any inconsistencies that might provide him with another piece to the diagnostic puzzle. For example, a person with significant halts or delays in the middle of sentences or words might indicate the person is being distracted by internal stimuli, by auditory or visual hallucinations, that the person’s thoughts are moving faster than he or she can verbalize, or that there is an organic disorder impairing the client’s speech, just to name a few possibilities.

For someone who is monolingual, other languages have a distinctive and unusual sound in terms of rhythm and intonation. One will often hear people say that Spanish sounds fast, German sounds harsh and gruff, or that Scandinavian languages have a certain melody. There is even the jest that if you want to say something unkind to someone, you should say it in French because it always sounds elegant, kind, and sophisticated. Though I will try not to digress, I believe our associations with other languages have been greatly influenced by our own culture and the media. I cannot count the number of movies I have seen in which the Russian-speaking character is portrayed as someone devious, sly, untrustworthy, cold, heartless, and corrupt—who speaks in a cold, harsh, and unfeeling manner.

Stream of Thought

When he asks a question, the clinician is listening to the inter-relatedness of the client’s response as a reflection of the continuity of the client’s thought processes. Some responses will have nothing to do with the question (possibly indicating evasiveness or a preoccupation with a certain theme). The client may begin with a response that is relevant and related and then stray entirely away from the essence of the question (as with someone trying to conceal a preoccupation or obsessive concern, or contain his flight of ideas). At times the clinician may be able to detect weak and/or loose associations in a client’s commentary, allowing him to follow the stream of thought as it slowly digresses from the question. In some situations, the tangential response can indicate the presence of racing thoughts or a manic episode, or a not-so-subtle attempt to evade the question that was asked.

When a person is speaking tangentially, the clinician may test a person’s willingness to accept interruption and redirection in order to gauge irritability and insight (or to simply get through the interview when a client is speaking incessantly). Whereas some clients will permit their stream of thought to be interrupted and accept the redirection apologetically and with insight, others will not be so agreeable. Some clients will become quite irritable and angry when interrupted or redirected, and some will completely ignore the clinician and continue expressing their thoughts undeterred and unabashed by the interruption.

Speech Content

Although the clinician is interested in the contextual information the client provides, he or she is also hoping to gain information that may shed light on the person’s issues in a more indirect manner. For example:

• Does the person appear to be obsessing about or repeating any specific information?
• Does the person express ideas that seem exaggerated or overvalued?
• Does the person seem preoccupied with making himself or herself appear more important in a narcissistic or grandiose manner?
• Does the person appear evasive or guarded in a manner that might indicate the presence of irrational concerns or fears?
• Does the person relate to the surrounding environment, or does he or she appear to be withdrawn into an internal world (such as someone who is autistic or consumed by magical beliefs or fixed delusions)?

Informative

The clinician also tries to gauge whether the information the client has provided is sufficiently informative. If the response lacks substance, was this intentional or does the client lack the insight and/or ability to provide more detailed information? Responses that appear to be “impoverished in content” may indicate paranoia, an intentional effort to be deceptive or misleading, memory impairment, or difficulty articulating detail.
Abstractions

In an interview, you may hear the clinician ask the client to interpret a metaphor, such as “those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.” This question is a common method for evaluating a person’s ability to understand and interpret abstract ideas. A client who lacks the ability to understand the abstract meaning of this proverbial saying is said to have “concrete” thinking, and may respond to the question by saying “well…they shouldn’t throw stones because they might break a window.” Although the question may appear simple or even silly, it is important for the interpreter not to help the client understand the meaning behind what was said. The client’s response can provide valuable information as to how the clinical team will work with the client toward meeting treatment plans and goals.

It also goes without saying that many proverbial sayings have a cultural bias. I am always appreciative if my interpreter can provide me with a proverbial saying that is in the proper cultural context for the client. Of course, he might have to explain it to me first!

Idiosyncratic Speech Patterns

Sometimes a person’s speech is impaired in a manner that makes comprehension completely impossible. For instance, clients may only repeat a certain word or phrase without reference to any subject presented in the interview.

Aphasias

Finally, it is important to note that beyond mental health issues, aberrations of speech may also indicate the presence of a medical and/or neurological disorder. One such example is an aphasic disorder, which impairs a person’s ability to articulate expression due to a brain lesion or neurological impairment. The mental health clinician must also consider this possibility when trying to determine whether a neurological review is needed.

With the many elements of speech to be considered, one can see how important and challenging the interpreter’s job really is. Interpreters are charged with the task of conveying information to and from the clinician in the most precise manner that best reflects the content of the information and the aforementioned elements of the client’s speech. In addition to any medical and/or mental health influences that may impair a person’s ability to express him or herself, linguistic and cultural influences may also play a role in how the client conveys information to a person who is frequently a stranger.

To provide the client with the most effective treatment, I strongly suggest that the clinician and interpreter discuss their strategy and expectations prior to the interview in a pre-session meeting covering the following topics.

1. Any pertinent cultural and/or linguistic information can be shared, such as:
   - Where is the client from (nationality and region of the native country)?
   - Will there be a dialect or variation of speech that should be considered?
   - How long has the person been in the country (i.e., how acculturated is the person to the dominant culture)?
   - What were the circumstances that brought the person to this country?
   - If clients are refugees or seeking asylum, what was the nature of the persecution they faced in their native country?
   - If not a naturalized citizen, what concerns might the client have in terms of immigration and naturalization status? Might the client be concerned about deportation if treatment is accepted?
   - Are there cultural customs and considerations that the clinician should be made aware of (such as machismo, shame and saving face, or family dynamics)?

2. The goal and direction of the interview should be planned out before the client arrives:
   - What problem is the client presenting? (This is often available from the records and may be helpful in understanding the clinician’s planned approach).
   - What is the goal and purpose of the interview?
   - How should information be transferred back and forth (simultaneous or question by question)?
   - How will a situation where the client tries to convey “secrets” to the interpreter be addressed?
   - It should be understood by both the clinician and the interpreter that everything said in the context of the interview, whether by the client or the clinician, will need to be shared with everyone present to reinforce trust and build rapport.

Continued on p.40
Beware of the “Bilingual Expert”

By Maria Cornelio

It is generally recognized that the translation of medical documents is a very specialized activity. But it has been my experience that people in the medical field who are not translators believe the difficulty in translating such documents is due only to the medical and scientific terminology and the rigorous standards demanded of scientific research. As a result, a large number of physicians, healthcare workers, and scientists assume that any bilingual person among them (usually called a “bilingual expert”) can do a better job than a professional translator who does not have an advanced health-science or technical degree.

An article in the April 2003 issue of the ATA Chronicle brought the point home in a humorous and compelling way. As I read Steve Vitek’s “Is Technical Translation Really a Collaborative Activity?” I couldn’t help applying his observations to my own professional situation. Although we labor in different areas of specialization, Vitek and I seem to have come to the same conclusions about the dangers of relying on so-called “bilingual experts” to produce quality specialized translations. Generally, such “experts” are people who have trained in their respective professions and also happen to speak another language. However, unlike professional translators, these individuals did not acquire their second language by studying it in a systematic way. Even when they are native speakers and have received their technical training in the language of the proposed translation, these people may be “field experts,” but they are not necessarily “language experts.”

“…Even when they are native speakers and have received their technical training in the language of the proposed translation, these people may be ‘field experts,’ but they are not necessarily ‘language experts’…”

Botched by physicians, microbiologists, nurses, and other “bilingual experts.” In fact, for several years now, I’ve kept a (constantly growing) file of the many medical translations I’ve had to rescue after they were botched by physicians, microbiologists, nurses, and other “bilingual experts.” In fact, for several years now, I’ve kept a (constantly growing) file with the most egregious examples.

Two colleagues and I have described in print the many problems I found with one of these documents, a questionnaire that was translated by Spanish-speaking healthcare professionals for a major research study. The investigator who brought me the translation for review assumed that it would need very few changes, since she had confidence in the language abilities of the translators. However, the document contained so many errors that it had to be almost completely retranslated.

The vocabulary and syntax gave me the impression that I was reading English with Spanish words. Many statements would have made sense only to someone familiar enough with the English language to decipher the meaning behind what was said. For example, the phrase “did you attend support groups” was translated as “atendió grupos de soporte.” Many bilinguals often use “false cognates,” words that look alike but have different meanings in the two languages. Atendió is one such word. The Spanish meaning is “to be attentive, to heed, to pay attention.” It does not have the English meaning “to go to” or “to be present at.” Soporte is another false cognate. It comes from soportar, which means “to carry a load, suffer, or tolerate.” Support in the positive sense in which it was being used in the questionnaire should have been translated as apoyo. Success was translated as succeso, a word that does not exist in Spanish. The respondent was sometimes addressed with the formal usted and other times with the informal tú. Frequently, there was no agreement between adjective and noun, or between verb and subject. Often, the questions were simply mistranslated. For example, “how many other pregnancies have you had?” was turned into “have you had other pregnancy losses?” and “I get cross at my friends” became “I have confrontations with my friends.” The translators were obviously unfamiliar with the proper wording for demographic questionnaires in Spanish, including not being aware that “marital status” is translated as “estado civil.” This last phrase is something they could have found in any good bilingual dictionary. But being native speakers, they assumed no equivalent term existed in Spanish or else they would have known it. Clearly, they did not feel the need to consult the dictionary. As a result, while the English had a section with the
heading “marital status,” the Spanish heading read “Por favor de marcar. Estaba casado?” (“Please to mark. Were you married?”).

In short, the translation as it was would have been completely useless as a cross-cultural research instrument on psychosocial variables, even though it had been done by “bilingual experts.” As a professional translator, I was able to fix this particular translation so the study could be carried out successfully. I am happy to say that not only did the research make an important contribution to the field, but the investigator also obtained a Ph.D. for her work.

Even peer-reviewed medical journals sometimes unknowingly publish translation disasters that would have been simple enough to prevent if the translation had been entrusted to a professional translator. A case in point is an article published a few years ago in the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, one of the most prestigious medical journals in the U.S. This article was brought to my attention during the course of my work reviewing translations to be used in clinical trials. An investigator submitted for review the translation of a pain questionnaire he wanted to use in his study. After looking over the questionnaire, I informed the study coordinator that I could not approve it because there were serious problems with the translation. She did not believe me and said there had to be something wrong with my method of evaluation, since this translation had been done and statistically validated by bilingual healthcare professionals at the University of Texas. In addition, an article had been published describing the methodology that was used in the translation and validation of the questionnaire. She gave me the complete citation and I consulted the journal. I found the article, which I proceeded to read with great care. The article looked impressive enough. According to the authors, their methods:

- “were designed to assure cross-cultural equivalence…and to conform to the guidelines…proposed…for the cross-cultural adaptation of [health-related quality-of-life] instruments. Content equivalence was assured by having an expert panel of healthcare providers fluent in Spanish and knowledgeable about Mexican-American culture evaluate the relevance of each item...to the culture of Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans. Semantic equivalence was ensured by using a rigorous forward- and back-translation process...An integral part of the translation process was evaluation by an expert panel to assure comparability of item meanings across the two language versions.”

The article then describes the translation and validation methodology in great detail.

- One translation committee formed by “nine bilingual health researchers with extensive experience studying Mexican-Americans.” Five of these translators had Spanish as their first language. The other four knew Spanish and “were...familiar with local Spanish usage.”
- Two evaluation committees, one made up of “eight healthcare providers,” six physicians, one nurse, and one social gerontologist. “Spanish was the first language for four of these individuals, but all were fluent and able to read and write in both languages and had many years of clinical experience with Mexican-American patients.” “The second evaluation committee was formed by 10 bilingual healthcare consumers,” all of whom were Hispanic (three had Spanish as their first language).
- “A total of five iterations of the translation process were accomplished, including a formal back-translation.” According to the article, great care was taken to preserve “the original structure of the [questionnaire]” and “for each of the [pain] descriptors in English, a Spanish equivalent was found that was considered to convey similar qualitative and quantitative dimensions of pain.”
- Once the translation and back-translation were done, the “evaluation committee, formed by healthcare providers, examined the appropriateness of the semantic content and grammatical form of each Spanish descriptor in the translation.”
- Finally, in order to establish its validity and reliability, the translated questionnaire was pre-tested with both bilingual and monolingual patients and the results subjected to a series of statistical analyses. These tests included Pearson correlation coefficients, chi-square, and paired t-tests. The results of these analyses are presented in a total of six scatter plots, two bar charts, two tables, and two graphs.

In their conclusion, the authors assert that they have “provided evidence that the translation fulfills published criteria for cross-cultural equivalence,” and that it “is suitable for studying Spanish-speaking
Beware of the “Bilingual Expert” Continued

Mexican-Americans in South Texas, and probably in other locations in the Southwestern U.S.”14

Seeing all this, how could I, a mere translator without a medical or scientific degree, pass judgment on work produced to such exacting standards by “bilingual experts” who were M.D.s, Ph.D.s, and R.N.s? As a translator, I am interested in words and their meaning, the context in which those words are used, and whether they follow the logic of the language. Looking over the list of pain descriptors these researchers had produced, it was clear to me that in the real world very few Spanish-speaking patients, Mexican-American or not, would understand such a questionnaire—let alone be able to give meaningful answers.

