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in this issue

Features

9 ATA 2003 Election: Candidate Statements

16 The Rudiments of Public Speaking
By Neil L. Inglis
Silence is not an option. Get the right message out!

19 Controlling Project Churn: A Case for Reality-Based Project Management
By Kenneth (Sandy) McKethan, Jr.
Controlling project churn: practical help for project managers.

23 A Guide to Navigating the Federal Marketplace for Interpreters and Translators
By Brenda S. Sprague
The federal government has an urgent need for linguistic services to meet a myriad of
program requirements. Linguists need a roadmap to negotiate their journey through the
federal marketplace.

25 Interpretation and Justice
By Laura Esther Wolfson
Mohamed Yousry, an interpreter providing language services for a prisoner convicted of
terrorism, was himself indicted on charges of conspiracy. The indictment comes under
the new Patriot Act, which narrows the range of attorney-client communications
deemed confidential and expands federal powers to listen in on such exchanges. What
risks do interpreters run in the War on Terrorism?

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

Columns and Departments

7 From the President
8 From the Executive Director
49 Accreditation Forum
51 Onionskin
52 Dictionary Reviews
56 The Translation Inquirer
58 Humor and Translation
59 New ATA-accredited members and
   Active Member Review
60 Marketplace
63 Display Advertising Index

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E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org
The ATA Chronicle | September 2003

The ATA Chronicle Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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) 683-8122 • Chronicle@atanet.org

The ATA Chronicle \ A Publication of the American Translators Association \ 1999 FIT Best Periodical Award Winner
Translation on Trial
By Maya Hess
It is truly unfortunate that conscientiously doing your job, adhering to your profession’s code of conduct, and making proper ethical choices can get you in the hot seat nowadays if you happen to work on a controversial case.

Fostering an Industry in Crisis: Canada Promotes the Interpretation Profession
By Suzanne Defoy and Michel Parent
The looming shortage of qualified interpreters is, like our society today, truly a global phenomenon. Learn about Canada’s efforts to nurture its struggling industry.

Ethics and Medical Interpretation: The Value of a Pre-Session
By Zarita Araújo-Lane and Vonessa A. Phillips
By setting the tone before a session, the interpreter virtually eliminates the potential for role confusion and the misplacement of loyalties in the medical session.

Telephone Interpreting: “It’s Not All About the Money”
By Douglas S. Divers
Telephone interpreting is a rapidly growing industry, yet it is often disparaged. This rewarding field enables a language professional to use his or her skills both to make a living and to make a difference.

Read My Lips: Interpreting for the Hearing-Impaired
By Rut Simcovich
How would you provide simultaneous interpreting for participants at a conference who were hearing-impaired?

Message in a Bottle Translators Produce Do-It-Yourself Anthology
By Ingrid Lansford
A long-term group project revives enthusiasm, provides hands-on experience, and propels 10 Austin literary translators toward their common goal.

Simultaneous Interpreting into English: The Argentine Case
By Daniel Giglio
A discussion of issues such as quality, training, ethics, and some theoretical aspects of simultaneous Spanish-into-English interpretation by Spanish native interpreters.

TIP-Lab 10th Annual Distance Spanish Translation/Revision Workshop
TIP-Lab is pleased to announce its 10th Annual Distance Spanish Translation/Revision Workshop, scheduled for January to June 2004. Participants will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Excellent command of both Spanish and English is a requirement. In the course of the workshop, four texts will be translated by the participants, reviewed by Leandro Wolfson, a professional translator from Argentina, and returned to each translator with revisions, annotated comments, and a model translation selected each month from the group. As in previous years, application for continued education credit (20 hours) will be submitted to the Judicial Council of California and the Washington State Courts. Additionally, TIP-Lab will be applying for ATA accreditation continued education credit. The registration deadline is Monday, December 15, 2003. For further information and to request a brochure with the registration form, call, fax, or e-mail: TIP-Lab, c/o Alicia Marshall (847) 869-4889 (phone/fax), e-mail: aliciamarshall@comcast.net.
About Our Authors...

Zarita Araújo-Lane has taught Portuguese medical interpretation at Bentley College and cultural competency for medical interpreters at Cambridge College. Recently, she joined forces with Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, through the Amistad Federal Grant, to develop a groundbreaking interpreter training program for high school students. In addition, she heads the team that writes and designs the CCCS, Inc. Art of Medical Interpretation training manual series. She is a native of Portugal and speaks Portuguese and French. Contact: zaraujo_lane@cccsorg.com.

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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 interpersonal 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.

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For complete conference information, visit www.atanet.org/conf2003 today!
From the President  Thomas L. West III
president@atanet.org

Elections and the ATA Conference

The election is upon us. This November, we have the biannual elections for president-elect, secretary, and treasurer. In addition, we have the annual election of three directors.

We are fortunate to have so many excellent candidates who are willing to serve the association. I would like to once again thank Nominating Committee Chair and ATA Director Bob Sette and his committee members—Rudy Heller, Odile Legeay, Ben Tompkins, and Courtney Searls-Ridge—for their excellent work in putting together this year’s slate of candidates.

Here is this year’s slate: President-elect: Beatriz Bonnet and Marian Greenfield; Secretary: Alan Melby; Treasurer: Jiri Stejskal; and Directors: Claudia Angelelli, Debra Kramasz, Jean Leblon, Virginia Perez-Santalla, Ines Swaney, and Jost Zetzsche. For more information on the candidates, please see their statements in this issue.

Given the experiences of other associations, the general consensus is that it is more difficult than ever to find volunteers, let alone individuals who are willing to make commitments for two, three, and four years. (For ATA, the secretary and treasurer serve two-year terms. Directors, of which there are nine, serve three-year terms. Finally, the president-elect has a four-year commitment—two as president-elect followed by two as president.) I will not lie to you—the time commitment has been challenging at times between running my company and balancing time with my family. However, in the long run, my time in office has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had.

If you have not considered volunteering, you should. It is an investment in yourself and your future. You will make contacts and learn about the best practices that others are employing. This does not touch on the enrichment and enjoyment in learning from others and sharing our common interest in languages.

The election will take place on Thursday, November 6, 2003, at the 44th Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. Ballots will be mailed to all active and corresponding members later this month. If you are going to the conference, you can vote at the Presentation of Candidates and Election on Thursday morning. If you cannot attend the conference, please be sure to return your proxy ballot. Every vote counts!

Register Today for ATA’s Annual Conference

I would not be doing my job if I did not urge you to register today for ATA’s 44th Annual Conference in Phoenix, November 5-8. ATA President-elect and Conference Organizer Scott Brennan has put together a schedule of educational sessions that is as impressive for its wide range of topics as it is for its depth. I am looking forward to attending as many of the sessions as possible.

Be sure to check out the conference page on ATA’s website for more information.

Continued on p.30

Seeking Input for 2003 Translation Support Tools Forum

Last year in Atlanta, many of you attended the Translation Support Tools forum and others have subsequently looked at the documents produced from that forum. Those documents can be downloaded from ATA’s website at www.atanet.org/conf2003/tac.htm.

In preparation for this year’s Translation and Support Tools forum in Phoenix, organized by ATA’s Translation and Computers Committee (TAC), please send in suggestions for questions that should be asked of participating vendors. Questions can be in two categories: 1) general questions that all vendors could answer in order to facilitate comparisons among them by ATA members; and 2) tool-specific questions by existing users—questions they have had trouble finding answers to by calling or e-mailing the vendor.

Please send your questions to Alan K. Melby (AKM), chair of ATA’s Translation and Computers Committee, at atatacakm@yahoo.com.
From the Executive Director

Conference and Accreditation Changes

Plans are well underway for ATA’s 44th Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, November 5-8, 2003. Here is a look at some of the enhancements that are already in place.

- **The Preliminary Program** is out in a new, eye-catching format with to-the-point copy. For more information, visit the conference page on ATA’s website (www.atanet.org/conf2003). Please let me know what you think of the new format.

- The online conference page has been completely revamped in coordination with the new format of the Preliminary Program. The new page offers the details of the conference in a very user-friendly format. Please take some time to check it out and let me know what you think. The comments so far have been extremely positive, particularly in response to the layout and ease of finding information.

- The registration process has been improved and simplified. For ATA members, as you start to register online this year, your contact information will be automatically imported from the database so that you do not need to re-enter it. (Please be sure to verify that the info imported is up-to-date.) If you do not want to register online, the registration form may be accessed as a PDF or Word file. New for 2003, the Word version allows you to complete the form online and then print it and mail or fax it to ATA Headquarters. In addition, you no longer have to complete separate forms to register for preconference seminars or the Job Exchange. You can sign up for these events on the registration form.

- The Cyber Café, which allowed attendees at last year’s conference to check their e-mail while away from the office, will be expanded.

The Cyber Café was without a doubt one of the most popular additions to the Annual Conference.

**Accreditation Program Changes Update**

As we move closer to implementing the accreditation program changes, we have compiled all the latest information in one location on ATA’s website. Be sure to visit www.atanet.org/accreditation_change.htm. You will find everything from the new application form featuring eligibility requirements and an ethics statement to the continuing education requirements chart and the report from the outside testing expert. We will continue to add information as it becomes available.

**Age Cap Set.** The Board approved implementing an age cap for those having to submit continuing education requirements. Members 60 years or older...

Continued on p.43

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Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (An ATA Chapter)

**Second Annual Conference: “Creating Partnerships”**

**Saturday, October 18, 2003 • 7:30 am to 4:30 pm**

Four Points Sheraton Hotel • Minnesota Grand Ballroom
1300 Industrial Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota

UMTIA is pleased to host this forum to facilitate the local trend of new partnerships between the language, communication, healthcare, technology, and education professions.

Complete details and registration materials are available at www.umtia2003conference.org. You can also contact UMTIA at uppermidwestata@yahoo.com or UMTIA President Dr. Laurence Bogoslaw at mtl@umn.edu or (612) 625-3096.
ATA 2003 Election: Candidate Statements

The election this year is to fill the positions of president-elect, secretary, and treasurer, as well as three directors’ positions (each a three-year term). The ballots will be mailed in late September.

President-elect (two-year term)
Beatriz Bonnet
beatriz.bonnet@syntes.com

It is a great honor to have been nominated to run for president-elect of the association. I have been an ATA member since 1988 and a freelance translator and interpreter since 1986. I am a federally certified court interpreter and hold ATA accreditation (English↔Spanish). I am a contract conference interpreter for the State Department. For 15 years, I have run Syntes Language Group, an established T&I company. It has been a humbling and sometimes rough journey that has taught me a great deal about leadership, management, and decision-making—skills needed to lead our association and further improve its financial stability. However, I am first and foremost a translator and interpreter: I interpret at least 20 days a year, and I translate and edit documents on a regular basis.

As an ATA director since 1999, I have contributed as follows:

- Initiated industry surveys;
- Member of Finance Committee;
- Member of Eligibility Requirements Ad-hoc Committee;
- ATA Representative to American Society for Testing and Materials Committee on Translation Standards;
- Mentor;
- Presenter at T&I conferences.

Our association is at a crossroads. We have an opportunity to take a leadership position, and I believe we have an obligation to lead. My vision for ATA is not only to maintain our status as the largest and most respected association for professional translators and interpreters in the industry, but to establish it as the most trusted source for industry information, positions, trends, and the champion of our professions. To achieve this vision, we must:

- **Continue and increase our PR efforts.** Through effective public relations and an increased “grass-roots” movement, we are slowly changing the perceptions of the public and beginning to gain the level of recognition we all deserve.

- **Increase outreach activities.** I will explore new ways to make our association more visible by working with other associations and the schools, engaging younger generations and those not previously interested in T&I. As a member of other boards of directors, a speaker to school groups, and an unabashed and passionate defender of our profession, I believe I bring a well-rounded perspective to this effort.

- **Expand our professional development activities.** I hope to expand our already successful professional development program. This is a great benefit to our members, and it will be of critical importance to the continuing education component of the accreditation program.

- **Continue to strengthen the accreditation program.** I fully support the changes that have been implemented. I also support changing the name to certification and opening up the exam to all candidates who fulfill the eligibility requirements. This will increase our visibility and recognition to the outside world and strengthen the perceived quality of our credential.

This vision is ambitious. It will take many years to accomplish, but I would like the opportunity to begin to set the course. If you share in my vision for ATA, I humbly ask for your vote. I will work hard to lead our organization towards accomplishing our vision. Thank you.

President-elect (two-year term)
Marian S. Greenfield
msgreenfieldtranslations.com

I would like the opportunity to guide ATA through the challenging tasks we must confront over the next four years. I want to see us become such a vibrant organization that no quality-oriented client would consider hiring non-ATA members, and no serious translator would question the value of membership. I believe that my service as New York Circle of Translators president, ATA Board member, and chair of several ATA committees, combined with 20 years of managerial and translation experience on Wall Street, have given me the leadership skills ATA needs to continue on its positive course. If elected, I will apply these skills to several key projects:

**Professional Development.** This is a critical member benefit that strengthens the association as a whole. We’ve made tremendous strides in the past few years by building on the success of the mini-conferences I organized to develop a full complement of advanced-level events. As Professional Development Committee chair, I have focused on recruiting top-quality speakers, including non-translator experts in various fields, and on increasing offerings of interest to interpreters. My experience in teaching...
translating and in conference organizing will be invaluable in expanding this program.

Accreditation. We must continue strengthening the accreditation (certification) program in order to make it the most credible, valuable credential in the market. ATA leadership has often called on me to find ways to implement some of the most difficult, yet necessary, changes to the program. To achieve the professional recognition we deserve, we need to ensure that the exam is rigorous; we need continuing education requirements; and we need to have the very best graders. This is essential in order to become the premier association we need to be. If you choose me as your president, my knowledge of the issues and frank, get-it-done style will aid in accomplishing this daunting task.

Public Relations. We’ve made dramatic progress, but much remains to be done. I have been a strong supporter of the Public Relations Committee’s very successful efforts, including hiring a professional PR consultant. We need to make sure that we continue to get the best bang for our buck. Our website needs to be enhanced to make it the first place visited by journalists, clients, and the public for information on translation and translators. And we need a business outreach program to raise our profile with potential clients. If elected, I will draw on my extensive managerial and Board experience to ensure that ATA’s message is heard.

Member Benefits. I have pushed hard to improve our insurance program, and as president I would continue to support proposed legislation allowing associations to provide group health coverage to members.

As a full-time freelancer, I strongly advocate broadening our range of membership benefits.

If we continue moving forward in these key areas, I’m confident we will become the premier organization we’re striving to be. This profession has given me so much, and I’d like to keep giving back by working with you to achieve these goals. I hope you’ll give me the opportunity.

Secretary
(two-year term)
Alan K. Melby
akm@byu.edu

Alan Melby joined ATA in the early 1980s. He soon, thereafter, began making presentations at the annual meetings on the use of computers as tools for human translators. During the past six years, he has been chair of ATA’s Translation and Computers Committee. He has also served two consecutive three-year terms on the Board of Directors and is now running for the position of secretary.

Melby will be able to serve effectively as secretary since he is already familiar with how the Board meetings function. As secretary, he would not be in a leadership position; however, he hopes to be reappointed as chair of the Translation and Computers Committee and to continue his service in that area in addition to his duties as secretary. He organized the Translation Support Tools forum at the 2002 ATA Annual Conference in Atlanta. He continues to seek ways to provide useful information to ATA members about technology, and to encourage tools vendors to make their products responsive to translator input and interoperable with each other so that they can compete on a level playing field.

Treasurer
(two-year term)
Jiri Stejskal
jiri@cetra.com

As the current treasurer of ATA, I find it a great honor and a great pleasure to be endorsed by the Nominating Committee as a candidate for re-election. In my first term, I made a good effort to meet the challenges associated with the office and learned a good deal about governance of nonprofit organizations in general and financial aspects specific to our association in particular. It is my sincere hope that I can offer the association at least as much as the association has given me through this learning process, and, if re-elected, I will do my best to contribute to the association’s well-being.

My curriculum vitae will tell you that I like learning new things, which is evidenced by my enrollment in a M.Sc. program in what was then Czechoslovakia, and by the two masters’ degrees (M.A. and M.B.A.) and the Ph.D. degree I earned here in the U.S. It will also tell you that I have been involved in the translation and interpretation industry for many years, becoming an associate member of ATA in 1991 and an active member in 1996. For other relevant engagements it gives the following list: member of the Czech Union of Translators and Interpreters; director of the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation; chairman of the Status Committee of the International Federation of Translators; chairman of ATA’s Finance Committee; coordinator of ATA’s International Certification Study; and chairman of the Ad-Hoc Eligibility Requirements Committee.

The last two items in the list above bring me to my involvement in the association outside of my duties as treasurer. In the August issue of the
ATA Chronicle, an article entitled “International Certification Study: Lessons Learned” concluded a multi-year project involving research of credentialing procedures in the T&I world. As the author of the article series, I became quite well-acquainted with various programs throughout the world. I had the good fortune of being able to apply this knowledge to our own credentialing program and to actively participate in its reshaping, particularly in the area of eligibility requirements. I fully endorse the direction our certification program is taking and look forward to continuing to serve the association in this respect as well.

Regarding my duties as treasurer, I am planning to continue in close cooperation with ATA Headquarters, our investment broker, and our auditor, and to inform the membership about the association’s financial matters regularly in the pages of the ATA Chronicle. If re-elected, I will do my best, in cooperation with ATA’s Finance Committee, to ensure prudent handling of ATA finances. In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the Board members with whom I have had the honor to serve so far, to ATA Headquarters staff, and to all ATA members for the wonderful support I have received in my first term in this office. I hope that I will be able to continue to serve to the satisfaction of all. Thank you for giving me the opportunity!

Director
(three-year term)
Claudia Angelelli
cangelei@mail.sdsu.edu

For 11 years, I have been an active member of ATA. I find it a great honor and a pleasure to be endorsed by ATA’s Nominating Committee as a candidate for election. I believe it is the marriage of academic theory and professional practice in my background that sets me apart as someone who understands the interplay and necessity of both.

My curriculum vitae shows that I am a translator/interpreter by education and have actively worked in the profession for over 18 years. I hold a Ph.D. from the School of Education at Stanford University (research focus: the role of the interpreter); an M.A. in Teaching Foreign Languages, with Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and Language Program Administration graduate certificates (research focus: translation/interpreting pedagogy) from the Graduate School of Languages and Educational Linguistics of the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS); and a Diploma in Spanish-English legal translation/comparative law from Buenos Aires, Argentina, with certificates in interpreting in English, French, and Spanish.

I have over 20 years of experience freelancing for private companies and nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and Argentina.

Currently, I am an assistant professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures at San Diego State University, where we are pursuing the creation of a Ph.D. in translation studies. I teach both graduate and undergraduate courses in applied linguistics in the areas of translation/interpreting and second-language acquisition. Previously, I was a lecturer at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Law School at Stanford University, an assistant professor at the Graduate School of Languages and Educational Linguistics, and a visiting professor in the Graduate School of Translation & Interpreting at MIIS, where I founded the Spanish Summer Program for Language Enhancement for translators/interpreters in 1993 and co-founded the English program in 1994. Before coming to the U.S., I was an associate professor of legal translation at the Catholic University and the Universidad del Salvador in Buenos Aires.

My commitment to the continuing education of translators and interpreters is evidenced by the fact that I have facilitated workshops and seminars on T&I for ATA, the Northern California Translators Association, and at world symposiums such as the Third Symposium on Translation (Puerto Rico), First Congress on T&I (Lima, Peru), and First Latin American Conference on T&I (Buenos Aires). My current research focuses on the education and testing of bilingual speakers at the higher end of the scale, specifically translators and interpreters. My publications include articles on interpreting, the pedagogy of T&I, legal T&I, teacher education, and language pedagogy for specific purposes.