In addition to my language skills, I also have to be familiar with research methodology so that I can understand and evaluate the translations of the protocols that come across my desk for review. Despite its complicated statistics, tables, and charts, the study violated one of the basic principles of research design. This principle states that in order to assure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, categories must be mutually exclusive. That is, the categories that are being studied must be defined in such a manner that each piece of information obtained during the research can fit into only one category and no other. The English questionnaire had 78 distinct word categories, each one a different adjective describing a unique type of pain. The translation purported to have a distinctive, perfectly matched Spanish word for each English one. However, two of the categories of the translation consisted of exactly the same word, punzante.15 Several other categories were too close in meaning to serve as unique descriptors. For example, three categories were all modifications of the word dolor (Spanish for pain): doliente, doloroso, and adolorido.16 Two more categories were simply variations on the word torcer. Neither of those categories would work because no Spanish-speaking person would characterize his pain as “un dolor tociendo” or “un dolor torciento,”17 since those phrases would make no sense semantically. A pain described as fearful in the English questionnaire became horrificante (a word that does not exist in Spanish); a radiating pain was translated as radiante (which means radiant in Spanish); and a wretched pain became afligido18, which can mean upset, grieving, sad, troubled, or tormented. A patient who is in pain can certainly feel any of those emotions, but it would be nonsensical to describe the pain itself in that way.

The entire translation was riddled with such problematic words. How did these terms manage to pass the evaluation committee’s aforementioned test of “appropriateness of the semantic content and grammatical form”? Evidently, the members of this committee did not have the necessary language skills to carry out the task. After hearing my comments, it was obvious to the study coordinator that in spite of its having been published in a prestigious journal, no statistical analysis would make this translation achieve its objective.

This and many other such incidents have made it clear to me that no one can ever take the place of a translator who has the education and practical experience to render meaning faithfully from one language to another while at the same time respecting the conventions of the specialized field in which she or he labors. In working with medical researchers, I let them know I believe in the concept of division of labor: they are medical professionals and I am a language professional. We each have our own area of expertise—theirs is medical and mine is linguistic. It’s simple. If you’re sick, see a doctor. If you need a translation, see a translator.

To quote Vitek once again:

“A bilingual expert is not necessarily a good translator, and a good translator is much more than a bilingual expert...if I have a choice between a doctor and a professional translator, I will always choose the latter.”

I could not have said it better.

Notes
2. Ibid., p. 25.
4. Ibid., p. 168.
5. Ibid., p. 168.

Continued on p.43
The Medical Interpreter and the Police in the Emergency Department: Too Close for Comfort?

By Shiva Bidar-Sielaff and Gladys McCormick

An ambulance brings a six-year-old girl to the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Emergency Department (ED). Bitten by a dog while playing in the park, she is accompanied by her limited-English-speaking mother. Within a few minutes, a monolingual English-speaking police officer arrives and asks the ED’s medical interpreter to help him get a description of the dog and its owner. Finding the dog quickly may save the little girl from having to receive the prophylactic rabies treatment, a procedure involving six painful injections within four weeks. The police officer informs the interpreter that he has no access to an interpreter through his department. Should the medical interpreter cooperate with the officer’s request to interpret for him?

Another scenario. A limited-English-speaking patient arrives in the ED in the early morning hours accompanied by a sheriff’s officer. Though the patient’s car hit a tree, he is relatively unscathed. He has a minor facial laceration and is quite agitated, slurring his words and calling out for his girlfriend. The officer wants to give the patient a ticket for driving under the influence (DUI) and get his signed consent to draw blood to determine the blood alcohol level. The officer asks the hospital’s medical interpreter to interpret for him. What should the medical interpreter do?

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Among the many challenging situations confronting interpreters in a medical setting, dealing with law enforcement agencies in an emergency room stands out as one of the most problematic. It calls into question the role of the medical interpreter, as well as the lines between personal, civic, and professional ethics. As medical interpreters, we are often asked to interpret for law enforcement or to help the police in a criminal investigation. These situations pose difficult and gut-wrenching quandaries. Should a medical interpreter cooperate with the requests of law enforcement officers? How about in the two aforementioned cases? In the first instance, the interpreter’s assistance could spare the girl from receiving painful injections and prevent further dog attacks. In the second situation, the interpreter could help the officer do his job while ensuring that the allegedly drunk patient understands what is being asked of him.

At first glance, one might be compelled to cooperate out of a sense of professional courtesy or civic responsibility. However, if we examine the situation more closely, we will see the need to tread very carefully. In most cases, as we will argue in the following article, it is in the interpreter’s best interest to turn down requests for interpreting services made by law enforcement officers.

When should the medical interpreter interpret for the police?

If forced to provide a blanket answer to this question, ours would be never. A medical interpreter should not interpret for law enforcement, since doing so breaches the role of the medical interpreter and presents a clear conflict of interest. The patient’s interests may be fundamentally different from those of the police, and this fact may not be obvious to an inexperienced interpreter. For example, an interpreter may not know enough to judge between an innocuous question and a question that is more interrogational in nature (and one whose answer could subsequently be used against the patient in court). If the interpreter collaborates with a police officer without evaluating the situation first, this could lead the patient to lose trust in the interpreter, possibly undermining one of the most important foundations of the interpreter/patient relationship. Medical interpreters are not trained in the specialized legal terminology that may arise when interpreting for law enforcement officers. The interpreter may inadvertently be liable for incorrectly relaying sensitive legal information, such as Miranda Rights at the moment of an arrest. Even more importantly, we believe that medical interpreters run the risk of divulging confidential healthcare information if they assist police officers. The strict guidelines guarding medical information in the recently implemented Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) clearly state that such collaboration could potentially be a breach of patient confidentiality.

The medical interpreter’s role is as complex as that of other individuals in the medical field, such as doctors and nurses. To understand this complexity, one must first recognize that what makes an interpreter a professional is not only linguistic ability, but the capacity for ethical decision making in the face of difficult situations. This is especially true in the field of...
medical interpreting, where interpreters regularly confront difficult ethical situations.

In our first scenario, the information needed by the police officer (a description of the dog and its owner) is of a very general nature and does not require knowledge of a specialized terminology. This information is time-sensitive and would be extremely beneficial for the little six-year-old, since it may prevent her from having to undergo six injections. In this particular scenario, when balancing benefits over possible harm, the benefits seem to clearly outweigh the negative. Therefore, in this case, the medical interpreter may choose to go ahead and interpret the questions pertaining to the description of the “suspects” to the police.

The second scenario presents a completely different picture. The need for immediate attention does not exist, and the medical interpreter may be unfamiliar with the legal terminology involved in a DUI ticket or the consent to draw blood. If the interpreter collaborates with the police officer, the patient may see the interpreter as an extension of the officer and be less forthcoming with medical information. If the patient has substance abuse problems, he may be reticent to mention this to the doctor (who would certainly refer the patient to a substance abuse counseling program) for fear that the information may aggravate his legal situation. In this case, it would be appropriate for the medical interpreter to explain his or her professional role to the officer and then politely refuse to assist.

These two cases illustrate the difficult choices to be made by the medical interpreter when deciding whether or not it is advantageous to collaborate with law enforcement officials. An interpreter could decide to assist an officer if the situation posed imminent danger to the patient or members of the community and did not warrant specialized knowledge of medical vocabulary. To clarify what is meant by imminent danger, let’s look at a third scenario where an interpreter might be called upon to help law enforcement.

Two ambulances arrive at the ED. The first one has a woman with stab wounds and the second a man with stab wounds and a kitchen knife embedded in his throat. There is no way of knowing if the case is one of attempted murder/suicide or double murder with the perpetrator still at large. If it is a murder/suicide the alleged perpetrator will need to be found. In such a situation, the medical interpreter may choose to help police officers question the stabbed woman to ascertain what took place. Upon finding out that the man had stabbed the woman and then himself in a jealous rage, it would then be appropriate for the interpreter to remove himself from the situation, since there is no longer the possibility of imminent danger (the perpetrator is incapacitated).

In contemplating a medical interpreter’s ability to professionally gauge the ethical dimensions of a situation, we must also consider how an interpreter’s own set of beliefs can interfere with the decision-making process. For example, a medical interpreter may have strong feelings about domestic abuse, compelling him to interpret for the police. However, the same interpreter may not feel as strongly about drunk drivers, so he decides not to interpret for the police in a DUI case. In another situation, police suspect that a patient in the ED is a victim of a hate crime after being severely beaten at a nightclub and left with non-life threatening injuries. Police arrest two suspects and want to take a deposition so they can keep them in jail. Considering it involves a hate crime, a medical interpreter may choose to help police with the deposition.

It is our belief that all three scenarios present situations where it would be inappropriate for the interpreter to intervene. In the events portrayed, there is no imminent danger to those involved. These cases also place the interpreter in a potentially antagonistic position in relation to the patient, and may require specialized vocabulary. What if the patient does not want to press charges against the person abusing him? What if the DUI patient refuses to answer the doctor’s questions after the interpreter has collaborated with the police officer because he is afraid of incriminating himself? What if the interpreter gets subpoenaed to testify in the trial for the hate crime victim? Such ambiguities surround many of the cases a medical interpreter confronts in the ED that involve law enforcement. Medical interpreters need to clearly understand that they must set aside their personal beliefs when confronted with these situations.

A Complicating Factor: The Relationship Between the Police Department and the ED

The medical personnel in the ED will usually have a close relationship with the police department that is mutually beneficial to both. The ED helps law enforcement officers whenever possible, and the officers are there to protect the ED staff whenever needed. Therefore, the medical interpreter is often under implicit, or even explicit, pressure from the ED staff to “collaborate” with the police. “Oh, come on, they just want your help so they can be done with this. No big deal.” ED staff may feel that an interpreter’s refusal to interpret will antagonize the police and may
jeopardize their working relationship.

At the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, medical interpreters often take the time to explain to their colleagues in the ED that, given the conflict of interest involved and the potential for mistakes due to insufficient knowledge of legal terminology and procedures, they are not qualified to interpret for the police. Such an explanation has raised the staff’s awareness of the role of the medical interpreter and has dramatically reduced the “peer pressure” that existed before.

Though opening the lines of communication can easily alleviate this form of peer pressure, medical interpreters still face an additional form of pressure that is not as easily solved. Many interpreters in the ED complain that police officers attempt to intimidate them into interpreting. Officers claim that an interpreter has a “civic duty” to collaborate with the police, and dismiss the reasons for the interpreter’s refusal to assist them. Medical interpreters are put in a very difficult position, especially if the officers repeatedly insist that they collaborate. To begin tackling this form of pressure, the hospital’s interpreter services department contacted area law enforcement agencies to explain our policies and requested that the information be shared with their personnel. As we will explore in the following section, these efforts should be part of a broader and ongoing communication with these agencies.

How to Make the Relationship Between the Medical Interpreter and Law Enforcement Close and Comfortable

There are several practical steps that can be taken to ensure a professional relationship between law enforcement officers and medical interpreters.

The first step to achieving this goal is to ensure that both parties understand and respect each other’s professional roles and boundaries. A meeting of the individuals in charge of the hospital’s interpreter services department, along with medical interpreters, the police department, and the ED staff can help ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of their roles and expectations of each other. Throughout these conversations it is necessary to make clear the expectation that law enforcement agencies need to provide for limited-speaking individuals, much as healthcare institutions have done. Police departments should pay for specialized interpreters themselves, or else ensure the availability of bilingual officers.

It is also important to make constructive suggestions to the police department on how to improve its capacity to work with limited-English-speaking individuals. Although they have good intentions, law enforcement officials are not always very knowledgeable about the field of interpretation and translation. To help them understand this need, it may be helpful to identify the reasons why it would be beneficial to have some of their written resources translated, as well as to share interpreter resources, such as telephonic interpreter services, that could make their job easier.

A second important step involves medical interpreters directly. Hospital guidelines that clearly address the role of medical interpreters, specifically stating the extent of their collaboration with police, would allow interpreters to have something to fall back on when deciding if they should accept a request for their services. Such guidelines could also be drawn up in conjunction with a Medical Interpreter’s Code of Ethics.

In Conclusion

The relationship with law enforcement is one of a myriad of challenging situations we face as medical interpreters. It is an area where guidelines and standards have yet to be developed. Like our non-interpreting colleagues, we believe that our ultimate duty is to do what is in the best interest of the patient. The interactions between the medical interpreter and the police need to be placed within this larger framework. When choosing to collaborate with law enforcement officials, we need to be aware of the ethical dimensions of our decision, the potential liability issues such a decision could bring, and the fact that our interpreting could violate patient confidentiality and lead to a loss of patient autonomy. This article is intended to foster a dialogue at the local and national levels about this subject. Undoubtedly, there is much to discuss before reaching a national consensus.

In next month’s Chronicle...
Medical Language and Medical Translation

By Elena Sgarbossa

Umberto Eco wrote: “Translating is not only connected with linguistic competence, but with intertextual, psychological, and narrative competence.” When translating medical text, it is also essential to be highly competent in the medical sciences. Medical language, while devoid of the complex nuances or prosodic constraints found in literary writing, can still be abstruse. Lexical errors can lead to a dangerous situation for the patient—e.g., it is not uncommon for a medical prescription stating “q.d.” (once a day) to be misinterpreted as “q.i.d.” (four times a day).

As consulting physicians, many of us routinely review medical record summaries and laboratory or test reports from other institutions. Patient documents that have been translated sometimes contain substantial errors. Some errors arise from problems intrinsic to the source language (as in the “q.d. versus q.i.d.” example) that can be carried over to the translation, while others emerge from the interface of two languages.