If elected, I will work to improve formal educational opportunities for translators and interpreters. In addition, I will support ongoing efforts to offer professional development seminars and to enhance the certification program. I believe my expertise will be an asset to ATA in our constant effort to strengthen our certification program. I feel that a pairing of both academics and professionals benefits and enriches both groups. Thank you for your support.
Director
(three-year term)
Debra Kramasz
debkramasz@aol.com

I am truly honored to be nominated for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors. I have watched ATA grow and mature since I discovered it in 1995, and have benefited from the valuable opportunities it provides. Since 1987, I’ve worked in the translation industry in various capacities: freelance translator, agency owner, and language manager.

My own personal search for more translation credentials and professional development opportunities within driving distance has lead me to establish in my area a translation and interpreting association, the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA), now an ATA chapter. It has been a humbling and enriching experience working with the seasoned language professionals and practitioners in UMTIA and the ATA Board during the chapter formation, and now as secretary and communications manager of the UMTIA Executive Committee.

If elected director, I will represent freelance translators and interpreters, do a lot of listening, and respond to their needs. I’d bring more attention to the need for additional formal education programs in translation and interpreting. I’d focus on the importance of adding more writing and document development curriculum to existing translation preparation programs.

Increasing the number of formal education programs in translation and interpreting will have a two-pronged effect: to provide credentials to translators and interpreters, thereby boosting their earning power; and to raise the translation and interpreting occupations up to the professional level alongside those of Europe, Latin America, and Canada, where translators and interpreters enjoy the prestige and status of true professionals akin to those of a certified public accountant in the U.S.

To accomplish these goals, a director needs to have experience and knowledge of translation and interpreting and strong administrative and effective communication skills. I have demonstrated these skills by mobilizing the Upper Midwest translation and interpreting industry, by working with the University of Minnesota on a translation and interpreting internship program, and by coordinating an Interpreting Stakeholders Forum.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to provide communications venues that connect the industry players in the Upper Midwest by serving as editor of UMTIA’s newsletter for two years, developing UMTIA’s website plan, and coordinating a local conference that brings together both local providers and users of translation and interpreting services in health care, communication, and education to exchange information. These efforts will have a lasting impact on the Upper Midwest translation and interpreting industry and will create true change.

It’s an exciting time in the U.S. translation and interpreting industry, with new trends emerging in global communications, multilingual technology, and education for translators and interpreters. Standing at the crux of this evolving industry is ATA, the only national translation and interpreting organization in the U.S. That’s a very crucial role, and everyone will be looking to ATA to continue its effective leadership and evolve along with the industry.

I hope you will give me a chance to serve you at the national level.

Director
(three-year term)
Jean M. Leblon
jean_leblon@msn.com

I am honored to have been selected by the Nominating Committee as a candidate for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors. I have been a member of ATA since 1987, the year I joined a steering committee that organized the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society, now a chapter of ATA. I have served NOTIS as secretary, treasurer, vice-president, and president.

Born and raised in French-speaking southern Belgium, I have translated since my earliest years, from and into Dutch, German, and English especially. Throughout my academic career, I spoke, taught, and wrote equally in French and English, adding Spanish while in New York City. As chairman of two departments and of one faculty senate, I often dealt with delicate matters concerning programs, personnel, and budgets. In the conservative academic atmosphere, a good measure of tactful determination was often necessary to bring about necessary changes.

After a first retirement 15 years ago, I began translating, interpreting, recording, and teaching in a translation and interpretation institute as an independent contractor. For five of those years, I was an in-house translator, editor, and terminologist in a large software company. I am now an accredited translator for the Consulate of France in San Francisco.

We must continue to increase ATA members’ confidence in a fair and equitable assessment of the accreditation examination. I am a grader of English into French and a member of the Accreditation and Eligibility Requirements Committees. Through
the work of those committees, I have been privileged to contribute to the important changes that have been brought to the structure of the examination—the error-marking system and the selection of candidates—and to attend discussions concerning the continuing education requirements. Furthermore, the Accreditation Committee has asked the language pair groups to set as much standardization as possible to their language-specific guidelines. A similar effort concerns the passage-specific guidelines for each year’s selection of passages.

The future of ATA, its chapters, and affiliates is bright. Local groups are receiving more support and advice from ATA Headquarters. Thanks to ATA’s help, some of these groups have been able to fund regional events. I applaud the successes of our public relations efforts and of the mentoring program. I plan to help develop the outreach to schools. I expect that the continuing education requirements will lead to the organization of more professional development seminars, already recognized as a valuable and economical option or addition to attendance at the Annual Conference. I would like to see these requirements also serve to encourage the establishment of more translation and interpretation programs in the U.S. I support the change of “accreditation” to “certification” and the opening of the program to nonmembers, since this will add to the credibility of our presence in the field here and abroad.

If elected, I will continue to support the above programs and, mindful of budgetary limitations and fiscal prudence, to participate in all ways in which the Board strives to provide more benefits and assistance to the members of ATA.

Diretor (three-year term)
Virginia Perez-Santalla
virginiasps@comcast.net

When asked to run for director, I felt extremely honored and thought about the responsibility to my colleagues and to the association, contemplating my qualifications to serve.

A few years ago I would have been hesitant to accept the nomination. Now, my perspective is different. For the past three years, I have been assistant administrator of ATA’s Spanish Language Division. In addition, I’ve been chair of the Inaugural and Second SPD Conference Organizing Committee; moderator of Espalista, (the SPD listserv); a member of the Interpreters Division Directory Committee; and a mentor in ATA’s Mentoring Task Force. This has made me realize I can work proficiently for our organization and our membership.

I was born and raised in Cuba, where I received a bilingual education starting in kindergarten, subsequently dabbling in French and Latin. I started as a freelance translator in 1980, obtaining ATA accreditation (English→Spanish) in 1982. Later, I decided to become an interpreter, qualifying as a master interpreter in New Jersey in 1989 and receiving federal certification in 1993. Like many of us, I fell into the profession by chance and realized I loved the challenges, deadlines, detective work, and, yes, even the occasional frustrations of the job.

Our profession has seen many changes since I started. It has advanced from using typewriters and white-out and researching at the library to sitting at the computer with the world at our fingertips. Translations now take hours instead of days. We are much more productive. These same changes that have worked to our advantage in so many ways have also created a more competitive global market. To compete, we need to be qualified. To be qualified, we need more than accreditation. We need to keep our skills, vocabulary, and techniques honed. Hence, ATA’s new continuing education requirements will assist us in keeping up with the global market, giving additional leverage to our accreditation.

I also believe we should explore more avenues for earning CEUs that would not require expenditures which are beyond the means of many. If elected, I will work with the Board to study additional options that could be implemented and be within reach of all members.

We should be more visible so people will start recognizing us for what we are—an organization of professionals who take pride in our services. We should employ the media to our advantage, using every opportunity to promote the association. If elected, I will work to achieve this goal.

After careful study, the accreditation program has undergone changes that will benefit translators and advance our profession. They are a necessary step after many years spent toiling for professional recognition. Some members have expressed dissatisfaction with those changes. If elected, I will listen to those concerns and make sure my colleagues have a voice.

I believe my work as a freelance interpreter and translator has made me aware of the many challenges we face. Therefore, I respectfully ask for your vote so I can work with the Board to promote and protect our interests.
Director (three-year term)
Ines Swaney
inesswaney@earthlink.net

These are exciting times in our association. As a current member of the Board of Directors, I feel we have accomplished a great deal in recent years. Colleagues have an enormous array of options provided with membership, including the ability to highly personalize the experience. Our divisions represent specialties not only by language, but also for those working as interpreters and/or with an emphasis on the medical field. The association is more responsive at the regional level, bringing professional development courses, conferences, and workshops closer to where members live. These presentations have been extremely well received, and provide a natural complement to the offerings provided at the ATA Annual Conference. Chapters and other groups also bring fresh ideas and resources at the local level. We are more visible and highly regarded in the media and in the business arena overall. Through ATA’s Mentoring Task Force, members with more years of experience are sharing insights and lessons learned with newer members who request such a mentor.

As a freelancer, in my capacity as a translator, conference and court interpreter, voice-over talent, writer, and instructor, my daily work keeps me in touch with the various challenges shared by many of our colleagues. Another term on the Board of Directors would provide me with the opportunity to continue being involved in many of these activities and programs, sharing my experience, ideas, and enthusiasm for the continued benefit of our association. Thank you for your support.

Director (three-year term)
Jost Zetzsche
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Few members of ATA have had a “traditional translation career,” and mine is no exception. But the various phases of my career have shaped my particular view of our profession, which in turn have led me to agree to become a candidate for ATA’s Board of Directors.

My Ph.D. thesis dealt with one of the greatest “localization” efforts ever: the history of the translation of the Bible into Chinese. Chinese Bible translation was a very painful process of transferring highly complex concepts into a target language that was one of the richest treasure chests of religious and philosophical terminology ever.

I learned about a very different kind of localization when I directed the translation operations of a fairly large translation and software localization provider in Bellingham, Washington. The contrast could not have been greater—from studying the several centuries it took to discuss the translation of a handful of terms in China, suddenly I was responsible for finding ways to turn out hundreds of pages of translation every few days.

Now, in my own small company that I co-founded four years ago, I am still looking for solutions that will optimize my translation work while at the same time raising its level of quality. Extensions of this are my work as a consultant for translation agencies and end clients and my “Tool Box” book that provides software guidance to freelance translators.

Out of all this have come two major themes I hope to address with my candidacy:

• A greater awareness and acceptance of technical and software solutions among translators and an increased effort to educate in this field; and

• A decrease in the division between the three major players in the translation industry: freelance translators, translation agencies, and “end clients” (i.e., the purchaser of the translation).

In my opinion, these two areas have a number of common denominators. Disagreements between freelance translators and agencies and/or end clients about how to implement computer-assisted translation tools increase the division, which will only grow as the discussion of ownership of secondary translated materials (i.e., translation memory databases, terminology databases, etc.) becomes more prevalent. ATA is well situated to be a mediator in these and other questions, and with my candidacy, I would like to encourage the association to take this position.

The recent changes in ATA accreditation, with the inclusion of the accreditation continuing education requirements, are a very positive step toward addressing my first area of concern, and I hope to be able to contribute to shaping the technical education that these will require.

I have benefited greatly from my years of ATA membership: through my accreditation as an English–German translator, numerous translation jobs via ATA’s website, and a number of seminars that I have taught at the Annual Conference and local ATA affiliates. It is an honor to have been nominated as a candidate for the Board, and I look forward to the possibility of giving something back.
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The Rudiments of Public Speaking

By Neil L. Inglis

Do you feel anxious about speaking in front of large groups? The days are long past when translators could afford to live like hermits. Increasingly, we must interact in open forums with business clients, students, and journalists. It is our duty—and also to our advantage—to educate the world and to correct misconceptions about translation and interpretation (T&I). Choose instead to hold your tongue and you are ceding the terrain to practitioners of misinformation who could harm your best interests.

Some do’s and don’ts hold true for translator and non-translator gatherings. There are commonsense tips that make the challenge easier. Even so, first-time speakers must conquer their nerves—and seasoned orators must steer clear of bad habits and stale material.

I will divide this discussion into the following topics: audience and delivery; structure and timing; delivery and content; humor and diplomacy; and technology.

Audience and Delivery

Public speaking is not an exercise in First Amendment expression or performance art. Self-discipline is vital. It may seem obvious, but the content of your presentation must be calibrated to your audience. Run through a simple checklist. Are you addressing the younger or older generation, or contemporaries? Fellow professionals? If students are involved, are we talking about postgraduate, college, high school, or younger? Speeches on (say) “healthcare” can and must differ depending on whether 20-somethings or Modern Maturity readers are in attendance. The composition and size of your audience will affect the length and structure of your presentation, choice of gags, etc. You must switch gears if your listeners are not who you expected or if their responses are disconcerting (see later section on reading from prepared notes).

By the same token, a non-homogeneous audience sets special traps for the speaker. If you are standing before a gathering comprised of 50% translators and 50% interpreters, your two groups have different needs and priorities and you must satisfy both. The same applies to separate subsets of those two main groups within your audience. Legal and medical interpreters don’t share all the same perspectives (they differ over whether the interpreter should serve as advocate for the person whose words are being interpreted). Even two different local translator groups meeting together for a convention can have sharply contrasting customs and values (one group may be anti-bureau, the other pro-corporate).

Sometimes a variegated audience can save your life. At a career day at a British university in 1992, I was relieved to have one mature student sitting in the front row. This was a lady nearing retirement age who asked pertinent questions, unlike the other slumbering undergraduates who had plainly lingered too long at the disco the evening before. By herself, this one mature student changed the entire tone of the event—for the better. (See Diplomacy and the section on putting your own questions to another speaker during the question-and-answer session.)

Audience restlessness is often a product of simple fatigue, specific to the day.

Structure and Timing

Ought you to adopt a highly structured approach, or should you be loose and extemporaneous? Audience composition is a key factor here. Equally critical in answering this question are the speaker’s own experience/comfort level and personal speaking style. If you read post-conference surveys of user satisfaction, expect to find comments from at least one audience member who insists upon a meticulously logical approach. Other spectators are more comfortable with digressions or outright free association. One technique is to advise your audience of your intended format in advance and then to deviate from it as your timeslot progresses (I did precisely that at the beginning of this article! See more on Delivery below).

Timing is another vital structural factor. An hour is a useful maximum. People don’t absorb data beyond that timeframe—certainly not without coffee breaks. In order to get in under the wire, you must be prepared to abandon cherished material—anecdotes you find rib-tickling may pass over your listeners’ heads.

When giving seminars to audiences drawn from other professions—even those with some language ability—how should you cope when faced with a mixed-needs situation? Participants may have contrasting expectations about the seminar outcome, or may struggle with certain aspects of the material. Make changes that are appropriate, but keep the focus on what is beneficial for your audience. Don’t be bounced into making changes out of panic.
Always spare a thought for the conference organizer (conferences do not organize themselves). You will earn the undying devotion of your facilitators if you adhere to your assigned time limit. Time discipline is a giant plus even in a loose and informal setting. For my first major speaking engagement to non-translators, I was allotted a maximum of 20 minutes and was warned I would be hooked offstage if I went overtime. You can do a lot with 20 minutes, but the clock runs swiftly. Back in my hotel room, I practiced my timing with a watch until I crammed my uncomfortably brisk delivery into 19 minutes and 50 seconds. But we stayed on schedule! At a different conference that same year, the moderator exercised no such discipline and was reduced to waving his watch piteously in the air such discipline and was reduced to waving his watch piteously in the air as conference delegates drifted off to lunch with the morning session incomplete.

**Delivery and Content**

**Spontaneity**

Especially with younger audiences, you must take command of your listeners right from the beginning and never let go.

A constant dilemma is whether or not to use prepared notes. My father, a famed public speaker and television broadcaster in the 1960s (All Our Yesterdays, Granada Television), wrote his own scripts. And yet, as a matter of personal choice, he relied undeviatingly on the so-called “idiot board” (an early teleprompter). He would not have uttered “good night” on television were those words not dangling before his eyes in bold, black letters. Sticking close to the prepared text can be a good idea on your maiden voyage into the treacherous waters of public speaking, especially if you are overcome with anxiety.

For your first public address, it is good to “go back home again” to a place, venue, or association with whom you have some prior connection. When I spoke to my postgraduate translation program in 1992, I was new to the speaking game and took precautions. I taped myself on a cassette in order to gauge my rhythms and identify awkward pauses and arch delivery. I found (as you will also) that audiences appreciate a well-prepared text and are generally kind. This all gets easier as time goes by and the nerves will fade, although, stage fright is no bad thing.

However, you will want to wean yourself from a text-based approach over time, as impromptu delivery will allow you to extemporize or adapt to unexpected audience composition or reactions. As my colleagues have mentioned in regard to speaking to schools, you must drop material that is tanking and be ready to linger over text that is striking an obvious chord with those in the room.

With good delivery and good material, all eyes are trained upon you. For that reason, at close quarters avoid unnecessary gesticulation (the gesture of penitence—slapping each opposite shoulder with your hands—is a common anxious tic and looks deeply unattractive in action replays). As we have said, nerves are okay, but keep them to yourself (my father kept his stage fright hidden by plucking his fingernails out of view).

There are many definitions of “public speaking.” One form of oratory, which also requires nerves of steel, arises when the tables are turned and you are the audience member asking questions during question-and-answer session after somebody else has been lecturing (grasping the mike is a useful way to shape the debate and influence the impressions which people take away with them when the day is done). Don’t be afraid to dive in—do so assertively! If you mentally prepare your comments, even a few seconds in advance, you need have no fear of looking foolish. The first time I “took the plunge” was with a UFO enthusiast who had been lecturing on his “abduction experiences” at a conference of skeptics (the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal [CSICOP]). My fellow audience members greeted my remarks with throaty cheers, which gave me a keen sense of empowerment. But challenging a controversial speaker when you are already a member of a hostile mob is no real act of bravery. Beware the “dog yapping at other drivers out of the back seat window” syndrome.

**Humor**

Disarming your listeners with humor is a fine icebreaker and can ease the tension wonderfully in those all-important early minutes. This ushers in a perennial debate in ATA circles—namely, whether or not to use translation bloopers to warm up your crowd. This subject is controversial. Many in ATA’s ranks are offended by the use of gross honkers in public speeches, arguing that such humor makes translators look like clowns. There is merit in this argument. Alas, your blooper stories have to be pretty unambiguous to succeed with youngsters and monoglot audiences. Different gags work better in spoken or written form. The following example would go better in a handout. Last year, the Plain English Campaign in the U.K. awarded a Golden Bull prize for an especially opaque nugget of corporate jargon.
“The benefit of having dedicated subject matter experts who are able to evangelise the attributes and business imperatives of their products is starting to bear fruit.”

Here you would linger over “evangelise” in order to extract full merriment from the gobbledygook.

The much-hated “NOVA” story (the car that doesn’t work) can have youngsters rolling in the aisles—kids love to get the joke! Don’t eschew surefire winners, but keep your witticisms in check, and at all times ensure that your blooper reel is fresh and accurate and not the stuff of urban legend.

Stand-up comedy, though essential, is another minefield. You do need gags to lubricate the proceedings and to keep the audience alert. Gentle self-deprecating humor is perfect for a Brit like me. In borderline cases, run a dubious joke by a trusted friend. Long-winded anecdotes and outrageous puns risk losing listeners from other cultures, who may tune out altogether. Some gags will be appreciated by some and not by others (political satire)—you can’t please all of the people all of the time. I have given talks that displeased the organizer and enthused everybody else (although this is not desirable). This leads us to the all-important issue of tact.

Diplomacy

Herein lies a major corollary to pleasing or displeasing the audience: how to deal with problem spectators? With a sleepy or unresponsive audience, identify the most detached-looking participants, and if you can bring them to life, the rest will follow. This technique also works with troublemakers who are smirking in the back row. Treat the ATA accreditation (soon to be “certification”) issue with extra care—the subject is guaranteed to elicit passionately long-winded reactions from at least one person. Keep your eye on the clock….

What if the nightmare happens and an audience member goes into meltdown? Here again I am reminded of an anecdote from the CSICOP conference. The late Carl Sagan had given a memorable keynote speech and then swatted away an irritating questioner with well-deserved firmness. The non-celebrity speakers among us must be more tactful in such cases, lest we are perceived as domineering and audience sympathies swing away from us. I tried this softly-softly approach with a guy at a history conference in Britain who went ballistic over a trifling detail in my prepared remarks. And guess what—today he and I are friends (well, sort of friends).

Technology

Handle technology with care. In 1996, I worked with the world’s best and worst microphones at events separated by a few days. At the 1996 Regional Conference in Washington, DC, a superb mike allowed me to quiet myself to a whisper or to harangue the congregation as necessary, thereby achieving optimal dynamic control at every step. Unfortunately, the equipment at my very next conference cracked with feedback and negated the points I wished to make. Though I successfully used portentous music (Bruckner’s 9th symphony, 4th movement) to preface my arrival onstage for my 1996 Regional Conference keynote address, such devices can misfire in the absence of proper preparation.

Instructors and trainers who work with audiovisual material—in addition to complying with applicable copyright restrictions—should review their tapes before using them in educational settings, especially when intended for non-English speakers. Through over-familiarity, they may remember their chosen footage as being crisp and clear, when in the classroom it turns out to be just the opposite. Compelling visuals can make up for poor-quality soundtracks, but only up to a point.

Technological gadgetry won’t save poor material, however. If your audience doesn’t like you, the game is over. You must have a heart, and your listeners must sense that. Of all the secret ingredients in public speaking, kindness is the one that counts.

Conclusion

I wish to close by stressing once again the vital importance of public outreach. If you’re willing to invest the thought and preparation required to follow these steps, you’ll achieve good results and raise your own profile along with the profession’s. Public speaking activities, even on a modest scale, can have tremendously positive ripple effects.
Controlling Project Churn: A Case for Reality-Based Project Management

By Kenneth (Sandy) McKethan, Jr.

“There is nothing in this world constant but inconstancy.”
—Jonathan Swift

Project churn happens, even with the best planning, even in the best of companies, even with well-intentioned managers. When such repetitive, disruptive project change does occur, what is its impact to budgets, schedules, and resources? How can one prepare for it? Can it be harnessed?

This article is aimed at enabling the busy globalization or translation project manager to plan realistically for change, and to even embrace change rather than to just brace for it. Identification and control will be shown as real responses to common sources of project change. This article will present a practical approach for quantifying and managing project churn. The intent is to equip the language professional to better set stakeholder expectations by more accurately factoring change into pricing, cost, and schedule planning.

As a globalization project manager, I should be accustomed to churn. Call me a control freak, but the fact is, I am not used to it. I will never be used to it. I have a real problem with it. To begin with, there’s entirely too much churn, and we need to be asking whether it is all really necessary. And be that as it may, churn takes too big a toll on human resources. Does anyone up there know or care about this impact?

Change is all around us. Consider those ever-changing styles of hair, clothing, autos, and just about everything else. What’s cool and sexy today becomes fodder for amusement of the next generation…if not sooner. Unless it gets recycled into cool retro.

Once there were Victrolas. Then there were 78 rpm records. Then there were 33½ rpm LP records. Then there were 45 rpm records. And an 8-track fits in there somewhere. MP3, what’s that?

…Choosing to control change puts us in the driver’s seat…

Change happens and its pace seems to be quickening. It seems harder and harder to keep up with the dizzying array of gadgets and software tools to master, the growing collections of user IDs and passwords (seriously, I must have three or four dozen of them), PINs, and other funky features that differ to a frustrating degree from manufacturer to manufacturer. You get my point!

We cope with change—usually. Responses vary with the individual. Some try to live in the past, ignoring change altogether. At the other extreme, some can hardly wait for the next change in style, gadgets, and autos. That’s the world in which we live.

And don’t look for relief from change at work, since for most of us, things are even worse on the job. In fact, today’s typical work environment subjects us to constant change regardless of the field. The workplaces many of us deal with are often downright chaotic. We are forced to deal with kaleidoscopic changes in technology, upgrades, goals, and methodologies.

Project Churn Happens: Get Over It

But it’s not just the times and the technologies that are changing. Projects also change. In his project management classic, The Mythical Man-Month, Dr. Frederick P. Brooks, Jr. put it this way: “Not only are changes in objective inevitable, changes in development strategy and technique are also inevitable” (Ref. 1). From my own experience, these changes sometimes occur mid-project, invariably when least expected. And as likely, they occur multiple times during the course of what begins as a totally routine project. And without fail, even just after you have spent considerable time adjusting to the previous set of changes!

We are all familiar with these realities. We also know that this churn takes a huge toll on us mere mortals. It also impacts schedules, costs, and, dare we say it, the quality of our work as well.

Resultant overtime is just quietly tolerated to get the job done and never shows up on anyone’s radar screen. Highly touted corporate mantras about balancing work and family go unheeded.

It stands to reason that for the project manager, handling this added load can be tantamount to having an additional project. Yet, the reality is that the proverbial pie remains only so big: there are just so many resources to go around, a finite number of hours in the day.

Less obvious is the fact that the toll of project churn typically goes unaccounted for. Intentionally or not, churn is not tracked nor factored into the scheme of things. In fact, your manager probably has only the vaguest awareness of its impact.

A Personal Quest for Churn Containment

Let me now share with you my personal quest for the control and containment of project churn. I started with these questions:
• Why do we have project churn?
• Is project churn inevitable?
• Can it be measured?
• Can it be factored into project planning?
• Can it be contained?

Also, do we even want to measure, let alone contain, churn? I mean, this can entail political ramifications. For instance, being able to quantify project churn may expose inadequate resources to get the job done. In some corporate environments, such additional considerations may not necessarily be welcome up the management chain. The Book of Genesis account of Pharaoh and the bricks comes to mind. You will maintain quotas and quality. And, oh, by the way, you will do so without the benefit of one of the prime components, straw. Happily, my present employer is not like that!

But some may elect to bury this kind of extra churn-related effort. Do we really want to know? What will change if we do know?

Some industries are more susceptible to churn than others. Driven by short product life cycles, the worst offender is no doubt the software industry, which is where I now work. My present job environment poses a huge contrast to the almost leisurely schedules I often enjoyed in my previous life as a freelance translator in such fields as power plant engineering, pharmaceuticals, and furniture hardware!

I manage internationalization (internationalized product design) and localization of user interfaces and publications from U.S. English into nine basic languages for assigned projects. In our parlance, internationalization (118N) plus localization (110N) equals globalization (G11N). Our key target date is the Release To Manufacturing (RTM) date. By corporate mandate, RTM delivers a simultaneous release of the U.S. English and localized product versions. Deviations are few. Availability of localized publications must follow within 90 days.

Think of the work involved, especially on large-scale projects, when you have to go back and replan and renegotiate the majority or the entire original plan! Consider the hours required to respin the various planning pieces and multiply this by the number of times the project changes.

There is also the energy it takes to go back and redo something I thought I had done thoroughly to begin with! I used to hate reworking a piece of translation after completion. Maybe you can relate to the context switching that compounds an already heavy load of multitasking. I heartily agree with Johanna Rothman that “…context switching demands more time and energy than you think…No matter how efficient you think you are, multitasking comes with a high cost. Because we’re people, we don’t swap out the content of our brains as easily as a computer does…” (Ref. 3).

And here’s another impact: the hit to your reputation as a project manager! Like it or not, you can become a victim of guilt by association. No matter how you explain it, regardless of who is at fault, some of the blame rubs off onto you, calling into question your planning skills and possibly jeopardizing your vendor relationships.

After all, why should vendors earmark resources for your next project if your schedules are never solid? The word gets around amongst translators about a certain company or project, and soon you hear: “I’ll only take on that work as a last resort.” Sound familiar?

Churn impacts resource planners, project managers, translators, right on down to editors, all trying to allocate their resources and available time. Worst of all, the hapless project manager is caught in the middle. The inescapable irony here, though, is that coping with project churn and producing multiple project respins should actually have the effect of enhancing one’s project management skills!

In his excellent book, Software Project Survival Guide, Steve McConnell says: “Because of changing markets and evolving technology, software project feature sets amount to moving targets” (Ref. 2).

Regardless of how susceptible the software industry may be to change, I was convinced that something could be done to mitigate, to gauge the impact, or at least to show that I was not totally misguided in my observations.

**Up from the Victim Mentality**

I ran across several timely rays of hope in McConnell’s book, “…Some movement is inevitable; other movement can be controlled…” (Ref. 2). It gets better. McConnell actually challenges us to take charge: “…controlling changes as an integral part of project planning is critical to project success…As Gene Forte says, ‘change control’ is in marked contrast to ‘change surrender’” (Ref. 2).

Seen another way, what McConnell is telling us is: Not only can we, we must control project churn. The project manager cannot afford to be driven along by the winds of change. This boils down to: control or be controlled. It is just that simple.

This reminds me of my flight instructor’s stern admonition some time ago: You make this airplane go where you want it to go, otherwise it will control you. McConnell empowers us to opt for the former. Are we feeling empowered yet? McConnell continues: “Change control allows all necessary changes to be made while ensuring that change...
impacts are understood projectwide [sic.]” (Ref. 2).

So, it all comes down to choices: change control is a conscious choice. Choosing to control change puts us into the driver’s seat. In turn, this gives us options—we can make necessary changes and understand the impact from these changes. By implication, understanding the impact caused by change may have the effect of curbing the amount of change. We really do need to understand these impacts and to look where we’re going!

It is important to remember that each and every time you have to go back and redo, retouch, respin all or part of your plan, there is an impact, a cost. This translates into inefficiencies.

But how can we understand these impacts unless we measure them? Basic to understanding the impact of change is the measurement of its impact to available resources, to the schedule, cost, and to the scope of a project. It follows that ignorance of the impact of change makes us its victim. This is all about shedding the victim mentality.

More often than not, though, we have no tools to gauge the impact of change. Like accident investigators, we have to sift through the wreckage for clues at postmortem time. Our lack of tools leaves us exposed and relegated to a reactive, defensive stance.

Wanted: A Few Good Yardsticks

Early in my quest, I made the assumption that metrics trump the stopwatch. Let me explain. Obviously, the most accurate way to gauge project churn would be to use a stopwatch or a detailed time log. Every time something about the project changes that requires me to go back and retouch, replan, recalculate, or respin, I would simply measure the time it took me to do this. But the stopwatch approach is completely impractical for the busy project management professional.

Besides, since most of us are constantly in multitasking mode, even a so-called efficiency expert would probably be hard-pressed to produce meaningful measurements. So, driven by a combination of desperation, self-preservation instinct, and more than a little hard-headedness, I set out on my quest for meaningful change metrics. The objective was to determine the additional time that would be required to redo a task due to project churn, over and above the initial planning cycle. My resources included recently acquired Project Manager Professional (PMP) certification training, consultations with my former PMP training instructor, and heuristics that I collected from globalization project manager (GPM) peers across IBM’s Tivoli globalization.

Our Case Study

For this case study, I selected a software globalization project that had been particularly troublesome from the early stages. The impetus to take a snapshot came after numerous changes to the project’s scope and schedule. By that time, I had been the GPM for well over a year.

Here’s the high-level, non-inclusive damage assessment of the selected project taken mid-project. This snapshot shows the level of change accrued up to that point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTM dates:</th>
<th>1 official, 6 candidates, 1 to be determined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project slip:</td>
<td>7 months and counting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan decision checkpoints:</td>
<td>3 and counting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translatable user interface scope creep:</td>
<td>2.5 times the original projection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, even the product name changed a few times. By any measurement, this is a lot of churn!

For us, each project change typically involves the following task repeats: going back to get new input from all stakeholders, cross-verifying new dates, confirming available resources internally and with vendors, updating plans and schedules, and finally, going back through formal plan approval processes required by ISO and good project management practice.

Aux armes, Camarades!

Here’s what I did. We had long since captured our globalization management process in a detailed checklist. This checklist resides in a Microsoft Project file. From this rather comprehensive checklist, I selected a subset of 18 tasks from the checklist Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). I then distributed these 18 tasks to GPM peers across Tivoli, asking that they provide their best experience-based estimate of the time that would be required to go back and retouch each task in response to project change. For each task, I asked for best, worst, and most likely time estimates per task. Note: these were not initial task creation times at the start of the project, but only retouch times.

I averaged their input for each of the three cases by task. This provided an average best, worst, and most likely figure for each task. At this point, I plugged these three cases into Microsoft Project for Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) analysis. PERT provides a weighted average per task. I used the default weighting factors.

Metrics Reloaded

This provided me with an...
Empirically based time yardstick for each selected task. For example, the derived task time required to respin an overall globalization schedule totaled 1.62 project management days.

From there, it was easy enough to do the math on this project to summarize the cumulative impact resulting from change. To determine the churn impact for our project, I selected only three examples from the larger subset of 18 project management tasks. This was sufficient to make the point. The results (PERT Metrics) are given in Table 1.

This means 35 extra project management days just for three tasks! One has to wonder about the total impact from 18 or more changed tasks. This is only part of the picture, but you get the point. This is like being responsible for an entire additional project, one that is beneath radar detection.

Qualifiers:
1) The project chosen for the study is admittedly somewhat atypical, an extreme example which lends it ideally to my quest.

2) The project is still not completed; the impacts continue.

3) Our study captured only a subset of a subset of the project management tasks.

4) Our study did not address the impact of initial planning, only re-work.

5) Our study addresses only G11N. Impacts to such areas as product planning, marketing, documentation, and testing are not reflected.

I should hasten to add that valid technical reasons drove much of the churn with this leading edge technology.

**Application**

The above was our initial project study. Where do we go from here to apply this metrics tool? One possibility is to fold it into an existing G11N project management tool that exists in another IBM division. To that end, I am currently working with my counterparts in the other division.

But this metrics tool has applicability beyond globalization. A broader benefit is evident. In fact, it is applicable to any project management activity.

As a globalization or translation project manager, as a project coordinator, as a translator, whatever your role, if your projects are constantly changing under you, you need to understand the impact. Why? You can factor it into schedule and cost planning. This knowledge also empowers you to set realistic expectations with all stakeholders, especially your customers.

Your first job is to generate a WBS task list, then plug in your heuristics, run your numbers, and then survey your piece of the damage. No doubt, you will be as surprised as I was.

This exercise may even help you get those additional resources that you sense you need, but are unable to justify. I had the blessing of management because they needed facts for realistic headcount projections. This may not always be the case, however. In some environments, there are political ramifications in that attaching numbers to project churn may expose the fact that inadequate resources were allocated to get the job done.

Lastly, it may be that determining the facts about your extra efforts will produce changes to your environment. But at a minimum, you will derive some measure of satisfaction. It should enable you to reset your own expectations to more realistic levels. In turn, this should help reduce frustration and stress levels, while providing a sanity check.

**Surrender is Not an Option**

Let me close with a parting comment from our friend, Steve McConnell: “…controlling changes as an integral part of project planning is critical to project success [emphasis mine]” (Ref. 2).

You must control. And in order to control, you must measure. Good luck!

**Notes:**


A Guide to Navigating the Federal Marketplace for Interpreters and Translators

By Brenda S. Sprague

Professional linguists have read with interest newspaper articles outlining the federal government’s desperate need for assistance with foreign languages. However, despite the documented need, both professional and “would-be” linguists are frustrated by their inability to “sell their services” to the government. How exactly can a linguist navigate his or her way through the federal marketplace?

The federal marketplace does offer exciting and rewarding challenges for the professional linguist. The keys to success are research, acceptability, and reliability.

The federal government has been seeking the assistance of foreign language experts since the earliest days of the republic. In 1789, when Thomas Jefferson was establishing the State Department as the first cabinet agency, the very first employee was Mr. Philip Freneau, an interpreter and translator of French and Spanish. The legendary explorers Lewis and Clark would never have explored the territories of the Louisiana Purchase without the able assistance of Sacagawea, the Native American interpreter who accompanied them on their adventures.

The U.S. government has long recognized the importance of languages. Unfortunately, this recognition has frequently occurred only when the country has been confronted with a national emergency requiring language support, and not because of a long-term commitment to developing and retaining foreign language assets.

The federal government has discovered the importance of languages in the past several years. Not surprisingly, the tragedy of 9/11 has brought the issue the greatest media attention. However, for more than a decade several significant trends have pushed the government to re-examine and refocus its attention upon obtaining assistance in responding to foreign language needs. These include the globalization of the world economy, the increasing diversity of American life and culture, and the compelling national interest in promoting American ideals and values in the developing world.

National security has always been the primary motivator for seeking foreign language expertise. The intelligence community is faced with an unprecedented flow of information about political, economic, and military events around the world. Policy analysts are overwhelmed by the requirements to have these materials reviewed, summarized, and sometimes translated so that policymakers can make the best informed decisions to ensure the security of the American people.

The intelligence community has been the most enthusiastic sponsor of research and development for automated tools to assist analysts in screening the flood of information that crosses their desks every day. These tools permit analysts to direct their attention to items of the greatest interest and importance. It is, however, generally conceded that automated tools provide, at most, a “rough cut” translation. A human translator must then carefully review the documents that are deemed to be of interest before the analyst can have any confidence about the importance and meaning of the material.

National security also requires the ability to communicate with other governments and peoples, including those who do not speak English. At the highest level, the responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of both oral and written communication is placed with the gifted interpreters and translators of the State Department’s Office of Language Services. In addition to the approximately 45 staff interpreters and translators, the Office relies upon a roster of approximately 2,000 freelance linguists working in more than 40 languages.

A major thrust of U.S. language policy is foreign language training for U.S. officials who will directly interface with foreign governments and officials. Both civilian and military agencies devote significant resources to training Americans in the languages they will need to properly represent U.S. interests both at home and abroad. Language training is designed to meet the needs of individuals at every level, from survival skills requiring a vocabulary of several hundred words to the training of future diplomats who will be able to defend U.S. policy and ideas at televised media events.

One of the major objectives of language training is preparing U.S. government officials to advance U.S. trade objectives worldwide. However, the globalization of the economy consists of more than selling U.S. products and services abroad. It involves the protection of U.S. businesses and labor from unfair business practices. It involves the preservation of the environment from rapacious and opportunistic...
interests. It involves ensuring the safety of products sold in the U.S. It involves the rapid dissemination of information about threats to public health and sharing the latest data on the success or failure of medical responses to these threats. The various types of technical information require skilled and versatile linguists who can quickly research and master the arcane vocabularies of these critical issues. Interpreters, and especially translators, are the key to maintaining the flow of information to the widest audiences. Virtually every agency of the federal government now has a program involving overseas activities, since all problems now have a global dimension.

Back at home, the diverse American landscape requires its own foreign language skills. Although there is virtually unanimous support for the use of English as the universal language, there is also recognition that many newly arrived immigrants impact upon the society before they have mastered the English language. Much of the burden for assisting with this transition falls upon schools and social services. However, the greatest burden may fall upon the law enforcement community and the courts, which must ensure equal access to the protection of the U.S. Constitution.

Not surprisingly, federal law enforcement activities, in addition to the federal court system, rely heavily upon linguists to assist them in the discharge of their responsibilities. Indeed, law enforcement agencies procure a far greater volume of linguistic services on the open market than traditional foreign affairs agencies.

The laundry list of foreign language needs of federal agencies highlights one of the most important characteristics of the federal marketplace—its diversity. The linguistic needs of the State Department are dramatically different from those of the federal law enforcement community. The federal procurement official attempts to articulate and publicize the requirements of his or her agency in a manner that is exactly tailored to the specific duties to be performed. One size does not fit all.

The requirement for assistance with foreign languages is an area that is particularly well suited for a partnership with the private market. Although many agencies have a small cadre of staff linguists, most requirements are met through competitive sourcing in the private market. Many agencies prefer to work with individual freelance professionals whose expertise and competence can be verified. However, firms specializing in language support activities frequently compete for larger scale projects and long-term needs.

Research
The articles outlining the paucity of linguistic services might lead the reader to believe that government agencies are beating the bushes to find talent. Notwithstanding the urgency of the government’s needs, the private firm must learn to navigate through the procurement system to locate business opportunities. The best place to start any research is at www.fedbizopps.gov. Also of interest are the General Services Administration’s (GSA) languages services schedules. These schedules are a procurement vehicle that permits agencies to select a vendor through a simple comparison of rates rather than through a full-scale competitive process. The schedule simplifies the process, but may not always permit vendors to appropriately highlight the special skills and expertise that distinguish their products and personnel from those of their rivals. Details about these schedules can be located at www.gsa.gov.