When “Common Sense” is Not Enough

Mark Twain said: “The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is as great as that between lightning and the lightning bug.” This is painfully true in medical translation, where simply applying “common sense” is often inadequate.

What is the nature of medical mistranslation? Statistics on frequent errors would be very difficult to compile, but I would like to contribute here my personal observations. The most pervasive errors I have encountered are categorized in the following sections. Some examples were taken from documents I edited and others from online discussion groups, where participants usually claim to have expertise in medical translation.

1. The Source Language: Intra-Lingual Problems

   a. Semantic Pitfalls
      
      "Common Sense" is often inadequate. Statistics on frequent translation, where simply applying "common sense" is as great as that between lightning and the lightning bug..."—Mark Twain

   Consider, for example, the word clearance. In everyday English, it means authorization [for a check], cleaning away, or even sale. In medicine, clearance specifically alludes to the volume of human plasma that is freed of a substance, per minute, in a live subject. Clearance is frequently attached to the word renal, but renal clearance does not imply eliminating the kidneys. Renal clearance is usually a measure of renal function. When kidneys do not need to be eliminated (because of tumors or disease, or when they are donated for transplants), the process is called kidney/renal ablation, removal, or resection.

   Other terms may also have unrecognized medical meanings. For instance, on one online medical translation discussion list someone requested the English translation of the Spanish word “circulante.” The translator added, for context: “circulante appears at the bottom of an operating room fee list.” In everyday Spanish, “circulante” means cash or circulating. Yet both “circulante” and circulating acquire a specific meaning in the context of the operating room: “enfermera/o circulante de quirófano” or (operating room) circulating nurse. The circulating nurse is a specially trained nurse who moves around active operating rooms to provide and clear away instruments or materials needed for surgery. The translator who posted “circulante” obtained several English renditions, including the correct circulating nurse. Among the less appropriate answers, however, were distributor (which is not grossly incorrect, but is misleading) and the colorful answer petty cash. (The context for circulating did call for operating room fees, which, I suppose, one could defray with some petty cash...)

   For yet another example, consider the lexeme patent/patent. Patent, Webster’s says, means “obvious” or “evident.” Patent is also synonymous with “unobstructed” or “per-vious,” which is the intended meaning when the term appears in a medical document or article. A translator requesting online help in the English→Spanish language pair posted patent jejunostomy as it appeared in the phrase “the left lower quadrant of the abdomen has a patent jejunostomy (medical record).” A quick response (provided by someone with a medical Ph.D. and a degree in translation) read: “yeyunostomía evidente, abertura quirúrgica evidente del yeyuno” (reference: Ruiz Torres Diccionario médico). The same translation was replicated by another participant, who provided Internet
references about “yeyunostomía” (but not about “yeyunostomía evidente”). To encounter a physician’s note stating “yeyunostomía evidente” (evident yeyunostomía) would be as unlikely as encountering a note stating “evident mouth” when discussing the exam of a patient’s face. The Spanish translation for patent jejunostomy (or functioning jejunostomy) is “yeyunostomía permeable” or “yeyunostomía funcionante.”

**Homonymy and Polysemy: One Word, Two Unrelated Medical Meanings**

Some medical lexemes have more than one meaning. For example, take the lexemes flare/flaring. According to Webster’s, flaring is “an area of skin flush.” This meaning is close to “flare up” or “sudden bursting into flame or light,” and implies “redness” or “inflammation.” Flare also means “to open or spread outward.”

On an online discussion group a translator posted the phrase nasal flaring and shallow rapid respirations, requesting a Spanish rendition. In this example, nasal flaring alludes to the rhythmic movement of the nose openings when trying to increase air intake, a worrisome sign exhibited by people with respiratory difficulty. The phrase nasal flaring triggered several answers, two of which coincided in proposing “rojez (enrojecimiento) nasal y respiración rápida y poco profunda.” Here, the second half of the premise has been adequately translated, although “poco profunda” is not as good for shallow as “superficial.” Nasal flaring, on the other hand, was misinterpreted to mean “flush” or “redness.” The correct translation would have been “aléteo o ensanchamiento nasal.”

The phrase emergent conditions can mean either “new diseases” or “emergency medical problems.” When the online translation (into Spanish) was requested for “emergent conditions” with the context “Only patients with emergent conditions will have referrals issued for the Emergency Room,” a translator proposed “enfermedades emergentes” and “enfermedades en vías de desarrollo.” Both options mean “new diseases,” which is the wrong interpretation.

A frequent source of error is the name medulla and the Spanish “médula.” The part of the central nervous system that continues the spinal cord towards the brain is the medulla oblongata, which is “bulbo raquideo” in Spanish. The medulla oblongata should not be confused with the “médula espinal” (spinal cord in Spanish) or with “médula ósea,” which means bone marrow. “Médula espinal” and “médula ósea” appear in several medical websites, often with their meaning switched or else confused with medulla oblongata.

Another term with an unsuspected medical meaning is burden of disease, which was submitted to a website by a translator requesting the Spanish term. The context was: “to estimate the current burden of disease.” A translator proposed to render burden of disease as “flagelo de la enfermedad,” which is indeed closer to disease scourge. This option, according to the translator, was justified because while burden in Spanish is literally “carga,” burden of disease was probably referring to the disease’s punishing societal aspects, which are well captured or dramatized by the word “flagelo.” In the field of epidemiology, however, burden of disease means “disease prevalence,” or the ratio of disease cases within a specific population. The disease prevalence in a population may indeed be zero (for example, when it is measured after years of vaccination programs), and therefore the connotation of burden of disease is neutral, not negative. Thus, the analogy to a scourge in the translation is misleading, which brings us to our next subject on lexeme connotation.

**One Term, Several Connotations**

Some lexemes maintain their “core” meaning across subjects or fields, but their connotation spins (often by 180 degrees). One example is the word remodeling. According to Webster’s, remodel means “to alter the structure; to remake.” Although remodeling as a process (be it in our home, workplace, or anywhere else) may not be enjoyable in itself, the tacit consensus is that the post-remodeling status will be more appealing than the pre-remodeling status. Remodeling is thus associated (if only for the end result) to a positive connotation. This is not the case, however, regarding cardiac remodeling. When remodeling has taken place in the structure of the heart (after a heart attack), the end result is an unhealthy cardiac deterioration.

I was recently editing a document in which “cardiac remodeling” had been properly translated into Spanish as “remodelación cardíaca,” but the remodeling was attributed by the translator to the beneficial effects of a medication—when indeed, this medication prevents or reverses remodeling (as stated in the original document), which is the action that makes it so effective.

**• Syntactic Pitfalls**

Newly coined medical lexemes in English are being introduced more frequently than ever before. This means that during their professional lives, medical translators working with English will routinely...
encounter unknown terms. When confronted with unknown lexemes, it is important to pay special attention to the sentence syntax. Analysis of the textual structure is particularly pivotal in “order languages” such as English, where a word may have a role as a noun, adjective, or verb depending on its location within a sentence.

Textual analysis might have prevented peer consultation in the following examples. A translator requested online help with a translation (into Spanish) for emerging genes. The context was: “Ideally suited in plasma and protein serum as well as emerging gene therapy applications, this early stage filter will……” The first proposed translation was “genes emergentes o incipientes,” until another translator noted that emerging was not an adjective for genes, but for applications. In this example, help should have been requested, if at all, for the phrase emerging gene therapy applications, or simply emerging applications.

Textual analysis of the source document may also uncover grammar errors and misspellings that shed light onto the fact that the unknown term may not be all that new. Consider, for example, the request for help by a professional translator in Latin America to render into Spanish the phrase “found to over.” The phrase appeared within the sentence “colon cancers are found to over express epidermal growth factor receptors.” Had “over express” been identified as a verb (or as the object of the verb in an infinitive phrase), the question would probably have not been posted.

Syntax rules also apply to numbers and dates. Last April, a translator was puzzled by the Italian text “il paziente è stato esaminato il 10/3/2003” (“the patient has been seen on 10/3/2003”). The translator wanted to make sure that “è stato esaminato” was past tense, and consulted with peers to ask whether it was possible that the date could have been mistyped because it was a future date and appeared twice. The source text was, however, free of errors. The date 10/3/2003 is “March 10, 2003.”

2. Problems Between Languages: Inter-Language Semantic Pitfalls

The Apparent Cognates or False Friends

Among speakers of some Indo-European languages, a non-negligible cause of medical mistranslation is the presence in a source text of deceptive cognates or false friends. These terms are dangerous because their apparent transparency prevents us from dictionary or peer consultations.

Misnaming occurs, for example, if one does not realize that the ilium (or “ilion” in Spanish) is a part of the pelvic bone that encloses the ileum (“ileon” in Spanish) or end portion of the small bowel, and that ileum paralysis constitutes an ileus (or “ileo” in Spanish).

In Italian, one could allude in writing to a patient’s family history, mentioning a “parente” (meaning relative), or refer to the patient as a “bimbo” (boy) while noting that his abdomen seems “sensibile” (sensitive) but “morbido” (soft). One might refer to a work-up in Portuguese as “testes” to mean tests. Medical treatment may require prescribing a medicine “fiasco” in Italian, or a medicine flask.

Translators working on the written report of a scientific meeting (“congresso” in Italian and “congreso” in Spanish) may find terms such as “asistir” (in Spanish) for attend, “atender” for pay attention, as well as “notizia” (in Italian) and “noticia” (in Spanish) for news. Other likely Italian terms include: “domanda” (for question); “laureato” (for graduate); “egregio” (for distinguished); and certainly “conferenza” (or “conferencia” in Spanish) for lecture; as well as “lectura” (in Spanish) or “lettura” (in Italian) for reading.

False friends abound. In Italian, “decade” means ten days; “fábica” (in Spanish) means factory; “candido” (in Italian) means naïve; and “librería” (in Italian) is bookstore. “Pain” in French means bread, and “also” in German means therefore. In Spanish, “once” means eleven, “pie” is foot, “largo” is long, “recordar” is to remember, “hípo” is hiccups, “éxito” is success, “tuna” is cactus, and “rape” means monkfish. A translator affirms that while she was at a beach restaurant in Spain browsing through the menu, one item caught her eye: the special dish “rape a la marinera” (monkfish marinara) was described for tourists as “rape, sailor-style.”

Transparent Terms with Several Meanings (One of Which does not Apply in the Target Language)

The problem of homonymia and polysemy is compounded when, for each of the word meanings, the source and target languages impose different boundaries. Consider the word titration. Titration means both “determining the concentration of a substance in laboratory samples (or in vitro) in terms of the smallest amount of a reagent of known concentration required to produce a given effect in reaction with a known volume of the test solution,” and “determining the optimal dosage of a drug in live subjects (or in vivo).” The first meaning can be translated into Spanish as “titulación,” but the second cannot. Titration in vivo does not have a one-word Spanish counterpart. One needs to resort to “determinación de la dosis...”
but not in first-tier journals with by non-English-speaking researchers, Medline LMCA main coronary artery. This artery, however, is called name for the main coronary artery. of “tronco coronario izquierdo,” a common trunk is a literal translation common trunk. A catheter to treat a lesion of the left …to use an 8 F guide catheter to treat a lesion of the left common trunk.” The term left common trunk is a literal translation of “tronco coronario izquierdo,” a name for the main coronary artery. This artery, however, is called left main coronary artery in English, or LMCA. “Left common trunk” and “common trunk” can only be found in Medline in a few articles authored by non-English-speaking researchers, but not in first-tier journals with meticulous editors, in cardiology textbooks, or in medical glossaries.

A translator requested online help with the English translation of the Spanish term “hipersensibilidad del cuero cabelludo.” A response provided by a translator read “Hipersensibilidad [sic] of the hairy leather.” This rendition not only leaves “hipersensibilidad” untranslated, perhaps inadvertently, but provides a “literal” translation of “cuero cabelludo” that is meaningless. The correct translation is hipersensitivity of the scalp or scalp hipersensitivity.

Another translator working on a radiological report in Spanish posted the phrase “no se observan zonas patológicas de reforzamiento con el material de contraste,” and asked for its English counterpart. The context provided was: “Describing a brain scan.” A proposed translation was Pathological zones of reinforcing with the resistance material are not observed. Here, the word reinforcing is a literal interpretation of “reforzamiento.” The word used in radiology, however, is enhancing, meaning to accent or increase [in visibility]. In addition, “[material de] contraste,” perhaps because of its inherent meaning of “contrary” or “contrarian,” was erroneously rendered as resistance, making it a case for this article’s next topic, reading too much into a term. A correct translation would have been: with the contrast agent, no pathological areas of enhancement are observed.

Reading Too Much into a Term

Examining the source document with excessive zeal or elaborating too much on a term sometimes leads to inaccurate translations. Consider the term double-masked, which someone who wanted a Spanish rendition posted in an online forum. The context was “A multicenter, double-masked, randomized, parallel study on the safety of YY….” A clinical study that is double-masked (or double-blind) is one in which neither the participating patients nor the healthcare providers are aware of the nature of the intervention the patients are receiving (usually placebo versus active medication). In Spanish, double-masked is “doble ciego” or “doble enmascarado.” The proposed translation, however, was “controlado” (controlled). Along with this translation, a link to a website was provided, with the comment: “Take a look at this website. I am not convinced by the definition of “doble ciego”; [your answer] ought to be “controlado” (author’s translation).