Acceptability
The successful interpreter or translator must carefully review the contract requirements and tailor his or her proposal to respond exactly to the requirements. However, one must exercise special caution to present an accurate, albeit positive and enthusiastic, portrayal of capabilities. One of the greatest mistakes a competitor for a federal contract can make is to promise a service he or she cannot deliver. If a contractor misrepresents his or her capabilities and then fails to deliver, the non-performance can be treated as a fraudulent business practice leading to debarment from federal contracts or civil or criminal penalties.

There is a special risk for linguists because the contracting officer procuring the services is almost never the user of the services. It can be difficult to be fully competitive when the requirements are unclear or unrealistic. Any proposal should carefully document the recommended approach to a task, even if the requirements are not presented in the customary manner. Procurement officials rely upon competitors to highlight problems or oversights in the solicitation document that could negatively impact upon the success of the effort.

Reliability
Competition is the linchpin of the federal procurement system. The government defines its needs in a public solicitation document in which the evaluation factors will be stated.

Continued on p.30
Interpretation and Justice

By Laura Esther Wolfson

At the June 2003 Board meeting, the ATA Board unanimously approved the following statement. Subsequent to Board approval, the two most serious charges involving terrorism were dropped against Mohamed Yousry and the attorney involved in this case.

The ATA Board of Directors wish to inform the membership and other interested parties of the following series of events. These events will be of interest to the language services community and have implications for practitioners of judicial interpreting.

In April 2002, U.S. Justice Department-approved Arabic interpreter Mohamed Yousry was indicted by the U.S. Justice Department for allegedly aiding and abetting in acts of terrorism. The alleged violations occurred while he was providing Arabic language services for attorney Lynne Stewart. Stewart was on the defense team for Abdel Rahman, also known as the blind shaykh, who was convicted and imprisoned for his involvement in the Holland Tunnel bombing case. Stewart was indicted at the same time as Yousry.

The association is not in possession of all the facts in the case and does not take a position regarding Yousry’s innocence or guilt. However, the association is following the case closely and with great interest. In this context, ATA is concerned that the role of the court or judicial interpreter be clearly understood by those involved in this case.

A judicial interpreter, whether hired by the courts or by one or another side in a legal case, conveys information either orally or through the use of sign language between two languages to facilitate communication across the language barrier. He or she does so in a neutral fashion, without adding to or subtracting from the original message.

In the words of the Interpreter Code of Ethics of the Community and Court Interpreters of Ohio Valley, a member of the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification, “The interpreter must…repeat faithfully and exactly the meaning of what is said without adding, omitting, altering, or summarizing anything spoken or written…this includes accuracy of style or register of speech and non-distortion of meaning, even if it appears obscene, incoherent, nonresponsive, or a misstatement.”

The interpreter expresses no opinions, either orally or through body language, about the content of the messages conveyed, and in no way edits messages, even those he or she disagrees with or considers inaccurate or unethical. An interpreter may be aware that a defendant or witness for whom he or she is interpreting is telling falsehoods, but the ethics of judicial interpreting forbid the interpreter from intervening or informing the other party to the discussion that the interlocutor is lying. The interpreter should not even respond when counsel asks whether he or she thinks the interlocutor is lying. This is well established in judicial interpreting precedent. The judicial interpreter is not a lawyer, jurist, or legal expert, and is not expected to know if the communication he or she is facilitating is, in itself, illegal. The mere fact of interpreting a message which is illegal does not implicate the interpreter, though it may implicate the parties for whom he or she is interpreting. (For more information on judicial interpreting ethics, see the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators: www.najit.org/ethics.html).

Therefore, if Yousry’s involvement in this case was limited to carrying out his job responsibilities of interpreting between Arabic and English and sight translation of documents—and again, ATA does not know whether or not this is the case—then he cannot be held criminally or legally responsible for the content of the message.

Yousry is not an ATA member. His case is expected to go to trial sometime in 2004, but no date has yet been set. He is currently out on bail, posted by a translation firm for which he continues to work regularly.

For more information on this case, a detailed article by Maya Hess (“Translation on Trial”) appears in this issue.

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Translation on Trial

By Maya Hess

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily represent the official position of ATA and the ATA Board of Directors.

What reads like some leftover encryption from the Cold War era is actually a mundane Department of Motor Vehicles list of license plate numbers—more precisely, license plate numbers belonging to FBI cars. These FBI cars, however, are not on the tail of some Armani-clad Mafiosi cooking up their next construction or garbage-hauling scam, or Ray-Ban-bespectacled drug dealers cruising in their black BMWs on the lookout for new business.

The truth is hardly as cinematic. Rather, it seems the FBI has chosen a much less glamorous target, turning its attention to one of the more behind-the-scenes, legitimate, and utilitarian professions: they are busy shadowing translators and interpreters.

This latest governmental pursuit—which, at times, has resulted in an entourage of three surveillance cars parading through the streets of Manhattan—suggests a comedy rather than an action-packed drama. The story behind one of the casualties of the Bureau’s investigation, however, evinces anything but laughter.

The victim is Mohamed Yousry, a Justice Department-approved Arabic translator and interpreter. On April 9, 2002, he was arrested, indicted, and charged along with three other defendants. The counts against him were: 1) that he “unlawfully, willfully, and knowingly provided and attempted to provide, material support and resources…to a foreign terrorist organization, to wit, IG;” 2) that he “unlawfully, willfully, and knowingly provided and attempted to provide, material support and resources…to a foreign terrorist organization, to wit, IG;” 3) that he “unlawfully, willfully, and knowingly combined, conspired, confederated and agreed together and with…other[s] to defraud…the lawful and legitimate functions of the United States Department of Justice and its agency, the Bureau of Prisons, in the

...Given that intelligence agencies already suffer from a critical shortage of linguistic professionals, the persecution of Arabic interpreters does not bode well for the War on Terrorism...

In its indictment, the government goes on to specify that in his capacity as interpreter, Mr. Yousry was “covertly passing messages between IG representatives and Shaykh [Omar] Abdel Rahman relating to IG’s activities.”

Before exploring how Mr. Yousry fell out of the government’s favor, it is important to know how he got involved in the first place. To that end, let me introduce some of the players. Among them are four attorneys—Lynne Stewart, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Abdeen Jabara, and Lawrence Schilling—who represent the Shaykh, an Egyptian cleric presently serving a life sentence after his conviction in a plot to blow up New York City landmarks. Shaykh Abdel Rahman is considered one of the leaders of the Islamic Group, or al-Gama’ah al-Islamiyya, an extremist Egyptian social movement designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. government. In order to communicate with their client, Ramsey Clark had hired Mohamed Yousry to serve as translator and interpreter for the U.S. legal team. In this position, Mr. Yousry was asked to go to the lawyers’ offices on a regular basis to interpret weekly phone calls between the Shaykh and his attorneys and to accompany them on occasional prison visits.

Additionally, there is Ahmed Abdel Sattar, who served as the Shaykh’s paralegal during his trial, throughout the appeals phase, and in the legal team’s continued representation of the Shaykh.

The government’s indictment in the case at hand—U.S. v. Sattar et al.—cites four individuals: Ahmed Abdel Sattar, Yassir al-Sirri (a Muslim activist residing in London), Lynne Stewart, and Mohamed Yousry. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on the latter two defendants only. Let’s start with the case against Ms. Stewart. It stems from the fact that she had to submit an affidavit to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York in which she agreed to abide by the terms of the Special Administrative Measures (SAM) applicable to Shaykh Abdel Rahman. This SAM agreement stipulated, among other things, that Ms. Stewart “shall only be accompanied by translators for the purpose of communication with inmate Abdel Rahman concerning legal matters”; and that she shall not “use [her] meetings, correspondence, or phone calls...
with Abdel Rahman to pass messages between third parties (including, but not limited to, the media) and Abdel Rahman.12 Ms. Stewart admitted in a CBS 60 Minutes interview with Mike Wallace that she made a mistake by signing the SAM and that she does not consider going public with a press release to be an “indictable offense.”13 When asked in a subsequent interview with Greta van Susteren on Fox Television’s On the Record why she didn’t go through regular channels and challenge the constitutionality of the SAM agreement in court, she answered that such a step had been in preparation, but had to be timed carefully, and that to bring a lawsuit right after 9/11 would have been ill-advised.4

Where is Mohamed Yousry in all this? How can an interpreter get swept up in a federal conspiracy indictment and stand accused of aiding and abetting terrorism? To understand, one must examine the role of the interpreter and how it relates to the allegations set forth above.

According to the Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices of the American Translators Association, an interpreter serves as “a bridge from one language to another and one culture to another....”14 He commits to translating “the original message faithfully, to satisfy the needs of the end-user(s).”15 Applied to the situation at hand, the “end-user(s)” would be the imprisoned Shaykh on the one hand and the attorney or other members of the legal team on the other, and the dialogue between these two parties would constitute the “original message.”

It is obviously an inherent part of an interpreter’s job description to pass messages back and forth in the designated languages. The interpreter does not pick and choose what messages he translates, but simply facilitates communication between the end-users by providing the necessary language skills. In doing so, he seeks “to conserve all the elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language.”16 The format of such messages he is asked to convey may range from letters, media accounts, and other assorted materials to question-and-answer sessions and legal strategy conferences, which may include political discussions. As far as the content of these messages is concerned, the interpreter bears no responsibility, no matter how incendiary it may be, and it is certainly not his role to opine. His duty solely consists of carefully and precisely rendering the messages from one language into another.

Keeping in mind the preceding definition of the interpreter’s function, it is clear that Mr. Yousry is an unfortunate victim of the attorney’s judgment call. To illustrate this point, let us look at the alleged misdeed. The inmate dictated a text to the interpreter in Arabic and the interpreter related this text in English to the attorney. If the attorney subsequently decided to go public with this material, in violation of the SAM agreement, the interpreter played no part in that decision. He cannot be expected to anticipate or second-guess an attorney’s actions. Moreover, the interpreter’s job description does not entail questioning the motives or strategic choices of an attorney—he is neither qualified nor in any position to do so.

Medical translators are familiar with medical expressions and procedures, but that does not make them doctors or a party to medical decisions. Likewise, court interpreters are experienced in legal terminology, but that does not make them lawyers or litigators nor are they privy to why an attorney chooses one legal strategy over another. In the prosecution’s mind, however, linguistically connecting point A with point B makes the interpreter a co-conspirator. This designation might be accurate if one were applying the meaning of the original Latin word consiprare—as in, breathing or drawing breath together; otherwise, this label is simply absurd.

Besides, any exchange of information between the attorney and the client presumably took place within the confines of a confidential attorney-client conversation, which is a Sixth Amendment-protected right. The interpreter operated as an undisputed extension of this attorney-client privilege. In this context, the allegation of “covertly passed messages” is simply illogical. If a conversation is confidential, why would a message have to be passed covertly? The government’s “spy lingo” is apparently intended to evoke James Bond images that are far removed from reality.

In addition to all these elements, it is simply baffling that Mr. Yousry was the only interpreter to be cleared and approved every 90 days by the very same Justice Department that subsequently hauled him into court. If the government was so concerned that this particular interpreter was conspiring, why didn’t they just withhold their approval and request someone else? Why did they approve him year after year over the course of several years? Or, alternatively, why didn’t they rotate a roster of interpreters to avoid running the risk that any one of them would get too chummy with the inmate? But the government chose to do no such thing.

Instead, they conducted a slew of operations that are straight out of a Grisham thriller. There was not only constant car surveillance—which can get very bothersome, especially...
when FBI cars take up multiple parking spaces (a precious commodity in New York City). The FBI also went through Mr. Yousry’s garbage, leaving him with the cleanest cans in the neighborhood. They then engaged in their so-called “sneak-and-peek policy”—the entering of premises without a warrant—and rummaged ever so clumsily through his and his family’s belongings, obviously none too concerned with the legality of their undertakings. On one occasion, two agents visited Mr. Yousry at York College, where he taught Modern Middle Eastern History as an adjunct professor. They introduced themselves as students and stated they wished to audit his lecture based on the recommendation of the preeminent Orientalist scholar, Bernard Lewis. This struck Mr. Yousry as odd as he had never met Mr. Lewis. He subsequently informed his visitors that he was giving a test that day and, therefore, they would not benefit greatly from sitting in on his class; they insisted, but Mr. Yousry turned them away.

The most extreme incident by far, though, occurred after September 11 and prior to the indictment, when two FBI agents visited Mr. Yousry while he was on assignment at ABC television providing Arabic translation services. The agents indicated that they needed to speak with him and invited him to the coffee shop across the street from ABC’s headquarters. Over English Breakfast tea, a detective with the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorist Task Force and a Special Agent with the FBI offered him roughly $1.5 million to work with the FBI. They mentioned that the amount would get adjusted to the cost of living index and that they would make him a rich man. Mr. Yousry rejected their offer.

It is truly unfortunate that conscientiously doing your job, adhering to your profession’s code of conduct, and making proper ethical choices can get you in the hot seat nowadays if you happen to work on a controversial case. The current indictment essentially penalizes Mr. Yousry for being the language interpreter for a lawyer defending social pariahs.

In the bigger picture, given that intelligence agencies already suffer from a critical shortage of linguistic professionals, especially those proficient in Middle Eastern languages, the persecution of Arabic interpreters does not bode well for the War on Terrorism. Who would dare work for defense attorneys in terrorist cases after this latest government overreach? What sane interpreter is willing to risk 25 years in jail for doing his or her job?

Update: Since the initial writing of this article, the judge dismissed the two terrorism counts against Mr. Yousry. However, he is still facing the charge that he defrauded the Bureau of Prisons by violating the SAM agreement. Considering that Mr. Yousry was never a party to that agreement inasmuch as he was never required to sign it, it is hard to imagine on what legal, let alone logical, basis the prosecution will argue this count.

End Notes
1. Indictment 02 Cr. by the United States District Court, Southern District of New York: United States of America v. Ahmed Abdel Sattar, Yassir al-Sirri, Lynne Stewart, and Mohamed Yousry.
2. Bureau of Prisons, Special Administrative Measures Affirmation.

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.
Fostering an Industry in Crisis: Canada Promotes the Interpretation Profession

By Suzanne Defoy and Michel Parent

Despite a shrinking supply of qualified personnel, Canadian government organizations, like those in other countries, have a healthy demand for top-notch interpreters to work events ranging from international summits and legislative debates to private meetings between heads of state. In response, the Translation Bureau, Canada’s largest language services provider, is spearheading a massive promotion campaign in a bid to attract young people to the profession and enhance the skills of existing professionals.

The campaign features a multi-pronged program designed to raise awareness among language students and university counsellors about the rewards that a career in interpretation can bring. Plus, a two-year internship program helps new graduates kick-start their careers by giving them the opportunity to acquire better skills and more experience. The Translation Bureau hopes its efforts will not only attract 120 interpreters to the profession over the next 10 years, but that the project will ensure the Bureau’s ability to continue to provide these services satisfactorily to its own government clientele.

The Translation Bureau is a public agency mandated to provide interpretation, translation, terminology, and other language services to Canadian government organizations. Part of that mandate includes promoting a healthy Canadian language industry in order to fulfill government requirements for these services.

Since Canada’s government conducts all of its affairs in the country’s two official languages (English and French), the demand for language services in this country is high and increasing each year. This growth is compelling the government to recognize the health of the Canadian language industry as a priority.

Last year alone, the Translation Bureau provided approximately 22,000 person-days of interpretation services to its government clients. These services are provided by some 75 full-time interpreters, as well as by members of the freelance community on contract. Bureau policy is to award contracts solely to accredited interpreters. Accreditation is obtained through Bureau-approved testing.

In addition to English and French, the Bureau’s services feature languages from around the world, including Canadian aboriginal and sign language. For these services, the Bureau relies more heavily on contracted work.

Current statistics show that while Canadian interpreters are poised to retire in flocks (more than half will go in the next 10 years), only a handful are joining the profession. In response to these statistics, the growth in demand for language services, and its dependence on the freelance market, the Bureau has stepped up its efforts to replenish the industry.

Attracting a New Guard

Since there are several stakeholders in the industry, the Translation Bureau is leading a partnership with academia, professional associations, and other levels of government (in Canada, we have a federal government, provinces, territories, and municipalities). Together, they actively recruit among translators, translation students, unaccredited interpreters, and legal or community interpreters. Experienced interpreters conduct workshops outlining the opportunities, rewards, and education requirements for careers in interpretation. A related education campaign targets career counsellors in order to give them the knowledge they need to recommend interpretation to students with an interest and aptitude.

Early next year, the partners will launch a new youth-friendly website designed to support their recruitment efforts. The site will feature an interactive demonstration designed to give users a “hands-on” glimpse into life as an interpreter.

Kick-Starting Careers

To help new graduates gain experience, the Bureau has sponsored a partnership program with the University of Ottawa, the only university in Canada to teach simultaneous and consecutive interpretation. The Bureau provides the university with interpreters for one full-time and two part-time professor positions every year. Graduates of the program who have a master’s degree in conference interpretation are hired on at the Bureau for a two-year internship.

During the first four months of their contract, interns are given additional training and assigned to various conferences as a silent member of an interpretation team. Here, they listen and learn from seasoned interpreters. After taking an exam, the interns are then assigned, depending on their abilities and interests, to one of two sectors: Parliament (Canada’s legislative house) or conferences. At the end of the two years, interns can be taken on staff if positions are available. If not, they can join the freelance market as
experienced, government-accredited interpreters.

This program targets English and French interpreters, which are in highest demand in Canada. However, a similar program for other languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese, is in the works.

**Interpreting the Future**

Like other countries, Canada is grappling with a sharp decline in the number of qualified interpreters. The Translation Bureau is hoping that through its efforts and those of its partners, the industry's future will soon look brighter.

**Canada’s Translation Bureau—a Quick Profile**

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**A Guide to Navigating the Federal Marketplace for Interpreters and Translators**

Continued from page 24

Normally, procurement officials base their decisions on both the price and the quality of the proposal. The best proposal is not always the least expensive. No performance standard will tolerate a sloppy product, however inexpensive it might be. On the other hand, the government will not purchase a boutique service when a less expensive option will meet the mission requirement.

The federal government is looking for competent and reliable sources of foreign language support services. Taking advantages of the varied opportunities requires a nimble and energetic approach. The rewards extend beyond the monetary and professional. Working for the federal government permits the linguist to give the gift of his or her language abilities for the benefit of all Americans.

Corrections to the 2003 Membership Directory

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<tr>
<td>2250 King Court, #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Luis Obispo, CA 93401</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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**From the President**

Continued from page 7

(www.atanet.org/conf2003) for the latest information and to register if you have not already done so. The page has been expanded from previous years, so be sure to take some time to explore it. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact ATA Headquarters at ata.atanet.org or (703) 683-6100.

See you in Phoenix!

**Job Exchange at the American Translators Association 44th Annual Conference**

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<td>Fri, Nov 7 10am-6pm</td>
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<td>Sat, Nov 8 9am-2pm</td>
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Can’t attend in person?

Complete the form at www.atanet.org/jobexchange.htm

(a benefit for ATA members)
Ethics and Medical Interpretation: The Value of a Pre-Session

By Zarita Araújo-Lane and Vonessa A. Phillips

The publication of the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA) Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice in 1996 raised the bar of professionalism in medical interpreting at a nationwide level. As a result of their widespread adoption, the MMIA Standards now exercise pervasive influence in the comportment of a multitude of trained medical interpreters.

For example, well-trained interpreters familiar with the MMIA Standards will refuse tips or gifts of value offered in conjunction with the triadic encounter. They will not offer opinions on treatment or comment on a provider’s qualifications. They respect patient confidentiality by not sharing confidential information with community members, family, or friends. They strive to be complete and accurate in their interpretation and to stick to the speaker’s language register so that all information is conveyed in its purest form. Additionally, they are committed to self-monitoring their interpreting performance and making appropriate corrections.