A study that is “controlado” is one in which a patient group in the study receives an active intervention and another group does not. A controlled study may or may not be double-masked, depending on the patient’s and the investigator’s awareness regarding the intervention status. While all double-masked studies are controlled, not all controlled studies are double-masked. Thus, controlled is not exchangeable with double-masked, and neither are their Spanish counterparts.

Another example of excessive deductive thinking was evident in the responses to the online request for the Spanish translation of elegant animal studies. The context was: “Osteoporosis. Skeletal response to mechanical forces. Elegant animal studies have shown the importance of mechanical loading to the skeleton….” Here, the obvious translation is “estudios animales elegantes” or “elegantes estudios en animales.” The proposed translation was “estudios Elegant en animales” (that is, studies Elegant in animals). This curious answer received endorsements from several trans-
The person who answered supported her proposal explaining: “Aquí, Elegant es nombre propio” (Here, Elegant is a proper name), providing an Internet excerpt where “Elegant” seems to be a brand name that happens to be associated with osteoporosis-related products. While I personally doubt that “elegant” is the best adjective for animal studies or experiments (since they usually involve intense suffering, a permanent handicap, or the death of the animal), the phrase “elegant animal studies” is a stock phrase found in some medical publications referring to a meticulous procedure followed during the experiment, and not to a “Dr. Elegant.”

In Conclusion
Unfortunately, problems in medical translation are common. The examples presented herein illustrate “real world” pitfalls in both the source language and the language interface. Medical mistranslations are often born of amateurs, but also of seasoned medical translators (many with advanced medical degrees). This would indicate that although advanced credentials (degrees in medicine and languages) and experience in medical translation may be necessary, perhaps they are not always sufficient to guarantee precision in medical translation.

Professionalism in translation entails being aware of the fact that as neologisms and new usages are introduced in a language, semantic and grammatical pitfalls, the sources of mistranslation, will be renewed. One way to decrease the risk of mistranslation is to continuously increase one’s proficiency in both the target AND the source language. This goal can partially be accomplished through the frequent use of dictionaries, specialized websites, and libraries. However, these and other standard resources for the translator (such as attending professional seminars and interactions with colleagues) rarely substitute for specific medical knowledge (ideally, at the graduate level). Perhaps the best way to master the language of medicine is through immersion, ideally in a “hands-on” fashion, in a medical environment such as a hospital, where one will be continuously exposed to medical terminology and all its nuances. Equally important for the conscientious medical translator is to read current medical literature (in as many ancillary medical fields as possible) in each language to keep abreast of both recently coined terminology and semantic shifts.

Translation and medicine are both inexact sciences. In each field it is important to be aware of one’s own limitations so that one can either consult with more knowledgeable peers or decline, in a timely fashion, a duty for which one may not be fully qualified.

What you don’t know can kill you—or someone else.

Note: All examples presented in this article as online consultations represent true instances of questions and answers by medical translators. The specific web address for each example is available by request to the author at esgarbossa@myacc.net.

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Simultaneous Interpreting: (Rewarding) Stress and the Need for Recovery

By Satu Höyhtyä, Translated from Finnish by Anja Miller

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Anyone who has ever attempted simultaneous interpretation or done it professionally knows that the work is challenging and is certain to lead, at the minimum, to nervous tension and feelings of inadequacy, if not to full-blown stress. The Finnish title of my study is “Simultaanitulkkaukseen liittyvä stressi ja siitä palautuminen. Kyselytutkimus suomalaisseille simultaanitulkille” [Stress Associated With Simultaneous Interpreting and Recovery from It: A Survey of Finnish Simultaneous Interpreters]. My warm thanks to all the interpreters who participated in the survey and to those who contributed in various ways to this master’s thesis research.

Theoretical Background

For this study, I relied on the results obtained in four different fields of science:

Interpretation research: The interpretation process as a whole and what simultaneous interpreting really is;

Cognitive psychology: Comprehension, language production, attention, and memory;

Neuropsychology: How and which parts of the brain are involved in language processing and simultaneous interpreting; and

Psychophysiology: Research on stress.

I focused on simultaneous interpretation and the demands and effects it places on interpreters. This is based on Daniel Gile’s (1995) model of simultaneous interpretation. The model includes three non-automatic processes (listening and analysis, production, and memory), which are coordinated by a fourth non-automatic process (attention). For all these processes, a finite amount of mental energy is available. If the total energy or the energy required for a certain process is insufficient, the interpretation suffers. A separate discussion deals with some brain functions and stresses that cannot be related to Gile’s model.

Based on this model, I designed an Internet survey of simultaneous interpreters. Participants’ contact information was obtained from SKTL’s [Suomen kääntäjien ja tulkkien liitto, Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters] 1999 directory of interpreters, as well as directly from EU interpreters who heard about the study through the chief of the Finnish booth at the Joint Interpretation and Conference Service of the European Commission. Information was also obtained at the European Parliament. I received 44 completed questionnaires and 23 messages from interpreters with various excuses for not participating. All contacts took place via e-mail.

Results

The questionnaire was very extensive. In addition to background variables, 19 questions were asked about factors indicating a need for recovery from stress, causes of stress, methods of recovery, improvement of the ability to concentrate, health factors and working hours, and finally the rewards associated with simultaneous interpreting that make interpreters willing to continue in their profession.

The background information revealed that the majority of respondents in this as well as in previous studies were women, mostly freelancers. Their ages ranged from 30 to 78, and the length of their careers to date was 3-40 years or “long” (this is how the two oldest respondents described their careers). Only three of the interpreters admitted to being smokers. This was interesting, since in another study up to 52% of the respondents had been “heavy smokers.” For the majority of government employee interpreters the number of working languages was four, while freelancers reported having two. The major languages were English, Swedish, German, and French.

The most significant indicators of the need for recovery from stress were fatigue or even exhaustion (either psychological and/or physical), as well as headache and muscle tension. These complaints were most common in response to health questions as well. Up to 59% of the respondents felt the need for quiet and solitude after their working day.

Stress Factors

Stress factors were explored through two long lists, where the degree of stress caused by each factor was rated according to the following scale: 1 (= no effect); 2 (= slight effect); 3 (= moderate effect); 4 (= considerable effect); 5 (= strong effect); 6 (= don’t know). In addition, an open question probed whether an interpreter who had worked both...
as a government employee and a freelance had noticed any difference in the stress factors in each role.

The results indicated that mental stress tended to contribute to the most stressful experiences. Mental stress usually leads to overload in some process involved in the interpretation. Factors leading to mental stress can include a speaker’s strong foreign accent, unfamiliar terminology, dense factual content, unknown subject matter, and the lack of logic and continuity in a speech. An illogical presentation hinders both comprehension and production, because the content is disjointed. An unknown subject and unfamiliar terminology have similar effects. New information must be integrated with existing knowledge, and something completely novel must be produced from both. At the comprehension phase, a foreign accent can consume a lot of energy. On the other hand, dense factual content may even lead to a saturation of all the processes (i.e., an overload of the total processing capacity), when the interpreter’s capacity may prove insufficient to cover all the information given from beginning to end.

Other highly significant factors leading to stress include a lack of visual contact with the speaker and audience, inappropriate booth size, negative feedback on performance, and general work satisfaction. This indicates that emotional aspects are also important in the work of an interpreter.

Factors leading to general stress included preparation for the assignment, the personal responsibility involved, and managing names and figures. In contrast with these stress factors, the interpreters participating in the study did not report that their current compensation, collaboration with technical staff, or their own expectations of the interpretation were very important. In fact, in a few responses to the last question salary was mentioned as one of the profession’s reward factors.

Background variables seem to explain the differences in stress factors reported by interpreters. Full-time employees tended to experience stress from all the travel required by the job, while freelancers were stressed by having to bear other responsibilities in addition to interpreting.

Differences were also noted between the degrees of stress related to colleagues and job responsibility as experienced by younger and older interpreters. Working solo, on the other hand, causes different kinds of stress for experienced interpreters than for neophytes.

A general conclusion was that the working conditions of freelancers are fairly unstable, while those of employee interpreters are stable. This would explain some of the variations associated with stress levels between the two groups. The stability factor was very clear in responses to questions on working hours. Frequently, some freelance interpreters were completely unable to estimate their average number of hours or days worked because they vary so much. Even they, however, can define their ideal working hours. Government interpreters would like shorter workdays, freelancers more work and stability.

A closer examination of team interpreting revealed that the common 30-minute time period rule is not preferred by a great number of interpreters, nor is it always followed in actual practice. Depending on the circumstances and various factors, some would prefer to interpret for only 15 minutes at a time. This preference should possibly be taken into account in interpreter training as well.

**Stress Recovery Methods**

Overwhelmingly, the most common means of stress recovery were exercise and rest. Even in theory, these are the best means of recovery. Exercise can help eliminate aggression, muscle tension, and mental pressures. A healthy body is also better able to withstand the effects of stress. Among the forms of exercise mentioned by respondents were walking, bicycling, jogging, aerobics, rhythmic gymnastics, and swimming. Sports activities, such as those listed above and not involving competition, are best suited for people living stressful lives, while simple rest can restore normal function to the body after the changes caused by stress reactions. Normal relaxation alone will restore balance to things like blood pressure and breathing. In addition to complete rest and sleep, relaxation exercises, mental imaging focused on pleasant things, meditation, yoga, etc., were employed relatively frequently as means of recovery.

Alcohol, cultural pursuits, and the family were also common stress reducers. The need for alcohol, however, did not appear to be very great at all. It was more often mentioned as an aid to recovery among respondents’ colleagues than as a method they personally employed. For many interpreters, family life and socializing with friends represent a contrasting environment and activity to work, and are conducive to relaxation. Cultural activities included literature, music, concerts, and museum visits. A relatively recent Swedish study found that experiences of high cultural value contributed to lowered blood pressure and reduced stress-related illness. Music at home also has an effect on the area of the brain that produces feelings of pleasure.
Other ways of stress removal mentioned were sauna, nature, and remembering that there’s more to life than interpreting.

The last question, dealing with the rewards associated with simultaneous interpreting, revealed that the mental effort required for interpreting and the satisfaction it offered was rewarding to the majority of respondents. One eloquent response was the following: “Interpreting is like a high-wire act: Once you have taken that first step you have to keep on full speed to reach the other end or risk falling off. That kind of challenge suits me.” Other factors leading to job satisfaction included the constant need to learn new things and to manage unexpected situations. On the other hand, a few respondents mentioned that they felt rewarded by the chance to help people, the real-time nature of the work, and good compensation. However, one response differed from the others by stating that simultaneous interpretation is always so challenging and demanding (citing “machine-gun speakers” and lack of collegiality among colleagues) that it is never possible to characterize the work as rewarding.

Several responses revealed how interpreters still remember the fear they experienced as students or in the early days of their career, and that they understand the fear and lack of confidence felt by students. These respondents thought that overcoming the fear requires a lot of work and practice. Of special interest in future research might be to focus on the stress experienced by students of interpreting and how they manage it.

Notes

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As I write this, it is voting time in Argentina. The crisis that swept away democratically elected President De la Rúa and led us to the record of having five presidents succeed each other in a few days (the other four were elected by the Legislative Assembly) is over, or not, depending to whom you listen. Some say it is just un veranito (a short summer), meaning a short-lived respite, although the weather has turned cold (don’t forget we are upside down here in the Southern Hemisphere). How has language reflected the Argentine political rollercoaster and, more particularly, the way people vote?

In the old days, we had voto cantado (literally, “sung vote”), although no karaoke was involved. It simply meant that people were supposed to say aloud who they voted for, under the forbidding glare of the local powerbroker’s thug. In 1912, an important law was passed, the so-called “universal secret and compulsory vote” act. At the time, “universal” did not encompass women (who were only given the vote by Perón in 1949). Curiously, school children are still taught that 1912 was the date when “universal” voting was established. But let’s leave that aside. More importantly, the law made voting mandatory. Therefore, in the 1950s, when Perón was ousted and proscribed, his followers favored the voto en blanco (blank vote), which means simply not putting a ballot in your envelope. The slogan at the time was “voto y vuelva” (vote and he’ll come back).

In the 1960s and 1970s, there wasn’t that much voting!, but rather a succession of military dictatorships. Democracy was restored in 1983, but as a sign of dissatisfaction with the performance of the government, people soon resorted to the voto castigo (punishment vote): voting against rather than for a political party.

After years of inflation and hyper-inflation, Argentina tied its currency to the U.S. dollar through the so-called “Convertibility Law” during the 1990s, making one Argentine peso equal to one U.S. dollar. For a while, this worked very well, and the economy grew at an unprecedented pace. Consumer credit reappeared and people went on a spending spree. However, your bank loan or credit card balance were denominated in dollars. Thus, the 1995 presidential election saw the appearance of the voto cuota (installment vote), a vote for the status quo by people who had dollar debts and did not want to rock the boat of “convertibility.”

The presidential election of 1999 was marked by the voto bronca (angry vote). The economy was in a recession, unemployment was on the rise, and there were new corruption scandals on an almost daily basis. The opposition candidate was swept in by a landslide. But very soon voters became sorely disappointed with the new administration. The recession continued, unemployment became even worse, taxes were raised, and salaries cut back. To top it all, the vice-president resigned, accusing the government of having bribed members of Congress to get approval of certain legislation.