However, even well-trained interpreters struggle with the ethics of moving among the varied roles of the medical interpreter: conduit, clarifier, cultural broker, and patient advocate. Navigating the interpreter’s many roles is even more challenging when ground rules have not been established through an effective pre-session, or mini-contract, with both the provider and the patient.

CIFE in the Pre-Session

In the belief that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Inc. created the simple acronym CIFE as a pre-session checklist for interpreters. CIFE is designed for use prior to every medical interpreting session and stands for:

Confidentiality
I use the first person
Flow
Everything said will be interpreted

Confidentiality
The interpreter explains to the patient and provider that all information shared during the session will stay among the parties to that session. A session starts with the first contact between the interpreter and patient. This often happens in the waiting room of a clinic or hospital.

I (use the first person)
The interpreter will be using the first person. Therefore, when the patient (or provider) says “I have,” the interpreter will say “I have” and not “he has/she has” or “the patient has.”

Flow (the interpreter may manage the flow of the session)
The flow of a session is crucial to accuracy. There are times when the interpreter may ask both the provider and patient to slow down or to pace their speech. During the pre-session, the interpreter may negotiate the use of an acceptable hand signal to indicate when either party needs to slow down.

Everything you say will be interpreted
Everything shared in the waiting room, in the session, and after the session will be interpreted. Interpreters are not allowed to keep secrets from patients or providers.

The CIFE checklist only works if all parties involved understand its purpose. The interpreter needs to include both the patient and the provider in the explanation of the CIFE. To do this, the interpreter holds a pre-session with the patient while in the waiting room and gives an overview of what took place when the provider joins the session.

But is a pre-session really that important? How does the interpreter benefit from initiating such a discussion, and what could happen if a pre-session is not held? Consider the following vignettes.

The Interpreter-Conduit

A single, young Muslim woman goes for her first medical appointment in the U.S. The provider, who is male, begins to question her about her sexual history. The patient, insulted, abruptly leaves the room. The interpreter runs after the patient and attempts to coax her back to the session. Later, the interpreter apologizes to the provider for the patient’s behavior.

In this case, the interpreter initially acted as a conduit by accurately interpreting all of the provider’s questions. This backfired when the patient began to feel that her honor and integrity were under attack. Upon seeing that the session was unsuccessful, the interpreter felt ashamed. This shame then led her to apologize to the provider.

The ethical question here is: Should the interpreter have informed the provider of the possibility of a culture clash before the session started? We ask this because, due to a cultural barrier no one took the initiative to...
address, this patient, who previously attempted to seek medical help, will now likely refuse it. And, as we all know, one unhappy patient will probably produce several more, as news of this stressful event spreads to family, friends, and other community members.

Another ethical issue is the abrupt end of the session, where the patient walked out and the interpreter tried to bring her back. Where was the provider in this interaction, and is it really the duty of the interpreter to bring the patient back?

Had a pre-session occurred in this case, the interpreter would likely have empowered the provider with the cultural tools needed to deal with a potentially explosive reaction. If the interpreter was aware that a young, unmarried female Muslim would probably feel uncomfortable answering a male provider’s questions about sexual activity, she would have done well to share that information with the provider in the pre-session well before the interpretation began. Such a course of action is supported by section B-2 of the MMIA Standards, which states that, as an indicator of mastery, the professional interpreter’s duty is to share relevant cultural information that may help clarify the problem. The interpreter should then preface any cultural coaching with a tactful comment such as, “It may not be the case in this particular situation, but in my experience___reaction is common among members of__community.”

If a pre-session were held and the provider still felt that questions related to sexual activity were crucial to the quality of healthcare delivery, then perhaps the provider could acknowledge the intent of the question and allow the patient to respond in a different fashion. The interpreter in this situation could act as a culture broker by introducing the provider to an explanatory model.

Where a provider feels more comfortable with western-style, close-ended, to-the-point questioning, he or she might first ask the patient’s permission to use this form of questioning. All of these factors could be negotiated in a pre-session between the interpreter and provider.

**When does a session begin? When does it end?**

Interpreters, although striving to be ethical, are often confused by the concept of patient confidentiality. It is widely maintained that all information shared in the triadic encounter must be accurately and completely interpreted to all parties. There are no secrets in the triadic encounter!

But the MMIA Standards, although establishing excellent directives on what to do within the confines of the traditional interpreting session (patient-provider-interpreter), are not explicit when it comes to dealing with unsolicited information shared by patients outside the triadic confines, thus leaving interpreters to use their best judgment when handling such situations.

While there exist conflicting opinions as to when a session begins, it often happens that while they are still in the waiting room, patients become so happy to see an interpreter that they begin discussing issues only a provider can attend to.

Interpreters usually greet patients in a warm manner. This can do much to dispel a patient’s anxiety about the upcoming medical session and to open the channels of communication. Often, though, the patient then volunteers a monologue and the interpreter, out of politeness, becomes a passive listener. The interpreter knows not to ask personal questions, but even the simple act of listening can be misleading to a patient. Before long, the friendly greeting has led a patient to divulge medical information, followed by the plea, “Please don’t share this with the doctor.” What an uncomfortable situation for an interpreter to be in!

However, if a patient is forewarned that the interpreting session has already begun with the first waiting room greeting and that all information shared from that point on must be interpreted, he or she will be less likely to divulge “secret” information or to bring medical issues to the interpreter’s attention.

Likewise, interpreters often work with patients who are not completely trusting of a provider’s medical expertise. In a spirit of “professional conspiracy,” interpreters are indirectly asked to collaborate in a game of trust. The following vignette illustrates a relatively common situation among substance abusers, who often “test” both interpreters and providers by sharing unsolicited information outside of the triadic encounter.

An older Portuguese man is seen by his primary care physician and is told that he has to stop smoking if he wants to live. During the next visit, the patient tells the provider that he no longer smokes. The physician smiles, congratulates the patient, and informs him that his lungs are now clear. After the triadic encounter, as the interpreter walks with the patient to schedule a follow-up appointment, the patient comments on how American doctors are much too easy to please. “Really,” he says, “the truth is that I still smoke as much as ever!” The interpreter smiles and goes on to schedule a follow-up appointment at the front desk.

In the vignette above, the patient shared information with the interpreter while walking from the exam...
room to the front desk. The patient’s time with the provider was over. Thus, the interpreter might erroneously believe that he or she is not responsible for the information. It is common to hear interpreters say, “As long as the matter isn’t life-threatening, I don’t have to disclose it.”

In fact, some interpreters may cite the MMIA Standards as a basis for their silence. Section C-1 states that a medical interpreter, if privy to information regarding suicidal/homicidal intent, child abuse, or domestic violence, should act on the obligation to transmit such information in keeping with institutional policies, ethics codes, and the law. From this wording, it could appear that anything less than life-threatening is inconsequential. And yet, is it really ethical to keep anything back?

We ask now: If everything in a session must be interpreted, when does a session end? Should we leave the disclosure of unsolicited post-triadic communication up to the judgment of an interpreter who is not trained as a provider to handle that information? Who should decide if information is worth sharing?

Again, a good pre-session will set the expectations for information sharing before, during, and after the triadic encounter. The patient will then know that a session begins with the first interpreter-patient contact and ends with the last “good-bye.” Conversations in waiting rooms, walks to the lab, chats with x-ray technicians, and tidbits shared on the stairwell, in the elevator, and walking out the door are all relevant, and all medical information must be shared with the provider. In this manner, if the patient knows exactly what to expect from the interpreter, “secrets” will not be shared and the “game” of trust will not become an uncomfortable reality.

**Interpreter-Patient Advocate**

Many interpreters have expressed a desire to coach patients in their understanding of the American medical system. These interpreters argue that to be a cultural broker with the provider is to be a “provider advocate” and, therefore, it is also part of their job to act as “patient advocates.” The question raised is: Should an interpreter act on behalf of a patient without the involvement of the provider? Before you answer, consider the following cases.

A young Latino man recently diagnosed with AIDS is in the emergency room. His interpreter directs him to tell the emergency room physician about his recent case of thrush, as this may result in an additional diagnosis. After all, the interpreter explains, he has seen three similar cases in the last two weeks. The patient quietly agrees. The interpreter feels good about his coaching, since he may be saving a life.

A veteran Portuguese-speaking interpreter tells patients that doctors in the U.S. are too busy to listen to long stories. She tells them to say “Yes” and“No” to the questions asked and to avoid bringing up details that are not directly related to the questions. Some of these patients have complained to subsequent interpreters that this interpreter made them feel uneasy.

A Haitian Jehovah’s Witness arrives at an emergency room after a bad car crash bleeding profusely. A blood transfusion is recommended. The patient refuses the transfusion, and the interpreter, familiar with the patient’s beliefs, attempts to talk him into accepting the recommended treatment.

In the cases above, the interpreters stepped outside the boundaries of their profession and became, for just a moment, medical providers. By practicing cultural coaching with patients, especially without the presence and orientation of a provider, they run the risk of creating an unequal balance of power and subsequently breaking trust in the triadic relationship.

Do interpreters really have “power” over patients? Well, to the patient, the interpreter is the one that speaks the same language, often comes from the same country, and can even share the same physical traits. “The interpreter is like me,” the patient reasons, “the interpreter is my friend.” And, understandably, patients may initially relish the thought of having a friend or ally in the triadic encounter, which can be both confusing and scary.

It is up to the interpreter to balance the distribution of power in a medical session. In the previously-mentioned cases, the interpreter would have done well to hold a pre-session with the provider or, at the very least, to pull the provider aside to discuss the cultural and/or religious issues that could potentially influence the session. The provider could then take the initiative to address the issue with the patient. After all, the ultimate goal of an interpreting session is for the patient and provider to develop a therapeutic alliance. A large part of the healing process stems from a patient’s trust in a provider. (For more information on the therapeutic alliance, see the bibliography list of essential articles and books by renowned authors at the end of this article.)

**The Conclusion, Everything Having Been Heard…**

Until recently, the pre-session was perceived solely as a tool for getting a sense of the overall linguistic register of the patient and perhaps a
general understanding of the possible clinical path from the provider. Although this understanding is not wrong, it falls short of the full potential of a pre-session. It also leaves it up to each interpreter to decide what information shared outside the confines of the triadic encounter is of clinical significance and how much of it should be reported to the provider.

This is why Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Inc. encourages interpreters to limit waiting room conversation with patients to very safe, short topics and to use the bulk of the time before the triadic encounter to tactfully explain CIFE and its relation to the role of the medical interpreter. By setting the tone before a session, the interpreter virtually eliminates the potential for role confusion and the misplacement of loyalties in the medical session.

Some interpreters find it easier to initiate a pre-session with patients than with providers. Perhaps this is due to the fact that many providers immediately launch into the interview process without introduction and without even acknowledging the presence of the interpreter. If you, the interpreter, work with providers who are not aware of the pre-session concept, seize the moment to briefly introduce CIFE. Some interpreters have found it effective to interpret the provider’s first comment and then to immediately follow it up with, “Excuse me. I did not have a chance to introduce myself.” The interpreter then briefly performs an introduction and mentions the concepts of CIFE. This should take no more than one minute.

Once all parties involved understand the interpreter’s role, the interpreter may concentrate on the content of the session, keeping an eye on accuracy and completeness. But undoubtedly the act of explaining CIFE in the pre-session lays the foundation for a solid interpreting performance.

References


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 the ATA 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.
Dispatcher: Please give me your name and state the nature of your emergency.

Caller: Well, the police officer said I was pretty and wanted to take my picture.

Dispatcher: What is the nature of your emergency? How may I help you?

Caller: Well, they all think I’m beautiful. I’m so sick. I need you to send an ambulance.

Dispatcher: Where are you?

Caller: I’m in the hospital.

Dispatcher: You are in the hospital and you need an ambulance?

Caller: Yes, I’m going to tell you in Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Italian in case you don’t understand me. Send someone right away because tomorrow I’ll be invisible!

Press disconnect button. Take one sip of coffee. Type a few lines. Ring! Ring!

Insurance Adjuster: I have here that the accident occurred while the vehicle was parked and unoccupied. Is that true?

Insured: Yes.

Insurance Adjuster: If you were not in the vehicle, how did you know the accident happened? Did you hear the noise and come outside?

Insured: Yes, I heard the noise and came outside.

Insurance Adjuster: Interestingly, I have the statements of two eyewitnesses that say you were driving the car when the accident happened. They say you ran a stop sign at the top of a hill, the vehicle became airborne, and you struck a stone wall. Then you crossed the road and struck another stone wall on the opposite side. Then they say you drove through a yard knocking over a birdbath, destroying lawn furniture, and ripping the branches off a crabapple tree. Finally, the car came to rest against the kitchen window of a house. You were injured. You stepped out of the vehicle and fled on foot. Is that how it happened?

Insured: Yes.

“…Telephone interpreting touches hearts and lives every minute of every single day…”

Often These Calls Involve High-Pressure Situations

The above conversations actually took place during telephone calls I have interpreted. They demonstrate the varied nature of calls that a telephone interpreter is required to handle. In fact, there are definite disadvantages to interpreting over the phone. For instance, it is impossible to see the facial expressions or body language of the subjects for whom you are interpreting. The telephone interpreter may also be called upon to interpret under very unusual or unorthodox circumstances. For example, although I am a man, I have been asked on occasion to interpret for both patient and doctor at gynecological examinations. It is quite unlikely that I would have been pressed into service for this at an on-site assignment.

An additional challenge is explaining the interpreter’s role to nonprofessionals who are unaccustomed to working with an interpreter. When the interpreter begins to speak English, the foreign speaker may become agitated and demand that the interpreter speak only his or her language. A more common problem is that either party may interrupt and speak while you are interpreting. This situation often calls for the interpreter to remind both parties that if everyone speaks at once, an accurate interpretation is impossible.

At times, I have interviewed detainees or individuals arrested for immigration fraud, public drunkenness, drunk driving, and possession of illegal drugs. The foreign speaker is often under the influence of a controlled substance during the interview. In such cases, it may often appear that the interpreter is not doing his or her job. This presents its own challenges and frustrations, since the interviewee often makes no sense or will not directly answer the questions. For example, in the experience mentioned in the introduction of this article, the caller was a patient in the psychiatric ward of a hospital. Somehow she gained access to a telephone with an outside line and called the equivalent of 911 in her country to request an ambulance. Eventually, we were able to determine her name. The dispatcher put me on hold, with instructions to “keep her talking,” while he telephoned area hospitals and was finally able to ascertain that she was a patient. He was then able to notify the hospital personnel so they could further assist their patient.

These calls often involve high-pressure situations, such as 911 emergencies, which can be very taxing and stressful for the interpreter. Recently, for example, I interpreted for a mother whose three-month-old baby had stopped breathing. She was...
on the verge of hysteria and very difficult to understand. In this tense situation, the dispatcher will often say something like, “I want to help your baby, but I need your help. Will you help me help your baby?” Fortunately, we were able to get the necessary information to dispatch an ambulance to assist the infant. At times like these it is helpful to remember that, as stressful as it is for the interpreter, it is infinitely more stressful for the caller.

Poor telephone connections may also hamper the quality of the interpretation. Sometimes one of the parties being interviewed is on a cellular phone. Weak batteries or a weak signal can wreak havoc with the interpretation process. Additionally, because some callers may be at home, there may be background noise, including the television, playing children, and barking dogs.

Another obstacle is the fact there is often very little time to prepare for an interpretation. At an on-site assignment there is the advantage of being able to prepare terminology beforehand. However, with the large clientele a telephone interpreting company handles, the interpreter may be caught by surprise in a situation that is quite unexpected. He may simply have an introduction such as, “(Name of company), your Portuguese interpreter, Doug, is on the line. Please go ahead.”

In certain customer service situations or calls involving police or medical matters, the interpreter may not always be immediately notified if the foreign speaker is part of the conference call or if the telephone is being passed back and forth between the two parties.

**On-site versus Middle of the Night**

No one likes to get a call in the middle of the night. Often, though, depending on the working relationship you have with a telephone interpreting service provider, the calls come at very inconvenient times, even in the middle of the night. It should be remembered that this is a worldwide 24/7 industry.

To protect your sanity, specify your availability with the provider that is interested in using your services. Otherwise, you may find the telephone ringing at all hours of the day and night, and that your sanity and personal life quickly disappear.

Another reason that some may be reluctant to investigate the possibility of telephone interpreting work is that the pay level is often significantly lower than for on-site interpreting assignments. This is true. However, for the freelancer there is security in having a regular baseline paycheck. Additionally, quite a few interpreting services offer tremendous flexibility with log in times. An interpreter will be assigned an identification number and can log in to the service to take calls at his or her convenience. Or the interpreter may be called at a time when he is not logged in, because there is a call in his language combination and no one else is available. In such cases, the interpreter is usually paid on a per call basis. Other services pay interpreters a per diem or per hour retainer to be available in the event that they receive calls in a given language combination during a given time slot. The rates usually vary, with higher rates being paid for languages of limited diffusion.

**Multitasking**

A substantial advantage to the freelancer is that while you are waiting for the phone to ring, you can be working on other tasks. This allows you, for example, to be paid by the hour while you are working on a translation project for which you are being paid by the word. I have often found that, while swimming in a difficult, seemingly endless paragraph of Spanish or Portuguese legalese, taking a break to interpret a call is a welcome change of pace. In my particular case, my wife and I work as partners in the translation end of the business. This arrangement allows us to still meet our deadlines even at times when the call volume is high.

“May God bless you for the work that you do!”

The work is always interesting and varied and often gives you a brief window into another business, industry, or way of life. I have interpreted doctor’s office visits, emergency room visits, immigration interviews, border patrol investigations, requests for political asylum, recorded statements for the insurance industry, and 911 calls during crimes in progress, to name just a few. Also, I have often found that the terminology needed for calls in certain industries goes hand in hand with translation projects I have worked on or may even be working on at the moment the call comes in. This has helped to hone my professional skills.

The personal satisfaction that comes from helping people resolve their problems is one of the many rewards of telephone interpreting. Many interpreters have assisted in severe medical crises, some even helping in the delivery of a baby by the roadside. Virtually every call represents a challenge to be overcome or problem to be resolved. The gratitude expressed by the non-English speaker is often heartwarming. For instance, recently I was called upon to interpret for an Angolan woman who was seeking asylum in a western country. The venue was a prenatal visit at her obstetrician/gynecologist’s office. The conversation went something like this:
Doctor: You have lost weight since your last visit. Are you getting enough to eat?

Patient: No, I haven’t been able to eat for days.

Doctor: Are you worried about something?

Patient: Yes, our request for asylum was turned down. I am afraid we will have to return to Angola.

Doctor: Have you spoken with your lawyer about the possibility of an appeal?

Patient: (Weeping) Yes. He says that it is very unlikely that it would be accepted.

If I have to go back to Angola, I do not want to have this baby. I want to talk to you about terminating the pregnancy.

Doctor: Why do you feel that way?

Patient: I would prefer that the baby not be born than to live the way we lived in Angola (sobbing).

Doctor: I cannot help you terminate the pregnancy. You are already in the third trimester. There are laws in this country against terminating a pregnancy in this advanced stage. Perhaps there is some other way I can help you. Why are you so afraid to go back to Angola?

Patient: I have another child. He is four years old. He is albino. You don’t know what it is like to have an albino child in our country. He was mistreated, teased, and tormented by other children in our village. Sometimes albino children are killed because they are thought to be a curse and bring bad luck to the village. I fear for my child’s life!

Doctor: Does your lawyer know this? Has he ever seen your other child?

Patient: He knows that we have another child, but he has never seen him. My husband goes on all the appointments alone.

Doctor: I think your lawyer should be made aware of this immediately. I believe that you may have grounds for asylum on this basis alone. Would you please wait here while I telephone him?