It is no wonder that when the midterm elections took place in 2001, we had an abundance of voto salame (salami vote), which consisted of inserting a slice of salami instead of the mandatory ballot into the envelope. In slang, “salame” is a rather polite way of calling somebody stupid. We also had the voto Clemente (Clemente is a very outspoken popular character in a daily newspaper cartoon who, together with another extremely popular character, Gaturro, act as political commentators of Argentina’s reality.) A group called “501” was also created. Rather than favoring Levi’s classic jeans, this group advocated for traveling 501 kilometers away as a way of dodging the obligation to vote (remember, I said voting is mandatory).

In the 2001 elections, a record number of the votes fell into one of the above categories. But politicians were looking the other way and paid no notice to the writing on the wall. Therefore, come December 2001, when people took to the streets banging pots and pans, we had the cacerolazo that led to the resignation of President De la Rúa.

Now, on April 27 (when you read this it will already be past history), Argentines are voting for a new president. And there seems to be several types of votes this time around. There are those who will supposedly vote for former President Menem (who, after being in office for 10 years, from 1989 to 1999, is running for a third term). This has been termed a voto verguenza (shame-faced vote), because few openly admit supporting his comeback. Then you have those candidates who are fighting the prevailing skepticism by asking for a voto contrato (contract vote), meaning “I will deliver.” But it doesn’t stop there. We have warnings...
against the *voto utilitario* (utilitarian vote), which means choosing a winner instead of voting for your preferred candidate if it is unlikely he or she will win. It is important not to confuse this with the *voto útil* (useful vote), a synonym for a valid vote that gets tallied in our complicated election system, as opposed to non-valid votes which do not count in the final reckoning. (In a nutshell: to win, a candidate must get 40% or more of the *valid* votes, not the *total* ones.)

This time, all political analysts expect no candidate will achieve the necessary majority to win on the first round of voting. Also, for the first time the *balotaje* system will come into play, which, of course, follows along the line of the French *ballotage*. But things will not end there, because this year there will be many elections. We will be voting for governors, members of Congress, a new head for the Buenos Aires city government, all on different dates.

One of the problems that has long afflicted Argentine political life is the existence of the *lista sábana* (bedsheet list), meaning that you have to vote for a full slate of candidates, say 30 representatives for a province. Some say the reason it has been dubbed *lista sábana* is that you can hide all sorts of things under it. People complain that they only know a few of the candidates on the list and the rest get elected on their coattails. Consequently, a proposal has been put forward, called the “*sabanita*” (little bedsheet). Basically, it consists in having two shorter full slates of candidates (don’t ask me to explain, because I haven’t yet worked it out myself).

Recently, a provincial election was disrupted and had to be suspended. Some have expressed concern at the emergence of what the cartoon character Clemente has called *prepocracia* or strongarm tactics (*de prepo* is slang for “by sheer force”). At the same time and in connection with the same election, political humor has coined the phrase *sale con fraude* (“with fraud on the side”) as an echo of a famous expression of restaurant waiters, who when relaying to the kitchen the order for Argentines’ staple steak, shout *sale con fritas* (with French fries on the side).

In many ways, a new election is a turning of the page, especially in a country that has been denied this right many times in the past. And, as I have tried to convey, it is also an opportunity for people to assert, even in the face of adversity, that as long as there is popular wit and humor, there is cause for hope...and new political jargon for translators to learn.

**Notes**

1. There were only three presidential elections: Illífa (1963), Cámpora (1973), and Perón (1973), none of whom finished their term, although for different reasons in each case.

2. Gaturro’s father, humorist Nik, was kind enough to grant permission to reprint the cartoon that illustrates this article with a literal rendering of the “salami vote.”
A Linguistic Tragicomedy

By Paulo Rónai, Translated from Portuguese by Tom Moore
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For the Brazilian who has not yet traveled outside his country, it will be difficult to understand the obsessive energy with which the idea of an international language haunts and torments a European brain. One trip through Europe would suffice to make the Brazilian develop a passionate interest in the matter. And if by chance he is lacking the means for such a trip, he can content himself by opening an ingenious little book intended for those lucky ones with no impediments to undertaking such an attractive and instructive expedition.

Throughout the ages, there have been small conversational guides for travelers to use. But no matter how compact they might be, the tourist wishing to criss-cross the Old World in all directions would never have enough pockets (even were he to wear a vest and overcoat) to carry all the guides he would need.

Mr. Archibald Lyall, a linguist endowed with good sense, had the brilliant idea of bringing together an enormous number of these little books in a single volume of only 300 pages. To accomplish this feat, he reduced each language to its quintessence: 30 sentences and 800 words. He certainly does not mean to insinuate that this limited vocabulary is sufficient for the exchange of ideas with the natives of various countries; however, it will enable the traveler to ask for and receive information to learn how much something costs or to buy a sandwich or a few liters of gasoline. With a malicious wink, the author observes that most people do not make use of a larger number of words and phrases, even when at home in their own country.

It is clear that Mr. Lyall chose the sentences and vocabulary with great care, and that these words correspond to the real necessities of the tourist in the street, the hotel, the restaurant, the taxi, and the post office. He must have made use of competent collaborators for each language, since, at least concerning those languages of which we have some knowledge, there are almost no errors. And what is more, he offers a short synopsis of each of the languages he includes, in which he quite laconically sums up their fundamental characteristics.

“One who, like us, pages through this useful little book, not as a tourist but rather in a (unhappily) disinterested manner, simply to dream a little, will certainly find food for thought. He will come away from his reading with the general impression of an insoluble linguistic drama. “What Europe most needs,” said a sagacious and bilious observer, “are about 50 more dead languages.” And we might almost agree with him, especially given the fact that Mr. Lyall considers it indispensable to supply our traveler with keys to no less than 25 languages. You may say that he has included Esperanto, and since it is spoken on the shores of the Mediterranean, Arabic. On the other hand, he paid no attention whatsoever to Catalan, Provençal, Basque, Gaelic, Ladino, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Slovak, Slovene et quibusdam aliiis, but not to mention dialects! And these are, by and large, old languages with strong cultural traditions, that is, resistant to any attempts at simplification or unification.

Another not very heartening conclusion: it is in the immediate necessities of expression in a language that the knowledge of others is less helpful, even if they are closely related. For example, despite the fact that French, Italian, Romanian, and Portuguese are related, a person will use very different formulas when asking for something in each language (donnez-moi, s’il vous plaît; mi dia, per piacere; te rog adumi; faça o favor de me dar). If his request is fulfilled, he will express his thanks using formulas that are completely distinct (merci, grazie, va multumesc, obrigado). How is it that each of four daughters of the Germanic branch (English, German, Dutch, and Swedish) has a different term for the word “matches” (matches, Streichholzer, lucifers, tandstickor)? How can it be that each language has a disparate way of expressing the term “walking” (to walk, spazieren, wandelen, promenera)?

The aspiring polyglot will also note, with surprise and a certain amount of disappointment, how small the number of truly international words is in the daily lexicon. Among the 800 words in Lyall’s book, there are not even a half dozen that are used in each one of the 25 languages listed. Kilometer and museum are, not taking into account the differences in spelling, kilometer and museum everywhere. But Turkish continues to call the restaurant a lokante; Hungarian still uses távirat instead of telegram; Finnish is obstinate in talking on the puhelin, not the telephone; German, just to be that way, listens to the Rundfunk, not the radio; and we Brazilians insist on calling correio what is the post everywhere.

Continued on p.58
In May 2003, the ATA accreditation program held its annual workshops for the language chairs and representatives of its 24 grading workgroups. In preparation for the meeting, ATA Deputy Executive Director and Accreditation Program Manager Terry Hanlen and Accreditation Assistant Regina Tocci had browsed through earlier files. One document they found was a telling reminder of the long road this program has traveled since its inception in 1971. Wrapping up the workshops, Accreditation Committee Deputy Chair Celia Bohannon held up the 1981 “Instructions for Graders”—a single sheet of paper.

Today’s “Grader Manual”—half an inch thick, with seven tabbed sections—describes a program that has grown in scope, complexity, and stature. ATA members around the world can access detailed information about accreditation policies and procedures on ATA’s website. Recent articles in the ATA Chronicle have outlined major substantive changes to the credential itself. This article highlights four relatively minor changes:
1) a revision of specific guidelines for into-English graders; 2) a change in the way exam passages are presented; 3) a clarification about the grading of practice tests; and 4) a modification of the exam schedule.

Starting January 1, 2004, candidates translating into English are expected to use standard American spelling, style, and usage.

In the past, graders of into-English ATA accreditation exams were told, “British English is acceptable if used consistently.” As recently as 1998, grader workshops presented examples such as “In a test under standardised conditions, the optometrist identified a color anomaly.” Although graders had no difficulty identifying the inconsistent spelling, they raised questions. What about British usage (“to table a motion” or “to revise for an exam”)? What if a translation presented British punctuation, but not British spelling? (In her defense, the grader cited “confusion.”) What about Canadian English? Australian English? Jamaican English? There were far more questions than answers.

The revised grading guidelines take into account the reality of today’s exam environment. Theoretical rationale: The ATA accreditation program primarily serves the credentialing needs of the translation market in the U.S. Clients based here should be able to expect ATA-accredited into-English translators to be proficient in the standard written English of this country. Practical rationale: All the into-English graders are proficient in U.S. English, but are not uniformly familiar with other national varieties of English. It is unreasonable to expect graders to recognize all alternatives that may be acceptable in any other English-speaking country, and virtually impossible for graders to verify whether such alternatives have been employed consistently throughout a passage.

Starting January 1, 2004, instructions for examination passages may include information about the source text and/or the target audience.

This change likewise represents a nod to real-world conditions. Information about a text’s source and its intended use can often guide the translator’s decisions about style, word choice, and the like. The instructions on current ATA exam passages merely state, “Translate everything below the horizontal line.” Starting with the 2004 passages, workgroups may provide additional information about the source text and target audience.

Examples (Passage A):
• The following text describes a research project sponsored by a major university. Translate for publication in a quarterly magazine sent to graduates of that university.
• Translate the following text for publication in an Italian travel magazine.
• The following text is taken from a study of attention deficit disorder. Translate for an online newsletter for elementary school teachers.

Examples (Passage B):
• Translate the following text for a mail-order catalog of home health equipment.
• Translate the following text for educated lay readers with an interest in voice-recognition software.
• Translate the following text for publication in a French magazine for tropical fish hobbyists.

Examples (Passage C):
• The following text will be mailed to all customers of a regional power company. Translate for a lay readership.
• The following text is taken from an annual report of an international widget manufacturer. Translate for an American law firm representing shareholders who object to the CEO’s benefits package.
• For a brochure describing healthcare benefits for teachers in a state university system, translate the following text into Spanish.

Effective immediately, graders of practice tests may stop grading when a passage has accrued 45 points or more.

This decision merely clarifies a detail that wasn’t spelled out when the point system was implemented in November 2002. The purpose of the practice test is to offer the potential
candidate an introduction to the nature of the exam. On the exam itself, a passage with a score of 18 or more points receives a grade of Fail, and a grader may stop marking errors when the score reaches 45 error points. Even if a grader marks additional errors, the maximum reportable score (and the score marked at the top of the first page) is 45 error points. This procedure now applies to practice tests as well.

Many candidates (and graders) have been under the impression that the purpose of the practice test is to give the candidate a better picture of his or her problem areas. This is not the case. The practice test is not like a car inspection, where the mechanic provides a list: “If you fix the brakes, the lights, and the turn signal, you will pass.” (Or, “If you fix the brakes, the lights, the turn signal, the emissions control device, the rust along the mainframe, the cracks in the windshield, and the short in the electrical system, you might pass.”)

It’s more like a test drive on a race-course. Drivers have the opportunity to view the course, maneuver through its twists and turns, and make adjustments based on the feedback that experience provides. One driver may get all the way around the course—skidding a bit here or there, brushing against the walls, braking too soon and losing speed—and emerge with a better sense of how to proceed when the stakes are real. But the driver who demolishes the left front fender on the first turn, shifts into first instead of third coming into a straightaway, and crashes head-on into the wall at the first hairpin turn doesn’t need any more feedback. By that point, it’s clear that the course is simply too difficult for that driver in that car.

Note: Some graders have the time and the inclination to continue marking errors on practice tests even after the score has reached 45 points. They may continue to do so. However, only the individual candidate is in a position to draw conclusions about readiness for the accreditation examination based on the experience of taking the practice test.

Starting January 1, 2004, the “examination year” for ATA accreditation will coincide with the calendar year.

This change (already announced in the April 2003 ATA Chronicle) is an administrative decision. In the past, the “examination year” began with one ATA conference and ended a month before the next conference, creating perpetual confusion for exam candidates and an unbalanced workload for ATA Headquarters staff. Because the new eligibility requirements that take effect in January 2004 add a preliminary round of administrative tasks for Headquarters staff as well as for candidates, the Accreditation Committee chose to shift the start of the “examination year” to January 1 at this time. This means that candidates taking the exam during the 2002–03 year will not be eligible to retake it in that language combination and direction until January 2004. Candidates registering for exams given after the ATA conference in November 2003 must meet the eligibility requirements described in the April 2003 ATA Chronicle and posted on the association’s website.

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The Onionskin  By Chris Durban

The Onionskin is a client education column launched by the ITI Bulletin (a publication of the U.K.’s Institute of Translation and Interpreting) in 1996. Comments and leads for future columns are very welcome; please include full contact details. Contact: chrisdurban@compuserve.com or fax +33 1 43 87 70 45.

Text Overboard at Niagara Falls

“The experience was marvelous!” raves Frenchman Alain Lebret, back from a long-anticipated tour of the northeastern U.S. and Canada. His trip included an unforgettable visit to Niagara Falls, where he donned a waterproof poncho and approached the base of the falls aboard The Maid of the Mist, a tour-boat service in operation since 1846.

Yet equally unforgettable for this language-sensitive visitor was a would-be bilingual sign displayed on the deck as passengers disembarked in Ontario. Mr. Lebret kindly snapped a photo for us: “Caution, Slippery Surfaces When Wet / Attention Glissant Surfaces Quand Trempe.”

For linguists, the garbled French is a clear indication of either machine (computer) translation or, perhaps, input from a helpful employee “who studied French at school,” working dictionary in hand. The words are there, but the message has somehow jumped ship.

As with most translation howlers, the mistakes are only evident to those who speak the foreign language—a Catch-22 cited by many monolingual translation buyers interviewed for this column. How can I be sure I’ve bought a high-quality text if I can’t assess what is delivered?

When we phoned the Maid of the Mist Steamship Company Ltd., an attentive Tim Ruddy, vice-president for marketing, promised an enquiry and a contact details. Contact: chrisdurban@compuserve.com or fax +33 1 43 87 70 45.

“HIV researchers have only one piece of the puzzle in HIV prevention,” says Dr. Ziff, who is keen to establish contacts with organizations and agencies in local communities. Aware, too, that outreach translations of this type require particular sensitivity to cultural issues.

“We knew the pitfalls, but were not sure how to proceed,” she told The Onionskin. “We have local coordinators in 15 cities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and feedback indicated that translations commissioned in the past had not necessarily worked once out in the community.”

Enter Mercedes Pellet, whose company M² Limited agreed to handle the job on a pro bono basis.

One of Pellet’s first recommendations was that Johns Hopkins invite comments from coordinators in the field before starting. The exercise generated unexpected benefits as both researchers and coordinators opted, after discussion, to produce a single Spanish edition rather than multiple versions as originally planned.

As Lillian Clementi pointed out in her insightful article in the June 2003 ATA Chronicle (“Doing Well by Doing Good: Using Pro Bono Work to Market the Profession and Yourself”), pro bono work can sour if the parameters are not set clearly from the start.

With Johns Hopkins, Ms. Pellet’s conditions could not have been more transparent. First step: a letter detailing what M² Limited would do for the project and setting out its approach. She asked Dr. Ziff to sign and return this “to confirm that we both knew what to expect from each other.”

In the letter, M² Limited agreed to:

• Conduct a pre-translation check to determine any areas of
difficulty, specialized terminology, and clarifications.

- Create a glossary of key terms to be used throughout the project, and send these terms to the coordinators for review and feedback.

- Build and use a translation memory with the translated text to guarantee consistency if additional translations were required.

- Using the key terms, translate the material into correct Spanish, free of regionalisms.

- Send the translated text to coordinators at five pilot sites, requesting their comments within a certain period of time.

- Review the changes suggested by the coordinators and enter these into the appropriate version for each coordinator’s website (while urging the group to consider a single version rather than five different ones).

- Send the revised text to the coordinators for their final approval and final changes, if required.

The letter also established that the work would be done on a pro bono basis and stipulated that M² Limited would get credit for its input.

Meticulous planning definitely smoothed the path.

Thus, from the start, trendy or “sophisticated” formulations (e.g., “research-based prevention strategies,” “culturally responsive”) were translated into the most neutral Spanish possible to ensure that they would not be off-putting for lay readers. Dr. Ziff made sure that coordinators’ comments were returned in a timely manner. And when the designer delivered the final layout to Dr. Ziff, M² Limited reviewed the document one last time to ensure there were no hyphenation problems or other discrepancies.

“My husband and I have done many pro bono jobs through the years,” notes Pellet. She gives two main reasons: “Most of our business is built on relationships and trust. And there are certain causes that we believe in; this is a way we can show that by making a meaningful contribution.”

Dr. Ziff is enthusiastic. “It went wonderfully. Our initial print run was 5,000, but some sites have informed us that they need far more, so a new order is absolutely necessary,” she told us. Not to mention other benefits: “The project worked as a confidence building exercise between us and the coordinators, creating closer links all around.” It sounds like they’ll be back.

Nazi Slur: Scapegoat Sighted in Brussels

The European Union presidency rotates every six months, with each member country holding the office in turn. In July it was Italy’s turn, and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi—the controversial businessman-turned-politician—had been on the job only two days when he caused an uproar in his first appearance before the European Parliament.

In response to criticism from Martin Schulz, a social democrat member of Parliament from Germany, Mr. Berlusconi lost his temper, snapping “A producer in Italy is making a movie on Nazi concentration camps. I would suggest you for the role of capo (head guard). You would be perfect.”

At his outburst the chamber erupted, and despite attempts by high-ranking diplomats to extract an apology, Mr. Berlusconi refused to oblige.

Not surprisingly, there was an attempt to shift blame to the translator—or interpreter in this case. “My joke wasn’t meant to be offensive,” an AP dispatch reports Berlusconi saying. “It was an ironic joke, perhaps the translation wasn’t done in an ironic sense.”

When tempers flare in international politics, interpreters are always convenient scapegoats. Standard practice. Ho-hum. Who’s keeping count?

With thanks to Bob Blake, Philippe Callé, Lilian Clementi, Neil Inglis, María Angeles Lebret-Sánchez, and Nathalie Renevier.

Job Exchange at the American Translators Association 44th Annual Conference

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With two volumes, one for each direction of translation, containing 750,000 translations, 500,000 words and expressions, 25,000 specialized terms, two thesauri (one for each language), a notional-functional grammar for each language, and a bilingual color atlas, the second edition of Le Robert & Collins Super Senior is top of the line among the Robert bilingual dictionaries. Compiled using the fifth edition of Le Robert & Collins Senior and researched using a 400-million-word electronic corpus, this is a dictionary that constantly strives to improve and expand an already well established reputation for superior lexicography and reliability.

No doubt inspired by the electronic culture of user-friendliness, efforts are present throughout the dictionary to facilitate consultation. A three-column layout is used for the listing of headwords, which appear in boldface type. Separate semantic dimensions are clearly numbered, and for traditionally long entries, a summary menu with numbered sections is supplied under the headword. For example, the English entry for the word “mind” contains a menu indicating five grammatical categories or parts of speech (noun, transitive verb, intransitive verb, compound, and phrasal verb), which breaks up the article and supplies all the translations according to corresponding semantic dimensions (each boxed). Thus, for “mind” as a noun, translations according to the semantic dimensions of “brain,” “attention and concentration,” “opinion,” “intention,” and “memory” are supplied. These are followed by “mind” as a “transitive verb,” with translations for such semantic dimensions as “pay attention,” “dislike/object to,” “care,” “take charge of,” “remember,” and so forth, all the way to “mind” as a compound, which lists such items as “mind-bender” [rêvélation], “mind-reader” [télépathie], “mind-boggling” [ahurissant], and “mind” as a verbal phrase, which lists “mind-out” (as in “watch-out!”) [Attention!].

While the menus used to remodel the presentation of long articles invoke traditional categories of grammar, such as nouns, verbs and compounds, Le Robert & Collins Super Senior has included, for each language, a modern treatment of grammar that is different in comparison to your other institutional dictionary giants, and a real bonus for translators. This modern grammar, appearing as a separate section at the end of each volume, termed “Language in Use” in English, and “Grammaire Active” in French, is notional/functional and cross-indexed with the main listing of the dictionary. For reference, the European Council developed notional/functional grammar in the late 1970s in response to practical issues of immigrant language learning and employment. It is a semantic grammar that categorizes language according to the uses to which it is put—termed functions and notions (Council of Europe 1976; Wilkins 1976). Thus, beyond verb and noun as categories of language, each word is seen as it is invoked in the larger context of language use. This grammatical system yields categories, such as “opinion,” “agreement,” “comparisons,” and “requests.” Every category invokes a repertoire of expressions, or possible ways of conveying the message of, say, “making a request,” “expressing an opinion,” and “expressing disagreement.”

For translators, this grammar, and the 27 categories of usage offered, is a bonus because for each term indexed to the grammar in the main listing, a set of alternative, contextualized, and varied forms of language use are supplied. Thus, for example, say that you are looking up the translation of the term “furthermore” as an expression of “adding or detailing.” You will find that it is cross-referenced in the main listing of the dictionary to the “Language in Use” section. And in section 26.2 of “Language in Use,” you will find no less than 12 of those wonderful cohesive devices, in French, that also function to express “addition” like the English term “furthermore.” So that beyond a standard “de plus,” you will also find some more elegant alternatives such as “en outre,” “d’ailleurs,” “quant aux,” “à cet égard,” “de même,” “ajoutons à cela,” and “à ce propos.” In sum, while you may sometimes be reluctant to consult the traditional...
Dictionary Reviews Continued

compact grammar included in your dictionary, preferring perhaps your own comprehensive resources, you will definitely find the grammar of *Le Robert & Collins Super Senior* useful, different, and interesting for all the alternative translations of expressions it supplies, each according to function or notion.

A similar kind of translation bonus has been included in *Le Robert & Collins Super Senior* in the form of a separate thesaurus for each language. The French thesaurus is based on the latest edition of *Le Robert’s Dictionnaire des Synonymes*, with 21,000 entries and more than 200,000 synonyms. The English thesaurus is based on the *Collins English Thesaurus*, with comparable content. You should also know that *Le Robert Dictionnaire des synonymes* was the recipient of an Académie Française award. Accordingly, the main listing cross-references all the terms included in the thesaurus for each language, so that for each translation that you look up, and for which there are synonyms listed in the thesaurus, you will find a small “+SYN” box included. Again, for translators this is an invaluable tool, since so much of translation also involves finding the right tone, shade, and tint of a particular word, in view of the many constraints on language use, such as audience, domain, and style, found in all texts. Considering both source and size of the two thesauri included in *Le Robert & Collins Super Senior*, and the bridges built across bilingual and monolingual references, this is indeed perhaps part of the reason why the term “Super” appears in the title of this latest edition of the *Le Robert & Collins*.

Add yet another big bonus in the form of a 25-page bilingual color atlas, divided between both volumes, and you will have completed a tour of the *super* features of this bilingual dictionary. The atlas is also particularly translator-friendly since, rather than supplying two monolingual atlases (one for each volume), it is truly bilingual, with maps displaying information in both languages. Consequently, you will find English-speaking countries (including the Americas and Oceania) in the French-to-English volume, and French-speaking countries (including Africa and Asia) in the English-to-French volume. While you may raise an eyebrow at this somewhat arbitrary division of the world, with Physical Europe in one volume and Political Europe in the other, you will be delighted at the ease with which you can locate translations, since all places (i.e., countries, capitals, cities) and geographic characteristics (i.e., mountains, rivers, deserts, and oceans) appear in both languages, wherever pertinent. What is more, you will appreciate the graphical quality and clarity of the maps.

Beyond the most obvious *super* bonuses of *Le Robert & Collins Super Senior*, the qualitative lexicographic dimensions of this dictionary are tops. Robert & Collins dictionaries, and this dictionary in particular, pride themselves upon supplying users with a true picture of naturally occurring language use. This dictionary accomplishes this through extensively researched terms based on two language databases, containing a combined total of 400 million terms, culled from a wide variety of media. These databases, compiled by Collins and Le Robert for each language, supply both what is included in the dictionary and the translations that are selected for inclusion. The results are apparent in several ways.

First, you will find up-to-date inclusion and translation of terms such as “snail-mail” [courier poste], “webzine” [web-zine], and “chat-room” [forum de discussion] in the domain of the Internet; “extreme sports” [sports extremes], including “bungee jumping” [saut à l’élástique], “mountain biking” [VTT; vélo tout terrain], and “white water rafting” [rafting] in the domain of new millennium sports; and “get-away” [escapade], “frequent flyer program” [programme de fidélisation], and “red-eye flight” [avion ou vol de nuit] in the domain of tourism. It would probably be unfair to point out terms not included, such as “chad,” “9/11,” “bioterrorism,” “roam-time or roam-minutes,” or “dotcoms,” since most of these particular terms were thrown into common usage subsequent to the publication of this dictionary, and would only point to the futility of trying to claim exhaustiveness or some measure of victory in keeping up with the linguistic frontier. The reflection of language that is provided is bound to be selective and time specific in an endeavor to effectively claim a measure of truth, reliability, and authenticity.

Second, you will benefit from the concordance research, which is included in the listing. A good example, in the English-to-French direction, appears in the listing of translations for the term “cancel,” which lists the following collocates, in square brackets for each translation: [+ reservation, room booked, travel tickets, plans] annuler; [+ agreement, contract] résilier, annuler; [+ order, arrangement, meeting, per-
formance, debt] annuler; [+ check] faire opposition à; [+ taxi, coach or car ordered, appointment party] décommander, annuler; [+ stamp] oblitérer; [+ mortgage] lever; [+ decree, will] révoquer; [+ application] retirer; [+ ticket] (= punch) poinçonner; (= stamp) oblitérer; and so on, including collocates in the domain of math; [+ figures, amounts] éliminer; (= cross-out, delete) barrer, rayer; etc. Similarly, in the French-to-English direction, you will find, for example, for the term “prévoir” (to anticipate) the following collocates: [+ événement, conséquence] to foresee, anticipate; [+ temps] to forecast; [+ reaction, contretemps] to expect, reckon on, anticipate. This contextual information, directly gleaned from concordances in the 400 million-word corpus, supplies invaluable assistance to translators who are searching for tight correlations in the target language that reflect precise and common usage.