Patient: Yes.

Doctor: I have just spoken with your lawyer. He says you have grounds for an appeal to your refusal for asylum. Can we proceed now with your exam and talk about some things that will improve your health and that of your baby?

Patient: (Weeping) Yes, of course. Thank you, doctor! I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for interpreting for me. You were so kind. May God bless you for the work that you do!

Experiences like these convince me of the importance of the work that telephone interpreters do. I have worked in court, done simultaneous conference and escort work, yet none of these assignments have ever brought me the satisfaction and sense of worth that experiences like these have. And these are repeated week after week, year after year. I have received handshakes and congratulations from grateful business people at the end of an on-site assignment. But, as a telephone interpreter I have heard the ear-splitting, wet smacks in the receiver of elderly women trying to send me a kiss through the phone in gratitude for helping them handle a medical emergency, make payment arrangements on a debt, or answer their questions about how to care for a sick and bedridden spouse. It is music to my ears. These rewards by far eclipse the long hours and other inconveniences.

A Rare and Precious Asset

An immeasurable blessing for the telephone interpreter is the ability to work from home. In today’s fast-paced lifestyle, working at home with my family around me is a rare and precious asset which has drawn our family much closer.

Daily exposure to my work has kindled my son’s interest in my profession. This has both been a source of pleasure and, at times, humor. When he was five years old, he announced at the dinner table, “Daddy, I learned a new Portuguese word when you were interpreting.” When we asked him what it was, he replied, “MasterCard.” In addition to the formal language instruction we give him at home, we have been delighted to discover that his comprehension of Portuguese has increased dramatically simply from daily exposure.

A Rapidly Growing Industry

Telephone interpreting is a rapidly growing industry. The following is just a partial listing of the areas of service:

- Financial Services: credit card and Travelers Cheques processing; fraud investigation; collections and customer service support; concierge and peripheral services.
- Insurance: claims processing; accident investigations; customer...
Some years ago, I had a call from an association of hearing-impaired people. An important American deafness expert was coming to Argentina to lecture at a conference, and there would be many hearing-impaired people in the audience. Could I think of a way to provide them with simultaneous interpreting?

The problem, of course, is that hearing-impaired people cannot employ the translation receivers that are commonly used at these events. In a normal setup, interpreters speak into microphones that connect to a transmitter in the simultaneous interpretation system. Participants listen to the interpreter by using translation receivers with earphones.

I should point out that there are very highly skilled sign language interpreters in Argentina (I had the chance to work with some of them, as I will explain later), but they cannot provide English-to-Spanish simultaneous interpreting. Moreover, because of the phonetics of the language, most hearing-impaired Spanish speakers learn to read lips. Reportedly, this is also the case with speakers of other Romance languages like French.

In conferences with a large audience, it has become customary to project the image of the speaker onto a large screen using cameras and video projectors. This system helps attendees relate better to a speaker who would otherwise look like a tiny speck on the stage.

The lecture in question was going to take place during a conference with a number of Spanish speakers. The organizers were planning to install a video projection system that would be used for an additional purpose—by projecting the image of the speaker, it would allow hearing-impaired participants to lip-read the presentations.

We decided the interpretation problem might be resolved if we could figure out a system for the audience to read my lips. Since I have heard of no similar experiences elsewhere, I thought it could be valuable to share this with other colleagues.

The conference was being held in one of the largest venues in Buenos Aires. The hall was equipped with a row of fixed booths located along one of the walls, perpendicular to the stage on a sort of balcony overlooking the room. Although larger than portable booths, the booths still had a standard-depth desk for the interpretation equipment and glass on the front and sides.

“...For a time, I became one of the better known faces in Buenos Aires...”

I was to interpret in front of a video camera that would be used to project my face onto a large screen (5 x 7 meters, or around 17 x 23 feet) so that anybody in the estimated audience of around 1,200 people would be able to read my lips!

The first problem to be solved was finding a way to place the camera inside the booth. The distance from the front of the booth was too short for the camera's angle. Also, I had to be in a position where I would be able to handle the controls of the interpreter's console with ease.

The solution was to place the camera on one side of the booth (the side parallel to the front of the room) and for me to sit facing the camera, with the controls on my side. This would allow me to operate them in a reasonably convenient fashion.

Simultaneous interpreters normally take turns every 30 minutes, but in this case that would have required some rather difficult acrobatics, because the camera took up the space of one interpreter. I accepted doing the lecture on my own, but asked that its duration be restricted to no more than 90 minutes. This is the maximum amount of time a simultaneous interpreter is expected to be able to work without any degradation in the quality of the output.

Another consideration was that I needed to look squarely at the camera at all times. This meant that my view of the speaker would be limited—through the side glass of one booth and the front glass of the next, in a rather slanted fashion. We tried it out and found that, although not ideal, it was acceptable.

Finally, no matter how good my interpreting, clearly it would be of no use if people could not read my lips. This meant that I had to learn to pace my speech and mark the words in a special manner. Of course, the only way you can do this is if you select what is relevant to the audience and choose your words very carefully, especially since Spanish words are longer than English ones.

People at the association running the conference trained me to speak for the hearing-impaired. Still, the big question was whether I would be able to maintain these skills when actually interpreting at the conference!

As you may have already guessed, the story has a happy ending. Although a bit stiff after sitting in front of the camera for over two hours (counting testing time, preliminaries, etc.), the conference was a success, and for a time I became one of the better known faces in Buenos Aires (at least, among the hearing-impaired).

A couple more points regarding this experience. For the question-and-answer period, a microphone was
installed in one of the aisles. Questions could either be in writing, read out loud by somebody standing at the microphone (and projected onto the screen by another camera), or posed orally, but always in front of the microphone.

Also, using what is known as “picture in a picture” throughout the lecture, I shared the screen with a smaller image of the presenter. We, of course, had a very skilled video director who would select which images would appear on the screen.

Some time after this, I interpreted for the hearing-impaired a second time. I was to travel with some British specialists to several cities and run one-day seminars. The organizers wanted to invite people with various disabilities, including the hearing-impaired. In this case, the system I described above would not have worked, since it would have been too costly and there wouldn’t have been enough time to set up and test the equipment. However, the audience at this event would be much smaller (around 100 people in all).

We came up with a simple solution. All participants who were hearing-impaired (around 10 people) sat in a group at the front of the room. Then, using normal translation receivers, sign language interpreters provided a sign language rendering of my interpretation. Under the circumstances, this much more modest solution worked quite well.

Since there is significant discrimination against the hearing-impaired and other people with disabilities around the world, it gave me great satisfaction to enable them to share in an experience that others take for granted: being part of a multilingual conference.

As an added bonus from these experiences, I believe my diction benefited from the special training I received. Plus, whenever I encounter a “breathless” speaker (you know, those people who do not seem to need to take in air), I step back and remember that even if the audience is not reading my lips, there is no point in rushing to “say it all” if they cannot understand me properly. After all, the reason interpreters are there is to help people communicate.

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**Telephone Interpreting: “It’s Not All About the Money” Continued from page 37**

An article published in the Los Angeles Times (February 24, 2003) mentioned that Language Line, a spin-off of AT&T, handles approximately nine million calls per year. Their strongest competitor, NetworkOmni, with over 4,800 clients, processes one million calls per year. The numbers demonstrate the opportunities to get a foothold in this growing niche in the industry.

Although call volume is high and there is a heavy demand for interpreters, companies like those mentioned above have an intricate training and qualification process for their interpreters. Calls may be monitored for quality assurance. In fact, NetworkOmni estimates that only 5% of its applicants make it through the selection process. The demand for qualified interpreters in this field will only increase.

**It’s Not All About the Money**

Why do we do what we do? In short, it’s not all about the money. It’s about facilitating communication to help others and save lives. This rewarding field enables a language professional to use his or her skills both to make a living and to make a difference in the lives of fellow humans. Telephone interpreting touches hearts and lives every minute of every single day.

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Message in a Bottle Translators Produce Do-It-Yourself Anthology

By Ingrid Lansford

Most translators are in the business for love and money, but the literary variety mainly work for love and publication. Only the most successful literary translators can subsist on their craft alone. All the same, the Literary Special Interest Group (LitSIG) of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA) has managed to attract as much as 10% of the association’s membership to its bimonthly meetings over the past 10 years. Some technical or business translators, such as our late president Harvie Jordan, have come just to enjoy the conversation.

Sometimes the LitSIG meetings have focused on an outside speaker, sometimes on a common translation assignment, but most often they have served as a forum for discussions of individual members’ translation problems as well as general translation and publishing issues. A collegial atmosphere has prevailed, in which our two or three well-published members have shared their experiences with the rest of us. Publication is, of course, the shining goal for the latter group. Though the help of our colleagues has been invaluable, the majority of our members have felt stymied by the uncertainties in moving beyond translation to publication.

The Genesis of Our Anthology

During the first half of 2001, attendance fell off so markedly that the group’s coordinator proposed that we suspend our meetings. At that point, we had one of those “you don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone” moments. We wanted the group to continue. Group member Traci Andrichetti, who had just won an American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) fellowship to read an Italian play she had translated, considered ways of recharging our energy. In September, she hosted a nine-course Italian meal, which brought all of us back and then some. During the ALTA conference in November, she and a fellow Austin presenter agreed that a hands-on project would help give us a new sense of purpose. How about an anthology of our work? The LitSIG would gain practical knowledge by going through the steps of the publishing process, from selecting a foreign-language text and obtaining publication rights to seeing its translation in print.

We held a well-attended kick-off meeting in early December 2001. Though I knew anthologies were often used in writing classes to gather final versions of student work, I had no idea that our group project would focus our efforts to such an extent, or how much could be learned by it. The following is a report on the anthology project as it unfolded.

The Scope of the Project

The first two meetings were spent in defining the content and scope of our anthology. We would accept both poetry and prose translations, including literary nonfiction. We hoped for a wide variety of languages and cultures. In choosing a theme that would yield a title for our book, we tried to keep it broad enough to enable all of us to find relevant source texts. Our working title became Urban Elements. We initially set a 10-page limit for each of the 15 contributors.

We settled on a game plan. Every translator would select no more than three texts and make a pitch for them to the rest of the group. After a text was judged to fall within our criteria, the translator could submit a polished English draft to the group by e-mail attachment before the next meeting for editing and joint discussion. Following a rigorous critique, subsequent revisions, and resolution of the copyrights question, the translation would be ready for the anthology. With an eye to fall marketing opportunities, including the annual meetings of ATA and ALTA, we established August 2003 as the deadline for going to press. To meet it, we switched from bimonthly to monthly sessions. Our agenda for the next four months covered hearing all the pitches while researching various publishing options, funding sources in case we wanted to self-publish, and documenting our progress. At the end of the second meeting, the project sprouted legs as we each committed $10 toward its realization.

Coming Down to Earth

Our research led to two important decisions. Initially we had hoped to interest a small press and were planning a query letter, but we discarded that strategy as a gamble and opted for self-publication. This meant trading the enticing, but remote, possibility of having our work accepted, along with the valuable experience of working with a publishing company, for the certainty of getting published. But the change would bring us closer to the processes of editing, design, and layout, which would also be beneficial. The certainty of being published would, of course, come at a literal price: we would have to bear the printing costs.
The second decision was not to apply for foundation grants. After very thorough work, our grant-seeking committee had concluded that it would be difficult for us to meet the criteria. In some cases, our parent organization’s 501(c)(6) tax status would disqualify us. Most of the grantors we looked at preferred 501(c)(3)s, while for others, we would have to propose elaborate schemes for involving schools and the public. We wanted to focus on writing and publishing, and after we learned that a print run of 200-300 copies would come in below $2,000, grant writing seemed like waste of energy. We opted to solicit seed money or borrow outright in order to cover printing costs and then sell enough copies to pay back the loan.

Queries and Their Limitations

We began to hear the pitches at the March meeting. A pitch was an oral equivalent of the query letter, including the author’s name, the genre, content summary, length, publishing history (if possible), copyright situation, connection of the piece with the anthology’s theme, and any other reason it should be published.

Texts were accepted or rejected based on the pitch. Here is where we learned that a pitch can only give an idea of the content, and that editors must ultimately base their acceptance on the submission itself. When we saw the first complete translations by early summer, two translators were asked to find other texts. In addition, our working title, Urban Elements, no longer seemed to work. As we continued to read, one of us found that the pieces tended to be “poised between two eras, or two phases of life, or two states of being—lots of different kinds of thresholds.” The others agreed that turning points in people’s lives and the marginality of existence were more prominent among the submissions than the urban theme. In August, we changed our anthology title to Thresholds.

Contents and Contributors

While our group did not succeed in recruiting translators of African, Middle Eastern, and Asian languages, we were able to add Bulgarian, Danish, French, Italian, Russian, and Ukrainian to the inevitable Spanish. Half of our offerings are European and half are from the New World, but we hope this accent on one hemisphere is somewhat compensated by diversity in form and content. We picked a chapter from a Ukrainian novel about the change from the gods of Kyivan Rus to Christianity, a story set in Panama just before Noriega’s capture, two vivid Uruguayan short-shorts, a story about a dysfunctional family in pre-Revolutionary Russia, a story about the day the Graf Zeppelin landed on a Uruguayan beach, and other pieces equally absorbing (a satire of conditions in Bulgaria near the collapse of Communism, a tale about roaming the seas in an apartment building, and a macabre fantasy about an unusual artichoke). The poetic voices of a contemporary Mexican woman, a Nicaraguan man, an anonymous Argentine, and a mid-century North African prostitute can now be heard in English. We present autobiography in the form of a partisan’s account of Italian resistance against the German occupation and a chapter of Hans Christian Andersen’s life story.

Several interesting source texts came to us through members’ personal acquaintance with their authors. We relaxed the initial 10-page limit for each contributor when our number shrank to the 10 who persevered: Michele Aynesworth, Traci Andrighetti, Tony Beckwith, Jane Chamberlain, Jonathan Cole, Ingrid Lansford, Zoya Marincheva, Marian Schwartz, Jay Tkachuk, and Liliana Valenzuela.

Editing and Critiquing

We had several guidelines for evaluating translations. First, we heard Carol Maier of Kent State speak on this topic at our February 2002 meeting. As soon as the pitching stage was over, we received a set of written rules from one of our more experienced translators. These ground rules for the “editorial board”—all 10 of us—included courtesy and helpfulness, a strategy to allow quick comments from all who had checked the piece beforehand, a more thorough critique from the group coordinator, and a short list of specifics pertaining to good English style. While some of us were urged to make more revisions than others, every participant eventually contributed a creditable translation to the anthology. Hearing pitches had taken about three months. The editing and revision phase kept us busy for a year.

If our process had a weakness, it was here, in the critiquing. None of us knew all the source languages, and translation errors were hard to catch. In evaluating a translation from Russian or Bulgarian, we had to treat it as an English text about foreign characters and a foreign setting. Still, most questions could be resolved in discussion with the translator, and our ignorance of the source language enabled us to pinpoint for each other where the English reader required help in the form of a modifier or translator’s explanation to bridge the culture gap. Because explanations are best presented in an introduction, we decided all contributions should have one.

Spreading the Word

Throughout the critiquing...
process, we accomplished other tasks, several being related to publicity. One member introduced the anthology at a regular AATIA meeting last year. An article mentioning the project appeared in the AATIA newsletter and on the website in April 2003, and another one came out in the July issue. Our coordinator inquired about a program slot for readings at the coming ALTA meeting.

When one of us volunteered to design an advertising flyer for the book, we suddenly found ourselves in need of a better name for our group than “the LitSIG.” After an e-mail brainstorming elicited two dozen good suggestions, Message in the Bottle Translators won out. Mike Conner, AATIA newsletter editor, created an appropriate logo and the designer of the flyer dreamed up a subtitle everyone liked, World Literature from the Heart of Texas.

The advertising flyer naturally led to a discussion about selling our book at meetings (including ATA’s Annual Conference), over the AATIA website, and elsewhere. To do this, we needed an International Standard Book Number (ISBN). After our initial sticker shock, we applied to R. R. Bowker.

Into the Home Stretch

In May, we received two last-minute check sheets for our translations. One was from literary translator Andy Hurley, who had hosted our group while living in Austin (one of our members told him about the anthology in late April at the second annual conference of ATA’s Spanish Language Division in San Antonio, Texas). It was then time for the final polishing, as June 15 was the deadline for turning in all translation manuscripts and possible graphics to the designer. Our designer had circulated a format mockup that everyone approved. However, the order of our contributions still had to be decided. The group member entrusted with this delicate task suggested dividing the anthology into units thematically linked to the threshold idea.

In early June, we met again with a heavy agenda of last-minute business. We considered suggestions for the anthology cover and learned that Andy Hurley had agreed to write our preface. We still needed a brief introduction about the Message in a Bottle Translators, their mission, and the anthology’s title. One “messenger” composed a draft and the others made amendments until everyone was satisfied. The sequence of our translations was settled with a similar round of e-mails. The book’s designer, who is also the composer and layout person, sent out a model for our final submissions. All final submissions came in on schedule. In a subsequent meeting, we decided to issue the anthology under Pangloss Publishing, our book designer’s company name, and had the ISBN transferred to reflect this.

What is left to be done? Thresholds: World Literature from the Heart of Texas is now going through final editing for style consistency throughout the submissions. Then it will be formatted and artwork will be added. In late July, we plan to have everyone proof his or her galleys and perform a general overall proofreading. We will go to press about mid-August.

Now the task of marketing the book begins in earnest. The Message in a Bottle Translators are getting ready for a presentation at the July AATIA meeting. Though the anthology will not be out, we’ll circulate flyers to sell advance copies. After fall publication, we’ll hold readings in central Texas and market the anthology here and at the ATA and ALTA conferences.

Was our time worth it? Absolutely. The meetings were fun and we learned a lot. We received our first proof of the project’s effectiveness when Zoya Marincheva’s anthologized story “Feta Cheese” was also accepted for the 2003 issue of Two Lines. We hope to see further success of this kind as we help each other with the next step: transforming our short pieces into proposals for book-length manuscripts and submitting them to publishers.

Resources for Beginning Literary Translators

Books

Dictionaries, not only in your language combination, but particularly in the target language. You’ll need
of age or older in the year their re-certification is due do not have to meet the continuing education requirements. (However, those individuals will have to submit the continuing education form indicating that they are 60 or older.) For example, if you are currently accredited and turn 60 or older in 2007, you will not have to fulfill the continuing education requirements to maintain your accreditation.

Finally, thanks to all who have taken the time to share their questions and comments. This valuable feedback is helping to refine the information provided and to shape the continued publicity of the accreditation program changes.
Simultaneous Interpreting into English: The Argentine Case

By Daniel Giglio

Why is it necessary to interpret into the non-native language?

The classification of working languages (A, B, C) proposed by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) has been accepted by most professional interpreters.

In Western Europe, it was long thought that interpreters should work only into their A languages in the simultaneous mode of interpreting. It is a well-known fact that conference interpretation requires the interpreter to encode and decode the message at very high speeds. To do so, the interpreter needs a vast vocabulary and a great command of his working languages (Gile, L’interpretation: 304). According to Danika Seleskovitch, the interpreter also needs to have a total feel (emphasis added) of the language in order to simultaneously interpret (Interpreting: 80). Seleskovitch is of the opinion, however, that years of experience in the profession, an exceptional flair, and a deep knowledge of the terminology in question may allow the interpreter to do a respectable job of interpreting technical material into his B language (Interpreting: 75). Times have changed since Seleskovitch made such a statement and, above all, the needs of the market have also changed.

The demand for simultaneous interpreting is a reality in Argentina, and we may even extend this statement to other countries. According to David Snelling, “…it is no longer even important to debate the necessity (as opposed to the desirability) of…Spanish [and, in my opinion, Argentinean]…interpreters being able to work into English. The laws of the market economy have concluded that debate for us” (Strategies: 2). In Argentina, the market has indicated that interpreters have to work into their “Bs” not only at technical meetings, but at all other types of meetings as well.