Third, you will find excellent indexing of the terms listed: according to style, with several levels for colloquialisms (including “Danger!” for slang that is likely to offend); according to various subject domains, such as botany, physics, or the Internet; and according to whether the term is specialized or in general use. Additionally, as this is a French and British product, you will notice that the headword listing contains both American and British spellings, and that American terms are generously included both as headwords (10,000) and in translations. Thus, you will find listed such American terms as “Emmy” [Oscar de la télévision américaine]; “turnpike” [autoroute à péage]; “skid row” [cour des miracles, quartier des clochards]; and “pocketbook” [porte-feuille, sac à main]. Similarly, when you look up translations for French terms such as “métro” and “biscuit,” you will be happy to find American and British translations indexed respectively: [(Brit.) underground, (U.S.) subway]; [(Brit.) biscuit, (U.S.) cookie].

Finally, you will also find an excellent treatment of abbreviations in the main listing, which provides both expansion and translation. For example, for the abbreviation “MRI,” you will find: (abbrev. of Magnetic Resonance Imagery) IRM [imagerie par résonance magnétique]. Add still a bit more in the form of “Cultural Notes,” which appear as gray boxes in the main listing. The “Cultural Notes” supply additional information for culturally loaded terms. Thus, you will find notes for terms such as “Affirmative Action” and “Smithsonian Institution” in one volume, and “DEUG/DEUST” and “Sécurité sociale” in the other. And last but not least, you will find complete verb conjugation lists and conversion tables, to conclude this tour of 

Le Robert & Collins Super Senior

Le Robert & Collins Super Senior is far more than just the latest version of a bilingual dictionary with a tried and true reputation for superior lexicography. This edition includes an expanded corpus, a thesaurus for each language, a bilingual color atlas, and a notional-functional grammar for each language. As the title indicates, this is indeed a super edition. Enjoy!

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Author: Christopher Freeland

Published by: Christopher Freeland, Le Chalet de la Haute Bardière

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Available from: A form printed off the website (www.financelex.com)

Reviewed by: Marian S. Greenfield

This glossary has grown from 324 pages, including 16 pages of abbreviations and acronyms and more than 8,500 terms, to approximately 384 pages, including 18 pages of abbreviations and acronyms and approximately 10,000 terms in the areas of finance, insurance, accounting, real estate, and law. It indicates
British or American usage, although spelling tends toward British, and I find some of the English odd, at least to my American ears: financial year, upon sight, trend turn-round.

It is a perfect-bound paperback glossary, with clear, easy-to-read typeface. Unfortunately, the binding is not as secure on the new editions as on the 1995 edition—several pages in my newer edition have come loose, while the 1995 edition is still intact.

I reviewed the first edition of this glossary in the March 1996 ATA Chronicle. Several terms have been added since that time, but the big innovation is that the glossary can now be printed on demand, including the new terms that have been added based on queries to Christopher Freeland’s website. The website (www.financelex.com) is worth adding to your favorites list and offers online glossary entries. If a given term or acronym is not found, the user can send a query to Mr. Freeland, who will research the term and e-mail the user back with his findings. I have done this myself on several occasions, and Mr. Freeland has been quite helpful and prompt in his responses.

Look-up is convenient. Each term has an individual entry, resulting in multiple entries for one term. There are several alphabetization anomalies in the new edition, including the following: curiously, amortissement is listed at the end of a list of several compound terms, such as amortissement accéléré through amortissement linéaire; and capitaux is listed at the end of a list of several compound terms, such as capitaux circulants through capitaux immobilisés. This listing practice seems to be prevalent in the new edition. Furthermore, acceptation bancaire is listed both before and after acceptation, with different translations.

Headwords in the two glossaries are printed in bold, with diacritical marks for French headwords. Gender information is provided in the French-to-English section only. No contextual information or examples are provided, but there are two very useful appendices, one for French acronyms and one for English acronyms.

The following are the results of an update to the expected-term search from English-to-French I did for the first edition. Terms found in Freeland as well as in other accounting and business/finance dictionaries (Saxcée’s Dictionnaire comptable, fiscal et financier, Harrap’s French and English Business Dictionary, and Le Robert & Collins du Management); blue chip; bullet issue; cash management; earnest money; EFT; ERM; foreign exchange risk; junk bond; late interest charges; market maker; mutual fund; return on equity; settlement; soft market; spin-off; stacked hedge; trader; takeover bid; turnover; valuation; warrant; white knight.

Terms found here and in other accounting and business/finance dictionaries: banque universelle (although Le Robert & Collins gives all-purpose or universal bank and Freeland gives full-service bank [which I believe to be the most accurate translation]; universal or global banking); caisse noire; créneau; forfait; marché à la baisse; marché offert; marge commerciale; mobilisation de capitaux; operable; passif à court terme; plus-value; produit interérieur brut; sauf bonne fin (but Freeland merely translates it as recourse clause, as opposed to Robert’s under usual reserve or, the old standard I learned at the first bank I worked, subject to final collection).

Terms found in Freeland, but not elsewhere: au-dessus du prix; caisse d’avances; nominatif pur; sans recours; sans valeur nominale.

Terms found elsewhere, but not in Freeland: capitaux oisifs; redé-marrer; rémunérateur.

Terms found elsewhere, but not in Freeland: capital; turnover; delisting; profit;

Added to Freeland since 1995: added to Freeland since 1995: accounting standard; bull market; day trading; repo.

Terms found in Freeland, but not elsewhere: aging schedule; collar; FRN; REIT; revolving underwriting facility.

Terms found elsewhere, but not in Freeland: golden handshake; markup; Wages Guarantee Fund.

Now for the updated results of a French-to-English search:
A
dvertising overload is some-
thing that can confuse even the
most experienced driver. It is
most likely to happen when a person
is driving through a commercial area,
like the shopping center in which the
Translation Inquirer happened to find
himself recently. So many advertising
signs assaulted him that he misread
quite a few, including one that said,
“TRANSLATIONS.” What?! A store
in a strip mall (see below for English-
to-Spanish consideration of this term)
whose business was to provide the
public with translations? What an
aburd setting for it!

Well, the Translation Inquirer had
not become dyslexic; he simply mis-
read the sign, due to brain overload.
Upon closer inspection, it turned out
to be a salon named “Tansations”:
a place where you go to become
browner than you were. My brain,
from long habit, added an “i” and an
“l” to a set of letters that I am unusu-
ally familiar with. Breathe easy; our
profession is not going to hit the strip
malls yet. And certainly not with a
store as big as

**New Queries**

**(D-G 8-03/1)** This query is about
“over het geheel genomen,” and
comes from a report about facilities in
residential housing for senior citizens.
The ProZ correspondent who pre-
sented it also provided this much con-
text: “In de onderstaande figuur wordt
de gemiddelde maaltijdkosten per
gemeente weergegeven en afgezet
tegen de gemiddelde, over het geheel
genomen van de aanbieders uit de
drie gemeenten, maaltijdprijs.” What
is it?

**(F-E 8-03/2)** This query, with its
origins in Lantra-L, involves a dispute
in which one pharmaceutical com-
pany has taken legal action to force
another to stop making misleading
claims in two advertising cards,
leaflets, or the like. “Visite” evidently
is used in this context to mean a med-
ical checkout. The two items are in
bold print in the context quote below:
“…sous quelque forme et dans
quelque document publicitaire que ce
soit (annonce presse, remis de visite,
aide de visite, mailing, poster, diaposi-
tive, publi-rédactionnel…).” What
are they?

**(G-E 8-03/3)** A Lantra-L corre-
spondent had trouble with the phrase
“hydraulisch gut angebundenen
Oberflächengewässern,” referring to
surface waters, the level of which
does not alter. It comes from online
courseware for GIS software. Want
more context? Here’s the whole sen-
tence: “Festpotenziale in der Natur
können z. B. die Wasserstände von
hydraulisch gut angebundenen
Oberflächengewässern oder die
Höhenlage von Quellausstritten sein.”

**(G-E 8-03/4)** In a listing of tem-
porary drilling site dwellings a con-
tractor had to supply, Cappie found
one that was intended to be occupied
by the “Sichtführer.” What sort of offi-
cial is that?

**(I-E 8-03/5)** This automotive en-
gineering text being worked on by a
ProZ denizen had “minima continua-
tiva,” a concept that stumped him. The
context: “La pista per prove di
velocità è utilizzata per la determi-
nazione delle prestazioni dinamiche
dei veicoli (velocità massime, minima
continuativa, frenatura, sforzo al gancio, prove di slalom).”

This should be enough text to allow
someone to try!

**(N-E 8-03/6)** The school subject
“eldre historie” stumped a ProZ
member. What kind of studies are
involved here?

**(R-E 8-03/7)** Just one word out of
many, but it caused problems for Bill
Halstrick in this document about oil-
related data processing: “…sous
quelque forme et dans
celui de visite, mailing, poster, diaposi-
tive, publi-rédactionnel….” What
does the word in bold print refer to?

**(Sp-E 8-03/8)** Tomas Chamberlyn
heard a disk jockey say “Esta rola me
late.” What sort of Mexican youth
ejargon is this, for which one might be
forced to forgo the dictionary and
consult, say, a teenage daughter?

**Replies to Old Queries**

**(E-F 6-03/1)** (all in a day’s work):
According to Suzanne Meyers, three
good choices might be “Cela fait
partie de ma (la) routine” or “J’en vois
bien d’autres,” or “Et tout çà, ce n’est
que le train-train quotidien.”

**(E-R 10-02/3)** (bring or recover in
an action): Vadim Bourenin, bringing
this matter to our attention a second
time, respectfully disagrees with
Michael Ishenko’s proposals on page
55 of the May issue. Vadim states that
принести иск does not mean fetch.
Rather, it is a set phrase, along with
иметь иск, from the repertoire of
Russian legal boilerplate, and has
nothing to do with fetching. Also,
Michael errs, in Vadim’s opinion, in
phrasing it as recovery should be…brought, because it is a suit that is
being brought. The word иск is
omitted in the first part of the combi-
nation to avoid repetition, as it is
in the source text as well. Vadim believes that 強勢变 superhero does not even sound Russian and that his version, though somewhat heavily constructed, is, after all, a legal disclaimer. Did you ever, he asks, see one written in plain language?

(E-Sp 4-03/4) (strip malls): Renato Calderon says this could be “una franja de tiendas,” i.e., smaller than the regular and larger malls. He went to Alta Vista-Babel Fish translations online, and what he got back was “alameda de la Tira.” Calling his sister in Bolivia to share a laugh, she told him that in that nation  malls are “galerías.” So, he sticks with the suggestion at the top.

(E-Sp 10-02-04) (The goal of this program is to ensure redundancy, etc.): Mario Valenti believes that the version suggested by Jaime Vargas on page 54 of the April issue (“Capacidad de repetición,” etc.) does not convey the right meaning. Mario proposes: “El propósito de este programa es el de asegurar redundancia suficiente repetición, etc.” By the way, he does not see any reason not to use “redundancia” for redundancy, as it is also a legitimate word in Spanish. I just added “sufficiente repetición” just in case, to facilitate the understanding of the uninitiated.

(E-Sp 10-02/5) (set the table): Efraín Rodríguez Ballesteros says that “poner la mesa” is used more frequently than “tender la mesa,” but both expressions are equivalent. He quotes the Diccionario Enciclopédico Abreviado, Vol. V, seventh edition, 1975, pages 803-4: “Poner la mesa. Cubrirla con manteles, poniendo sobre ellos los cubiertos y demás adherentes necesarios para comer.” “Alzar la mesa. (frase figurative y familiar). Levantar los manteles de la mesa terminada la comida.” “Levantar la mesa” is the equivalent of “alzar la mesa.” As for “montar,” in addition to to ride, it can mean “armar o poner en su lugar las piezas de cualquier aparato o máquina.” It is also a synonym of “engastar” when referring to precious stones, a meaning also found in English.

Tomas Chamberlyn says that his mother-in-law, wife, and daughter all would have told their children, over a period of more than three decades, to “pon la mesa.” In no other way would they have given this command.

(E-Sp 5-03/2) (up-flow add-on evaporation coils): Here’s what Efraín Rodríguez Ballesteros offers: “diseñado para operar con toda una línea de sopladores, ventiladores, etc., y evaporadores adicionales con serpentines de flujo vertical.” See page 55 of the May issue for the entire sentence which he is translating here.

(E-Sp 5-03/3) (pancakes): In Tomas Chamberlyn’s Guadalajara, Mexico, “hot cakes” is what appears on pancake flour packages sold in the stores. Sorry!

(E-Sp 5-03/4) (birthday cake): María Fagrelius is from the north of Spain, where it is “tarta de cumpleaños.” Did she write Tarta or Torta? “Pastel” also refers to a cake or pie (if filled with meat, compote, etc.), and “torta” refers to a flat cake. She does not believe there is a superior or inferior term for this; just the right term to be understood by those reading the document. In Tomas Chamberlyn’s Guadalajara, it is “pastel de cumpleaños.” “Pastel” would never be pie (called “pay” there), and a “torta” is a kind of sandwich on a roll or bun.

The main problem, opines Efraín Rodríguez Ballesteros, is the notion that “pastel” is a pie. Not so. The Spanish word carrying the same meaning is “tarta,” and if you are in doubt, compare dictionaries. “Pastel” is a cake. For wedding cake, for example, it’s “pastel de boda.”