There are, as some authors have pointed out, exceptions to the “only into the A language” rule. Borderline cases (Gile, Basic: 209) and true bilinguals (Thiéry, Bilingualism: 26) fall into this category, for they may—in my opinion—work very well into their active languages in both modes of interpretation. There is another case in which it would be acceptable for an interpreter to work into his non-native language. If the interpreter has mastered his B language well enough to be used as a native language, such a language should not be discriminated from an A language (Gile, Basic: 209).

There is yet one more exception to such a rule: market needs. There are certain places in the world that require interpreters to work into their “Bs” in the simultaneous mode simply because there are very few interpreters that have that B language as their A language (Harris, Norms: 117). As mentioned earlier, this is the case in Argentina.

The simultaneous mode, known as “two-way” or “retour” interpreting, is widely used in Argentina, both because of market modality and because it reduces costs (Celesia et al., Actualización: 2.). “Two-way” interpreting—which is also common practice in the private market in Europe—means that both interpreters in the booth will be working, for example, from and into English. The so-called European Union or UN model calls for one booth to work only into English and the other only into Spanish, for instance. However, this model is not always practical in Argentina, where the growing number of interpreter-mediated events being held in the country requires interpreters to work into their “Bs” in the simultaneous mode.

Since the organization of seminars, congresses, and talks is currently a very profitable business (Simcovich, Algunas: 1), interpreters are hired in order to provide language services for the audience. At large international conferences and seminars (for instance, those organized by the UN, the OAS, or other international organizations), the “one-way” simultaneous interpretation mode is used, and sometimes native English-speaking interpreters are brought in from abroad. Evidently, such meetings are not very frequent. Smaller events and seminars where there are one or two foreign guest speakers/experts are much more common (Simcovich, Algunas: 1). Therefore, it is economically impractical (and virtually impossible in Argentina) to hire two booths of interpreters for such meetings. Most Argentine interpreters work in the “smaller” meetings and obviously have to go into their “Bs.”

The Problem

We have briefly discussed the fact that interpreters in Argentina are usually required to work in the two-way simultaneous interpreting mode. A truly bilingual (as defined by Thiéry) professional interpreter’s performance
would most likely be of a very high quality in such situations. But are Thiéry’s “true bilinguals” the only bilinguals? I feel François Grosjean’s approach to bilingualism is much more up-to-date: “Bilinguals are not seen so much as the sum of two or more complete/incomplete monolinguals, but as specific and fully competent speakers/hears who have developed communicative competence that is equal (but different in nature) to that of monolinguals” (Grosjean, The Bilingual: 167). Most good interpreters would fall into Grosjean’s category of bilinguals. Interpreters need not necessarily fall under the definition of Thiéry’s “true bilinguals,” but they should ideally be as close to Thiéry’s model as possible. Another more modern, although rather comprehensive, approach to bilingualism that can be applied to interpreters is the one proposed by David Snelling: “…perhaps the only valid definition of ‘bilingualism’ for interpreting purposes should involve the completion of university studies in both languages” (Strategies: 2).

In addition to being “bilingual,” interpreters should be “bicultural” (Grosjean, The Bilingual: 167). Biculturalism is of the utmost importance in any setting, especially in simultaneous interpreting where the speaker often makes many cultural references that the interpreter has to understand and pass on to his audience, generally at a high speed.

There is no regulatory authority (see below) for “conference” interpreters as there is for court interpreters/Traductores Públicos. Almost all the translation schools in Argentina are geared towards training translators, not conference interpreters (although certified translators [Traductores Públicos] are expected—and supposedly qualified—to work as court interpreters). The young graduates of those institutions have no training in interpretation and are unfit to work as interpreters.

We then, more often than not, encounter interpreters who are required by market demands to interpret simultaneously into their non-native language, but who do not have the necessary skills to do so. How are we to address this problem? A number of issues have to be taken into account if we want to answer this question.

First, the truth of the matter is that most of the interpretation in small meetings is into Spanish. In smaller seminars and courses, the foreign instructor generally lectures and the only interpretation into the B language is the one performed during the question-and-answer session. Having said that, we need to remember that interpreters are frequently called upon to work in the “whispering” mode (at a board of directors meeting, a talk, etc.). Although, as mentioned below, no one else but the person who is being “whispered” to is listening to the interpreter, a flawed rendering may still lead to all kinds of unimaginable problems.

Second, many foreign guests expect that, being in South America, they will not find “professional” interpreters, and are therefore content with getting only the gist of the matter being discussed. They are thoroughly—and hopefully pleasantly—surprised if the interpreter has a light accent (or no accent at all) and conveys the message in clear, idiomatic English. A number of good professional interpreters have told me that, after working with non-professional interpreters, their clients have told them that they were pleasantly surprised at the professional interpreter’s accurate and idiomatic renderings.

Third, there is frequently no one (but the native English client) to check the performance of the interpreter. Also, it is often the case that clients will not complain about the quality of the language service out of politeness towards the meeting organizers, from lack of interest in the subject matter, or simply because they have decided to accept a mediocre interpretation.

Fourth, the interpreter himself is sometimes unable (or unwilling, perhaps?) to acknowledge his limitations when interpreting into his B language, and more often than not assumes that his output will remain evanescent (Shlesinger, Extending: 114).

Fifth, fewer people listen to and completely understand the interpretation into English. Therefore, the possibility of assessing issues such as quality, accuracy, and general delivery is lower. Basically, only a professional interpreter can listen to two language renderings simultaneously and accurately judge if the arguments developed in the interpretation are the same as those of the original text (Seleskovich, Interpreting: 122).

**Users of Interpretation Services**

Many organizers of smaller events usually think about interpretation services at the very last minute, and sometimes view interpretation as an expensive but necessary evil of dubious efficacy (Gile, Aspects: 240). Such services are generally under-budgeted or not budgeted for at all. Also, a large number of interpretation users do not realize that good interpretation is possible and that the first requirement is to recruit qualified interpreters (Seleskovich, Interpreting: 121).

It is the interpreter’s obligation to educate his clients. Basically, the quality of the interpreter used in a certain meeting depends on the
client. The better “educated” the client is, the more quality he is going to demand. Danika Seleskovitch is right when she says that “until delegates become more demanding, a great deal of simultaneous interpreting will continue to be performed by inadequately qualified interpreters” (Seleskovitch, Interpreting: 122).

The interpreter has to make sure users of his services understand that he is a language professional and, as such, he expects the same kind of confidence and respect that other professionals receive. As explained by Christopher Thiéry, a professional interpreter is never “the interpreter of one person only […] He is the interpreter of a given meeting […] When he accepts his interpretation assignment, he has committed himself to faithfully and completely communicating the messages given in the other language” (Thiéry, La responsabilité: 79). In other words, he is a professional bound by certain rules.

According to Sergio Viaggio, all professions are governed by rules, which are, in turn, ultimately subjected to rules of expectation. In professions other than translation/interpretation, such rules of expectation have evolved together with professional rules. Other professionals are deemed experts in their respective fields of practice and have gained the confidence of their clients, who—if nothing else—are always willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. Such professionals have achieved their goal after centuries of collective and systematic efforts. Argentina has somewhat acknowledged and protected a specific aspect of the profession by means of the recognition of the professionals known as Traductores Públicos (TPs), but it has failed to acknowledge translators and interpreters as a whole. This lack of awareness by the general public and, to a large extent, by the very users of interpretation services has made it virtually impossible to “defend” our profession (No sé: 5-6).

Conference interpretation may be a young profession, but it is precisely for this reason that we have to be instrumental in making people aware of what our jobs are all about and what skills are needed to practice the profession. Unfortunately, as Viaggio has pointed out, “we have been unable to raise that kind of awareness, so that the rules of expectation that we are faced with are outrageously naïve” (No sé: 7.) The reason why such rules are naïve is that interpreters have not, as yet, achieved a social status comparable to that of other professionals. The market is made both of nonprofessional interpreters and highly qualified language mediators. Given the fact that the layperson often sees more of the former than of the latter, it is understandable that the general status of the profession tends to be low. Ultimately, the practitioner’s status is determined to a significant extent by its [sic] own behavior (Gile, Basic: 39).

A survey conducted by AIIC in Europe concluded that:

“The ‘ideal’ interpreter speaks in a clear and lively manner, but doesn’t go in for histrionics, understands the subject matter of the meeting and knows the terminology, speaks in complete, grammatically correct sentences, and enunciates clearly without ‘umming’ and ‘aahing.’ Clarity of expression is the quality that users rate above all others. The ‘ideal’ interpreter puts faithfulness to the meaning of the original speech above other considerations and in so doing concentrates on essentials rather than trying to reproduce literally everything that is being said. Delivery is regular and, surprisingly high on the list of points raised spontaneously by respondents, the ‘ideal’ interpreter keeps as close as possible to the original. 34% of the interviewees said that they are uncomfortable if the interpreter waits for a long time before starting to interpret, or pauses for long periods during a speech” (Mackintosh, 1998).

All this may be applied to interpreters worldwide, but we have to place the above assertions in the context where the survey was conducted. All of the interpreters used were AIIC members, working under AIIC-suggested conditions. User expectations seem fairly universal, but do they apply to our clients in Argentina? They might, but until we have supporting data in this regard, we cannot be sure. However, the data provided by AIIC describes the “ideal interpreter” that most users would like. This information gives Argentinean professionals a model to which they can refer.

Quality, Ethics, and Training

What is quality in interpretation? In my opinion, it is first and foremost the possibility of achieving full communication between two parties who do not speak the same language. By full communication, I mean that both parties achieve complete mutual understanding, i.e., that they understand each other’s message and package (Gile, Basic: 26-27). However, in simultaneous interpreting, it is easier for a delegate to assess the packaging than to assess content (the message) because of the speed involved in the process and the impossibility of comparing both the original and the translated texts. This may distort his perception of quality (Gile, Basic: 33).
So what about quality when interpreting into the non-native language? Here, the conveyance of the message is king, so accent and style issues should be overlooked if the content and package are being substantially passed on to the message receivers. The native speaker of Spanish will more than likely have a perfect understanding of the source language text even though she or he may express it inelegantly, but that is preferable to an ill-grasped, but stylishly expressed, message (Snelling, Strategies: 13-14).

Ethics also come into play when working as an interpreter in Argentina. Article 3a) of the AIIC Code of Professional Ethics states that: “Members of the Association shall not accept any assignment for which they are not qualified. Acceptance of an assignment shall imply a moral undertaking on the member’s part to work with all due professionalism” (http://aiic.net, Nov. 19, 1998). These norms are only binding for AIIC interpreters, but they are such a basic set of ethical rules that they should morally bind anyone working as an interpreter.

Since, unlike trained professional court interpreters, conference interpreters enjoy no legal protection in Argentina, it is of the utmost importance that they work together in order to establish a set of comprehensive and fair standards that will govern their profession.

Does training have a bearing on quality? I believe it does. The kind of training that is necessary is good training (i.e., one that provides students with the tools needed to make them become good professionals). In other words, the kind of training that creates qualified interpreters who are immediately operational upon graduation (Gile, Basic: 256).

An explanation is in order regarding the candidate selection system. Many of the Argentine translator and interpreter training centers lack an appropriate entrance examination. If entrance exams are fair but rigorous, only qualified candidates will become students. This will, among other things, reduce overcrowded classrooms and result in a better quality of training.

With the increased need for interpreters in Argentina, more attention will be paid to interpreter training in the future. There are some practitioners who have been trained overseas who have become excellent teachers. There are other self-taught interpreters who have designed excellent private training courses. Having said that, I still think that conference interpretation training should preferably, and ideally, be conducted at the postgraduate level (Gile, Basic: 256).

Starting university exchanges with interpreter training centers of the English-speaking world could resolve the lack of native English-speaking instructors. To my knowledge, such exchanges are virtually nonexistent in Argentina. If instituted, they would not only enable students to receive better training, but would also provide Argentine instructors with a mutually beneficial academic interchange. Student exchanges are also a way to promote international understanding and cultural feedback. Argentina is, in this regard, a very isolated country and these “linguistic exchanges” could reverse this situation somewhat.

Some Theoretical Aspects of Interpreting into the Non-Native Language

The spontaneity of the native language is responsible for the speed at which a message can be retransmitted, as well as for the clarity of its interpreted form (Seleskovich, Interpreting: 100).

Interpreting into one’s A language requires a totally different approach from interpreting into one’s B language. There are very few linguistic mediators who admit to working with equal ease into and from a given language. Most interpreters prefer to work into the languages in which they have conducted their university studies (Snelling, Strategies: 2).

Another aspect of working into the non-native language is what has been termed lexical restriction. The availability of words is presumably more restricted in the B language than in the A language (Gile, Basic: 226). If we add to this the time constraints and speed that usually accompany simultaneous interpretation, it is easy to understand why the Spanish interpreter going into English almost always has a difficult task ahead of him. A very interesting study conducted by Valeria Darò revealed that “a particular type of mistakes, i.e., those leading to loss of information, occur during active simultaneous interpretation (i.e., from A to B) of difficult texts” (Darò et al., Conscious: 101). This study involved French–English bilingual interpreters.

Another problem that arises when the interpreter is “going into his B” is interference. A very good command of the B language and of interpretation techniques, as well as a perfect understanding of the message, can minimize the adverse effects that interference can have on communication. When the interpreter does not have such skills, he tends to “parrot” the speech into his B language, thus making his rendering very hard or even impossible to understand. Any interpretation (either passive or active) carries with it the need for the interpreter to fully understand and process the message. Only then will he be able to “pass it on” to his audience. Upon listening to the original speech,
the interpreter expresses his own thoughts and forgets the speaker’s words while absorbing the entire message (Seleskovitch, Interpreting: 101). Furthermore, such skills will also permit him to more effortlessly render the message. However, these skills can only be acquired through conscious effort and training designed to find a specific solution to a specific problem (Snelling, Strategies: 4).

Conclusion
I decided to analyze the issues above in an attempt to understand how my own training had to be addressed in order to adapt it to the needs of the Argentine market. The research also made me think of possible solutions to the problems I found. My findings prompted me to develop a set of suggestions that could be instrumental in improving the current quality of active simultaneous interpretation in Argentina:

- Establish rigorous but fair entrance exams to translator/interpreter training centers so that only candidates with the required language skills are accepted.
- Provide adequate training in interpretation to the non-native language, preferably at the postgraduate level.
- Promote teacher and student exchanges with qualified interpreter training centers of English-speaking countries.
- Educate users of interpretation services and the public in general about what interpretation into the non-native language really entails.
- Increase the qualified interpreter’s professional status through quality renderings.

There are many qualified interpreters in Argentina who are interested in seeing their profession grow. I hope all practicing professionals can contribute to that endeavor.

Notes
1. “…les interprètes…[sont] fréquen-tement considérés un mal néces- saire, onéreux et d’une efficacité douteuse.”
2. “un interprète de conférence professionnel n’est jamais […] l’interprète ‘de quelque’un’ […] Il sera toujours l’interprète de la réunion […] En acceptant sa mission il s’est engagé à leur communiqué fidèlement, complètement, les messages énoncés dans l’autre langue.”
3. “[Traductores e intérpretes]…no hemos podido proporcionar esa instrucción, de modo que las normas de expectativa con que nos toca lidiar resultan exasperadamente ingenuas.”
4. Under this heading, four types of errors were grouped: mistranslations, imperfections (i.e., imprecise and/or inaccurate translation), calques, and omissions.
5. Twelve microtexts made up of relative clauses, which are harder to understand and put a heavier load on the interpreter’s processing system.

References
Seleskovitch, Danika. 1978. Interpreting for International Conferences—Problems of Language and
Accreditation Forum
A Long and Rewarding Road

By Lilian Novas Van Vranken, Accreditation Committee Chair

Looking back at the many changes implemented in the past few years, the Accreditation Committee feels confident to tackle the next level of transformation of the program. As stated by ATA President Tom West, “it’s not just an exam anymore.” When the new requirements take effect, the exam will be flanked by eligibility and continuing education requirements, yielding a “tripod” that provides a much stronger base for a credential attesting to professional competence.

Let’s take a look at the evolution of the accreditation exam, one of the legs of the tripod. We have strived to change the culture of the accreditation program by setting goals of greater openness, more recognition, an active grader recruiting policy, grader training and accountability, better error-marking guidelines and tools, and more transparency in the inner operation of each language workgroup.

Since 2001, the Accreditation Committee has met in March with the ATA Board to agree on changes and help shape the future of the program. These meetings have proven extremely useful and enriching by fostering open communication and mutual respect between Board members and Accreditation Committee members, and have truly forged our vision for our credential.

The following summary of the most important changes adopted to date reflects our commitment to improving the program and a strong dedication to enhancing the recognition of our credential and our profession in general.

Change in the Structure of the Accreditation Committee. The Committee, formerly made up exclusively of language chairs, is now open to current and former graders, as well as certain other (nonvoting) members.

This new structure has enabled us to benefit from the skills of highly qualified colleagues willing to volunteer their time to our program.

Exam Format. The ATA accreditation examination now consists of three passages of approximately 225–275 words each. The general text (mandatory for all candidates) is written for the educated lay reader in expository or journalistic style. Each candidate must also choose between two elective passages, one from the domain of science, technology, and medicine and one from the domain of law, business, and finance.

Grade Point System. Starting in November 2002, graders began marking examinations according to a point system, assigning 1, 2, 4, 8, or 16 points per passage for specific instances of an exceptional translation. Any quality points are subtracted from the error point total to yield a final score. A passage with a score of 18 or more points receives a grade of Fail.

Practice Test. The purpose of the practice test is to offer the potential candidate an introduction to the nature of the exam. Graders of practice tests may stop grading when a passage has accrued 45 points or more. Forty-five points (when 18 points means Fail) is enough to give the candidate a clear picture. Anything beyond that is extra. 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.

Addition of Information about Source Text and/or Target Audience for Exam Passages. Information about a text’s source and its intended use can often guide the translator’s decisions about style, word choice, and the like. Beginning with the new exam year, this or similar information will be included for each passage.

Exam Turnaround Time. Measures were put in place to speed up grading and expedite the reporting of results.

Change of Exam Year. 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. Because the new eligibility requirements that take effect in January 2004 add a preliminary round of administrative tasks for ATA 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.

Proctor Confidentiality Statement. To avoid a security breach and ensure ethical practices, a confidentiality agreement was drafted whereby proctors and assistant proctors are bound to maintain the secrecy and security of the exam passages and to agree not to use passages for any purposes not specifically authorized by ATA.

Revised Exam Policy Statement. The statement signed by candidates was revised to clearly define the steps available to candidates and emphasize that, by signing the statement, they agree that the Review is the last step in the accreditation process.
**Grader Training.** Since 2001, regional grader workshops have been held in Boston, New York, Houston, and San Francisco. According to a newly implemented policy, graders will be required to participate in one grader training session every two years. The options for grader training will include workshops during the Annual Conference, regional workshops, the Language Chair Spring Meeting, and online training via the Graders Forum.

**Two-Grader Collaboration.** This policy dictates that when the initial two graders disagree about the pass/fail outcome of an exam, they must consult each other to seek agreement. Only if they cannot reach an agreement will the exam be sent to a third grader, who in turn may consult with the initial graders or other graders in the workgroup.

**Grader Recruitment.** Formal grader recruitment procedures were adopted to ensure that prospective graders are thoroughly tested and screened. Furthermore, during the Annual Conference, a grader recruiting session is held to reach out to all attendees interested in joining the accreditation program.