(Sp-D 5-03/9) (“Número PGDR 20 – procuraduría“A): The abbreviated part of this, says Tomas Chamberlyn, might be “Procuraduría General de la República.”

(E-Sp 6-03/3) (filing status): Jaime Vargas likes “estado del declarante.” Suzanne Meyers focuses on the government’s wanting to know, in these forms, whether the taxpayer is married, single, or a widow(er), etc., so what about “Estado civil (or Estado legal) del contribuyente?” Bill Morgan provides “estado civil para efectos de la declaración,” and cites an IRS publication, no. 850, page 6, as his source, entitled English-Spanish Glossary of Words and Phrases.

(F-E 11-02/6): (“La société produit, distribue et exploite les films”): Adding to what Miriam Lassman-Rosin proposed, Mario offers profits from for “exploite.”

(F-E 3-03/1) (“normes de déploiement”): For Mario, ways of placement or ways of locating it work best. His overall translation: Establishing ways of placement will allow associates to benefit from the proximity of a multifunction printer, with all the advantages associated with this type of equipment.

(F-E 3-03/6) (“toujours en action”): Mario proposes always available or always ready.

(F-E 6-03/4): (“venant dans sa partie…[see page 49, June issue]): In the opinion of J. V. Guy-Bray, this bit

Continued on p.58
Humor and Translation  By Mark Herman

Herman is a librettist and translator. Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@earthlink.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 5748 W Brooks Rd., Shepherd, MI 48883-9202. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.

Irony in the Iliad

As a high school student in the 1950s, I studied Homer’s Iliad in the then new (1951) English translation by Richmond Lattimore. The jacket blurbs were wildly enthusiastic: “The finest translation of Homer ever made into the English language,” “the best modern verse translation.” But if Lattimore’s was indeed a great translation, it was clear to me that the original was vastly overrated. Sure, it had historical interest, but literary interest? Little that I could see.

Now I know better. The Iliad is great, as Robert Fagles’ 1990 translation shows. Lattimore’s translation is not. It was thought great because it was so much better than the drivel that had passed for Homeric translation into English for over a hundred years.

But between Lattimore and Fagles came Christopher Logue, a “translator” who knows no Greek and whose “translation,” begun in 1959, remains unfinished. Yet, Fagles’ introductory thanks to Logue is well deserved, for, without Logue, there would possibly have been no Fagles.

Logue, unintimidated by the Iliad’s status as a classic, showed that the Iliad is ironic if not actually funny.

Consider the end of Book 16, the Patrocleia, the first part of the Iliad that Logue translated. Patroclus, dying at the hands of Hector, tells Hector that Hector played the least part in Patroclus’ death, which was due mainly to destiny, and that Hector himself would soon be killed by Achilles.

Book 16 continues, in Lattimore’s translation:

He spoke, and as he spoke the end of death closed in upon him, and the soul fluttering free of his limbs went down into Death’s house mourning her destiny, leaving youth and manhood behind her. Now though he was a dead man glorious Hektor spoke to him: ‘Patroklos, what is this prophecy of my headlong destruction? Who knows if even Achilles, son of lovely-haired Thetis, might before this be struck by my spear, and his own life perish?’

He spoke, and setting his heel upon him wrenched out the bronze spear from the wound, then spurned him away on his back from the spear.

And, after an additional five lines, Lattimore ends Book 16.

Lattimore’s translation leaves the reader totally unprepared for Logue’s ending of the Patrocleia. It is as if Logue were translating an entirely different work:

Saying these things Patroclus died.
And as his soul went through the sand Hector withdrew his spear and said:
“Perhaps.”

Fagles’ translation is recognizably of the same work as Lattimore’s, but somehow Logue’s ironic sensibility is also there, most obviously in the transformations of Thetis’ hair from “lovely” to “sleek” and “Who knows?” from a simple question to an ironical statement, and in the excess of “young and supple strength”:

Death cut him short. The end closed in around him.
Flying free of his limbs
his soul went winging down to the House of Death,
wailing his fate, leaving his manhood far behind,
his young and supple strength. But glorious Hector taunted Patroclus’ body, dead as he was, “Why, Patroclus—why prophesy my doom, my sudden death? Who knows?—Achilles the son of sleek-haired Thetis may outrace me—struck by my spear first—and gasp away his life!”

With that he planted a heel against Patroclus’ chest, wrenched his brazen spear from the wound, kicked him over, flat on his back, free and clear of the weapon.

Plus, as in Lattimore’s translation, five more lines.


of electronics text is best expressed in English by whose lower part reaches to the contact between a metallic interconnection (CT2) and one (or an) electrode of the transistor of the cell.

(F-E 6-03/5) (“masse en ordre de marche”): J. V. Guy-Bray says that this is mass in working condition or order, or operating mass. It’s not a weight, which depends on gravity, but the amount of matter in the object concerned. Gabe Bokor’s opinion is that this is curb weight.

(G-E 11-02/9) (“Jetzt-erst-recht-Stimmung”): This has been translated as being vindictive, vengeful (i.e., negatively). Melitta Fort, however, has sometimes heard it (and has used it herself) in a somewhat positive connotation as well, as in “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” It all depends on context and mood.

(I-G 6-03/7) (“pomelli gradiati”: Berto Berti explains that these are knobs or dials, for example, time dial, thermostat dial, temperature knob in the kitchen range.

Pt-E 6-03/8: (“Trambulador”): This, states Gabe Bokor, is the gear selector.

(R-E 6-03/9) (зачиний): Gabe Bokor says this is easy: virtual (meeting) or even tele-meeting, by analogy with teleconferencing. (In academia, зачиний курс is a distance learning course). The opposite could be non-virtual, to avoid awkward descriptions like with the participants physically present.

(Sp-E 3-03/8) (“Les heredamos a nuestros hijos”): Alvaro Villegas says that it is common in Mexico to use “heredar” as an active verb, in which someone leaves something to someone. This option is marked as “unusual” by the Royal Academy Dictionary, but it does exist: “darle a uno heredades, posesiones o bienes raíces.” In the sentence originally quoted by Renato Calderon, the meaning is “We are leaving XXX to our children [as heritage].” But such a usage would be absolutely unusual in Spain, he admits.

(Sw-E 5-03/10) (“giftorättningsländer”): There must be some sort of glitch here, says Paul Hopper; obviously, this is not patent-related. His rendering of the sentence: The property that is not enumerated in the prenuptial agreement is community property. Those final two words presumably clear up the sticking point.

Thanks very, very much! I was even compelled to hold over some responses until the September issue. But don’t let that stop you from sending either responses or fresh queries, particularly the latter.

A Linguistic Tragedy Continued from page 46

else. But where this variety approaches the level of absurdity is in the terms used for that particular spot where every tourist must go periodically, and which, as we come and go, could certainly be indicated with the same euphemism in every tongue.

As far as foreign terms are concerned, certain languages (Russian, in particular) show great liberality in welcoming them in, whereas others, such as German, and Hungarian and Finnish even more so, refuse to accept them. When these languages are forced to accept foreign terms, they drown them in the national lexicon to such an extent that they become unrecognizable.

Mr Lyall’s lists also allowed me to discover that there are not only ultra-national and xenophobic languages; there are jealous and vindictive ones as well. This is the case for modern Greek, which seems to bear a grudge against Latin for having supplanted it 2,000 years ago in international communications, and thus obstinately opposes neologisms from Latin roots. Though every other country has adopted such nouns as republic, bus, passport, visa, in the land of Homer these have not managed to overthrow dhimocratía, leophoreión, dhiamatión, and epitheórisis, and—unless Mr. Lyall is pulling our leg—a self-respecting Greek does not say consulante, but rather proxeneion!

What tempers somewhat the effect of such disheartening information is the unintended humor of other information. In order to better serve the tourist, the scrupulous author felt obliged to transcribe the pronunciation of the sentences in other languages into the English alphabet!

Reading such a book will make us palpably understand how fortunate is the linguistic unity of our immense Brazil. Just imagine if our maçã (apple) could be called pomme in São Paulo, melo in Vitoria, manzana in Belo Horizonte, marul in Brasilia, apple in Curiúva, aeblet in Florianópolis, üldloko in Recife, alma in Manaus, obylis in Belém, and milon in Salvador. You should give thanks to Providence that you do not need to take Mr. Lyall’s little book with you when you take the ferry.

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<td>$270</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Hotel Accommodations**

The Pointe South Mountain Resort, the host hotel, is the largest all-suite resort in the Southwest located on 200 acres at the base of South Mountain Park. It is conveniently located at 7777 South Pointe Parkway, just six miles from Sky Harbor International Airport.

Conference attendees can register at the discounted rate of $155 single/double and $175 triple plus tax per night. This rate is good until October 13, 2003. The availability of guest rooms or the group rate cannot be guaranteed after that date. In addition, take advantage of the special resort rate that is being offered to ATA conference attendees. For a daily charge of $8.00 per suite, attendees may enjoy unlimited local phone calls, unlimited access for credit card, toll-free, and collect calls, free incoming and outgoing facsimile service, daily in-suite pot of coffee, weekday delivery of USA Today, admittance to the Fitness Centre, unlimited tennis and volleyball, and complimentary shuttle to the Arizona Mills Mall.

To make your hotel reservations, contact the Pointe South Mountain Resort at 1-877-800-4888. Be sure to specify that you are attending the ATA Annual Conference.

Mark Your Calendar Today for November 5-8, 2003!
Registration Fees

Early-Bird (available until Oct. 1)
One-day (indicate day __________)
After Oct. 1
One-day (indicate day __________)
Onsite (after Oct. 25)
One-day (indicate day __________)

Note: One-day and student registrants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings.

Registration Fees = $ _________

Preconference Seminar Registration

(see page 4 of the Preliminary Program for details)

Seminar A (9:00am-12:00pm) $15
Seminar B (9:00am-12:00pm) $50
Seminar C (9:00am-12:00pm) $0
Seminar D (9:00am-12:00pm) $50
Seminar E (9:00am-12:00pm) $50
Seminar F (9:00am-12:00pm) $50
Seminar G (9:00am-5:00pm) $100
Seminar H (2:00pm-5:00pm) $0
Seminar I (2:00pm-5:00pm) $50
Seminar J (2:00pm-5:00pm) $50
Seminar K (2:00pm-5:00pm) $50
Seminar L (2:00pm-5:00pm) $50
Seminar M (2:00pm-5:00pm) $50

Preconference Fees = $ _________

Special Event Tickets

Interpreters Division Dinner (Thursday, November 6) $20 per person x ___=$ _________
Medical Division Dessert Reception (Thursday, November 6) $20 per person x ___=$ _________
Round Robin Tennis Tournament (Thursday, November 6) $25 per person x ___=$ _________
Translation Company Division Reception (Thursday, November 6) $35 per person x ___=$ _________
German Language Division Happy Hour (Friday, November 7) $20 per person x ___=$ _________
French Language Division Reception (Friday, November 7) $35 per person x ___=$ _________
Japanese Language Division Reception (Friday, November 7) $22 per person x ___=$ _________
Portuguese Language Division Reception (Friday, November 7) $28 per person x ___=$ _________
Closing Banquet (Saturday, November 8) $55 per person x ___=$ _________

Special Event Ticket Total = $ _________

Total Payment = $ _________

Payment

❑ Check/Money Order: Please make payable, through a U.S. bank in U.S. funds, to American Translators Association
❑ Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Credit Card No. Expiration Date

Name on Card Signature

❑ Please indicate if you require special accessibility or assistance. (Attach a sheet with your requirements.)
❑ Yes, I would like to take part in the Job Exchange.
Pointe South Mountain Resort
7777 South Pointe Parkway, Phoenix, Arizona 85044
Phone: (602) 438-9000; Fax (602) 431-6535
Located just six miles from Sky Harbor International Airport

Special Room Rate for ATA
$155 single/double a night, plus tax.

To take advantage of this special rate, make your hotel reservations by October 13. Be sure to mention that you are attending ATA’s Annual Conference.

ATA conference attendees pay a reduced resort fee. For just $8.00 a day, guests receive:
- Free local phone calls
- Unlimited access for credit card, toll-free, and collect phone calls
- Free incoming and outgoing domestic faxes
- Complimentary USA Today newspaper
- Free admission to The Oasis
- Unlimited tennis and sand volleyball court time
- Free access to the Phantom Horse Athletic Club

Resort Amenities
Located in scenic courtyards, six swimming pools offer the perfect respite under the Arizona sun. The fitness center features a full-length lap pool and water aerobics for an active alternative. The Pointe South Mountain Resort is the largest all-suite resort in the Southwest, all located on 300 acres adjoining South Mountain Park.

Onsite recreational activities include:
- The 6-acre Oasis Water Adventure
- Championship 18-hole Golf
- Horseback Riding, Mountain Biking, and Hiking
- Tennis, Basketball, Volleyball, and Racquetball
- 38,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Fitness Club
- Swimming and Aqua Aerobics

For more information, visit www.pointesouthmtn.com
Because many of the world's top companies and government agencies depend on Language Services Associates for superior quality, we vigorously seek out the industry's best interpreters and translators to join our team. Through selective recruiting, extensive training, innovation in technology and meticulous customer support, we have successfully served our clients' language needs for over a decade.

OUR NATIONWIDE SERVICES INCLUDE:

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Please meet with a representative at the upcoming ATA Conference

PHONE: 1 (800) 305-9673 / FAX: 215-659-7210
www.LSAweb.com / resumes@LSAweb.com