**Language Chair Rotation.** Each language combination has a language chair (LC). Language chairs will serve for three years, and may be retired by the committee chair at any time, or may resign by notifying the committee chair. The current LC must identify a successor, who will serve as the deputy LC for three years (or for the remainder of the LC’s term, if less than three years) and then serve as LC for three years. This policy will ensure transparency and give all graders an opportunity to act as leaders of their workgroup.

**Language Workgroup Procedure.** There is a clear framework in place that governs the inner workings of language groups to ensure full participation of all graders.

**Passage Selection Requirements.** Passage selection is probably the most daunting task faced by graders. New guidelines were established to ensure an adequate procedure for selection. All graders are expected to participate fully in passage selection and must prepare translations of exam passages. Counterpart language chairs (the German-to-English counterpart is English-to-German) review passages for accuracy, level of difficulty, and appropriateness of content. The Accreditation Committee chair and deputy chair will consult as needed with the language chair to ensure compliance with passage selection guidelines. Exam passages from other international organizations were ordered and examined to compare the level of difficulty and skills tested. In addition, several workshops have been held to develop consistent guidelines for passage selection.

**Revised Framework for Standardized Error Marking.** In an effort to continue fine-tuning the grading system, new error categories were added to the form used by graders to mark errors.

**Flowchart.** A group of graders devised a unique system to decide how to weigh and assign error points. This has proven to be a very valuable tool, and a source of consistent and streamlined grading practices.

**Passage-Specific Guidelines.** All language workgroups are expected to devise and compile grading guidelines for each exam passage. This time-consuming task requires the full participation of all graders, sparking continuous discussions and thorough analyses which lead to agreement on error points and the establishment of grading conventions.

**Language-Specific Guidelines.** All language workgroups are currently working on compiling and updating guidelines that reflect the idiosyncrasy of each language. This is a significant step that will help strengthen the foundation for error marking.

**Supervisory Functions of Accreditation Committee Members.** Several accreditation committee members have undertaken to act as "point persons" to monitor compliance with new procedures and requirements within the accreditation program.

**Computerized Testing.** This issue has been revisited many times, and we continue to examine all possible avenues to facilitate the test taking experience for candidates. However, due to security issues and the nature of our examination, it currently looks as if a solution will be several years in the future.

**Grader Recognition.** During the Annual Conference, "GRADER" ribbons are made available to attending graders as a way of promoting recognition and good will, and of showing pride for service to the profession. Graders are not required to wear the ribbons, but these have proven to be a most enticing conversation opener.

The Accreditation Committee, language chairs and graders, as well as ATA Deputy Executive Director and Accreditation Program Manager Terry Hanlen and Accreditation Assistant Regina Tocci at ATA Headquarters, have worked hard to conquer the steep learning curve demanded by the new policies and to ensure a smooth transition period. We all remain dedicated to doing what is best for the program.
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.

French Home Shopping Raises Eyebrows

“Discover the leader of French fashion online which can deliver women anywhere in the world…” was the surprising strapline that greeted visitors on www.laredoute.com until July 2003.

That was when calls from The Onionskin and other activists triggered a revamp, albeit a half-hearted one. The pitch now reads “which can deliver to women anywhere in the world…” Females only?

La Redoute S.A. is France’s leading mail-order specialist and ranks no. 3 worldwide, delivering some 65 million packages to men, women, and children each year. With over 50% of sales made outside France, the company has invested heavily to produce attractively localized sites for consumers in nine countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.K., and the U.S. Which makes it all the more regrettable that it has failed—twice—to commission professional input for consumers visiting poor www.laredoute.com itself.

Definitely unchic.

Engineering Success on Foreign Markets: Language Smoothes the Path

English is widely reputed to be the language of international business, leading some monolingual U.S. companies to assume they can tackle markets abroad with English-language sales literature alone.

Not so Advanced Mechanical Technology, Inc. (AMTI), based in Watertown, Massachusetts, where product manager Gary Blanchard insists that sales documentation in potential clients’ own languages gives his company an edge.

Founded 27 years ago, AMTI specializes in specialty engineering services, contract R&D, and the manufacture of force-measurement instruments—niche products by definition. In high-tech areas like these, English is omnipresent. Example: most papers presented at international conferences are given in English. And yet… “True, we sell into an engineering and scientific community where English is widely spoken,” Blanchard told The Onionskin. “But when buyers have a choice of two sets of product literature, one in English and one in their own language, they always prefer the one in their native tongue.” For engineering specialists, numbers can give an idea of technical performance, he says, but from a sales point of view “it is the language that draws customers in and wins them over.”

In AMTI’s market, clients are demanding. Translators must have both a thorough understanding of the technology involved and expert writing skills.

Concretely, the company relies on its representatives abroad to commission foreign-language versions of documents. To ensure that linguists and sales teams have the background information they need, it makes a point of supplying not only texts but also graphics and technical drawings in a variety of formats.

For AMTI, sensitivity to language issues is evident in face-to-face meetings, too. For overseas sales trips, interpreters are often called in. Yet even when discussions are in English and foreign contacts appear to have no problem understanding, Gary Blanchard is careful to check regularly to ensure that the message is getting across. “In some cultures the inherent politeness of the people means they will nod as if they have understood, even when they have not—to avoid embarrassing a foreign visitor, for example,” he says. One solution is to sit down and review information on paper, with technical drawings at the ready.

Leading-edge products and services plus cross-cultural awareness clearly make a winning combination. AMTI currently sells its products in some 20 non-English-speaking countries and views overseas markets as a growth area—“absolutely!” according to its product manager.

With thanks to Charles Martin.
Mighty Fine Words and Smashing Expressions
Author: Orin Hargreaves
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Publication date: 2003
ISBN: 0-19-515704-4
Price: $27.50
Reviewed by: Josephine Bacon

From the 19th century onward, numerous attempts have been made to explain the differences between British and American English by means of dictionaries. This type of straight, word-for-word translation is, however, an unsatisfactory way of explaining the two versions of English and the cultural gap between them. The differences between British and American English stem mainly from three sources.

1. The different ways in which the language has evolved on each continent. As so often happens, the “offshoot” (American English) has retained what are now archaisms in British English. Examples include “presently,” which the British use to mean “soon” rather than “immediately,” “gotten” (“got” in British English), and “dove” (“dived” in British English) as the past tenses of “get” and “dive.” This is also the reason why so many American spellings differ from British spellings. Many legal terms, such as “solicitor,” “barrister,” “magistrate,” and “justice of the peace,” also fall into this category.

2. Imports from other languages. The early Dutch influence and the huge waves of immigration have provided new words and nuances that greatly enrich the American language. However, these words are not used in British English. Examples are “cookies” (Dutch); “maven” (Yiddish); “resumé” (French—the British say c.v., which is short for “curriculum vitae” [Latin]); “counselor” (from consigliere [Italian]); “gringo” and “pinto” (Spanish); and benné (the Southern word for sesame seed) (Wolof).

3. The institutional differences. In the British legal system alone, terms such as “county court,” “recorder,” and “master of the rolls” have only approximate equivalents in American English. When Americans visit the U.K., they are astonished at the number of dialect accents and dialect words within what would be a very short distance for the U.S. Those who have watched British television through Masterpiece Theatre or cable shows, will know that the glossary required for Eastenders is very different to the glossary required for Coronation Street.

To add to the complications, the British punctuate differently, especially in their use of quotation marks, and they even hyphenate differently. As for technical terms, since the microchip came into general use, computer terms have tended to be identical, but in older technologies, such as railroads, paint, and construction, they are very different.

Orin Hargreaves is from Denver, Colorado, a tenth-generation American on his father’s side, second-generation on his mother’s side (her family came from Wales). He has been a teacher in the U.S. and abroad (mainly teaching English as a Foreign Language), including Morocco (with the Peace Corps) and in Hackney, a less affluent and multicultural district of London where he taught refugees and asylum-seekers in 1991. Hargreaves spent three years in the U.K., during which time he found himself working in his spare time as a lexicographer for European publishing houses such as the Oxford University Press, the Cambridge University Press, Bloomsbury, Harper-Collins, and Langenscheidt. He, thus, comes with plenty of experience on both sides of “the pond,” and has a clear idea of what is required to explain the vocabulary of one country to the other.

In addition to being a useful reference book, Mighty Fine Words and Smashing Expressions is an enjoyable read, explaining clearly and concisely the administrative and political differences between the U.S. and the U.K. While it is not perfect (I found a few typographical errors and there are some omissions), it is a really valuable addition to the library of a translator who finds British terminology confusing in, say, a legal or financial document.

The only thing seriously wrong with the book is the cover. Despite the old saying, many people persist in judging a book by its cover. The Oxford University Press has done the author no favors by producing a cover that is the very antithesis of what a good book jacket should be—clear, unequivocal, and eye-catching. The pale blue background conveys nothing about the contents and the multiple typefaces are so confusing that the actual title is not immediately obvious. I would advise a British
purchaser to “take no notice” of the off-putting jacket and tell an American buyer to “pay no mind” to it.

Store tanker i et lille land
(Big Thoughts in a Small Country, a Biography)
Author: Kirsten Rask
Publisher: Gads forlag, Denmark
Publication date: October 3, 2002
ISBN: 87-12-03923-3
Price: $36
Available from: www.saxo.dk; www.bogguide.dk; www.gad.dk; www.kirsten-rask.dk (rask_k@post11.tele.dk)
Reviewed by: Yngve Roennike

Some 200 years ago, comparative linguistics made a great leap forward. The affinity of Sanskrit with Greek, Latin, Gothic, and Celtic had already been pointed out, albeit sketchily, by scholars such as Sir Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, and Alexander Hamilton. The works of more prominent Germans such as Friedrich Schlegel, J.C. Adelung, and the Brothers Grimm represent other significant milestones. A lesser-known linguist, but no less important an icon, was the Danish scholar Rasmus Rask (originally Rasch). Denmark, then a country of one million (more commonly known in some parts of Europe merely as Jutland, a peninsula protruding somewhere between Sweden and England into the North Sea), spawned a linguistic prodigy who only belatedly would gain world recognition. Books are still being written about him, the one reviewed here being only the latest to emerge. It paints a linguistic, but also personal picture of Rask and his turbulent times.

Rasmus Rask’s extended biography would include the fact that he was knowledgeable in roughly 55 languages, many of them non-Indo-European, 14 of which he had already acquired as a neophyte student. He was endowed with perfect linguistic instincts (he would later say that he needed only to read the Lord’s Prayer in any language to be able to derive its grammar). He wrote the first comprehensive Icelandic grammar ever (1811), translated many Old Norse literary works (Icelandic sagas), and assisted and monitored similar translations by others. Rask was the first to describe, in a coherent and well-documented manner, the fundamentals of comparative linguistics, a study which some even credit him with founding. He is responsible for mapping and classifying a multitude of languages, many of them distant and obscure at the time (e.g., Aleutian), likely drawing inspiration from the great Swedish botanist Linnaeus (Karl von Linné). Granted his classifications were sometimes slightly off, but let’s not forget that at the time linguists were charting hitherto unknown territory. In a world completely without modern computers, the ability to store vast amounts of linguistic data in one human brain was a valuable resource, if not a prerequisite for making significant headway in this field. This then was Rask’s genuine forte, as was, in the words of Kirsten Rask, his knack for penetrating the structure of a language.

There was, however, a darker side to his character that is also disclosed. He would begin suffering intermittently from bouts of delusion, haunted, even assaulted, by the sounds of words from the many languages he had learned that stuck in his mind. A recurrent theme in this book is the concept of “fatal words.” Rasmus Rask was a beautiful linguistic mind, indeed, if I may allude to the title of the well-known film.

Store tanker i et lille land is divided into many short and neatly distinct chapters, making it easy to revisit various aspects of Rask’s life without being overwhelmed. Rask’s linguistic pursuits and accomplishments are recorded with a profusion of minutiae. We learn about his many self-initiated academic disputes in order to get noticed (a common practice then and now, I assume). The book details his cantankerous quibbling with his Danish and foreign peers, such as his extended arguments with Jacob Grimm (Rask successfully argued that Danish was no mere low-German dialect, but an altogether separate language; their cross-fertilizing exchange of letters would eventually come to a halt on an irreconcilable sour note). Other facts which emerge during the course of the book include: how Rask kept correspondents meticulously updated during his...
Dictionary Reviews Continued

travels about little details he managed to ferret out concerning the languages he studied; his nagging and persistent money problems (he grew up poor, but received adequate economic support later in life from several prominent patrons, including King Frederik the Sixth); and his publishing travails (many of his works only appeared posthumously).

Readers are transported back to an era in which traveling abroad could be a primitive endeavor and a perilous venture. We witness dramatic episodes from his journeys to Iceland and especially India (and the Danish colony there, Frederiksnagore), a trip lasting six-and-a-half years (via Russia, the Caucasus, and Persia), which was undertaken to sleuth out the root of the Nordic language, and indeed all languages. Many linguistic sidebars emerge, for example, how he revealed that a language such as Ossetic is the only Indo-European language in the Caucasus region. Such tidbitty details, which we are provided constantly, further serve to enhance the stature and complexity of his genius.

En route, he would sojourn, often for months at a time, in different locales (for example, Tbilisi), absorbing, studying, translating, and writing grammars of the various languages he interfaced with, such as Zend, Avestan, and Pehlevi (and others with which he apparently did not, such as Tatar, Mongolian, and Manchu). Oddly, his fascination with languages did not extend to their cultural environment, about which he provides mostly disparaging and desolate narratives. Sojourns, such as the time he lingered in Saint Petersburg for over a year, dismayed his benefactors, who kept prodding him on for fear he would fritter away the funds they had made available. He maintained a steady stream of letters back home to cover his progress, lest he perish prematurely and everything be lost. One such account tells us that, despite all his zeal and tunnel vision, he picked up a (Danish) love interest on a boat trip off the coast of India, which he maintained for quite some time. Unfortuately, it would not last; he never married and had no children, although he did sponsor one very grateful child throughout his life.

He became a great promoter of his native country and a strong proponent of indigenous languages. He urged the peoples he came in contact with to uphold and respect their native tongues, as he did when visiting Finland, a country which had recently seceded from Sweden (only to become part of Russia). True to this conviction, all but two of his works would be written in Danish, which was quite unusual at the time and caused him to be the subject of derision on the part of various German scholars.

Upon his return from India (in 1823), he was greeted with fanfare and admiration, but refused to participate in much of the hoopla that was stirred up on his behalf. He correctly pointed out that his journey was a sober academic and linguistic tour, not one dedicated to geographic pot-pourri. Then, with so many exotic languages under his belt, he suddenly abandoned his Asian language pursuits, published nothing, embarked on a Spanish grammar, and then, almost perversely, turned to writing a Danish orthography. This orthography encountered stiff resistance (its most notable feature might well be the suggested introduction of the circled \( \alpha \), which was eventually introduced into the Danish language in 1948). Thus, Rask casts an ever-wider net, a sign of a possible weakness and flaw to his character. Since he spread himself too thin and finished nothing definitively, his scraps and pieces got picked up by others who went on to garner greater fame. It’s easy to point this out 200 years later, looking in the rearview mirror, but life is lived forward, and it may not have been in Rask’s disposition to make a great meal of anything in particular, especially since he had another great mission in mind.

It was Rask’s goal to get to know as many languages as possible in order to create a fundamental grammar for all languages, past and present. Unfortunately, it was an ambition he would not achieve, for his life was cut short. This was at a time when, after having declined several prestigious offers from abroad, he finally received a professorship in Asian languages, an event he marked famously and laconically by commenting, “I fear it’s too late.” And it was—he died at age 45 of tuberculosis.

To understand more the impact of Rask’s work, let’s backtrack to Chapter 8 of Store tanker i et lille land. Rask posited that among languages, Danish is uniquely positioned in that it possesses an extant precursor language, namely Icelandic. This was a somewhat generous characterization, but one which was close enough, given the state of knowledge at the time. Absent Icelandic primers and dictionaries, Rask simply learned the language by comparing a recent translation of Heimskringla, Snorre Sturluson’s collection of sagas of ancient Norwegian kings, with the original Icelandic. He then constructed an
inflectional guide and a grammar by jotting down all the inflected and conjugated word forms of this highly complex language, and compiled an extensive dictionary. In the process of comparing Icelandic to Danish, he noticed certain regular character transitions. This turned out to be an important linguistic discovery.

Rask used Icelandic as a benchmark for all other languages, and commended it for its inherent purity. He treated languages scientifically and not as random etymological research based on accidental external similarities, a view that clashed with the trend of the day, Romanticism (a period in which communication between grown men was sometimes done in poems!). Rask viewed languages as being nonstatic and in constant flux, and theorized that different languages dot a timeline, developing in cyclical fashion after genesis. He saw languages as moving from primitive to complex, and then back to simple again. For instance, Greenlanders speak a more complex language than do West-Indian Creoles, Hebrew is simpler than Greek, and so on. Rask turned the study of linguistic affinity into a systematic, scientific comparison of languages. When a sound in one language systemically corresponds to a sound in another, then the two languages have a common root, or alternatively, one is derived from the other (a theory reminiscent of Charles Darwin, whose thoughts were to emerge in another field). Rask won a prize thesis competition sponsored by the Society of the Sciences in 1812, in which he called for a classification of the Nordic languages within their own group and their relationships with Greek and Latin. In this thesis, he espoused the following:

Grammatical correspondences are a much truer sign of relationship than is the general and wider vocabulary, i.e., languages belong to the same category when they have the most essential, sensual [sic], and initial words, the cornerstone of language (core vocabulary), in common.

He used many examples from numerous languages to illustrate his point. These were his great thoughts written in a small language. Here, "small" refers only to the number of speakers of the language. As the author succinctly puts it, in terms of the size of its vocabulary, inherited historical frame of reference, age, and expressiveness of language, Danish is among the world’s great, time-honored languages.

The book mentions many of Rask’s other accomplishments. He was the first to place Latvian and Lithuanian in a separate language group, and first to systematically demonstrate the relationship between Finnish and Hungarian, thereby founding the study of Finno-Ugric. He drew up and proposed an artificial language long before Esperanto had been conceived. He spoke of linguistic signs before the Swiss F. de Saussure did. He started writing a Sanskrit theory (textbook), but never finished it, so that instead the German Franz Bopp, with his Theory of Sanskrit in 1828, became the founder of the study of Sanskrit. Jacob Grimm saw that his own grammar was obsolete when published and, in 1822, provided a new edition using the discovery Rask had already made about the systematic letter mutations, or sound shifts, occurring between Greek and Latin and the Germanic languages. In the words of the author, although Jacob Grimm obtained the honor for one of the greatest linguistic triumphs, the discovery of the so-called Germanic sound shift, or Grimm’s Law, it was originally Rask’s breakthrough, and that is why, at least in Denmark, it has been renamed as Rask-Grimm’s law.

His splendid tombstone, erected in 1842 (10 years after his death), and likely too flamboyant for his more simple tastes, was sculpted by the architect Bindesbøll and adorned with inscriptions in Arabic, Sanskrit, Old Norse (carved in runes), and Danish. What follow are my own tentative translations of the author’s translations into Danish:

Sanskrit: There is no friend like activity, he who works, will not falter.

Arabic: Truth is clarity, falseness is obscurity.

Icelandic: When wishing to achieve complete knowledge, learn all languages, but do not forget your own.

Danish: All that we can accomplish, we owe our native country.

The latter comment was made after Rask had received several offers from prestigious universities abroad (which he had turned down) following the increasing global recognition and attention that his skills and works had afforded him.

The book has a nice crimson jacket with a lithography of Rasmus

Continued on p.57
If you are a faithful reader of this column, you know that The Translation Inquirer lives way out in the boondocks where linguists of any kind are scarce. To his knowledge, in 13 weary years of subscribing to the local newspaper, not one want ad has appeared for any language-related job. But lo! last week there was one. Susquehanna University in nearby Selinsgrove is looking for an instructor of basic Italian for the 2003-2004 academic year. Sadly, by the time you read this, if you are qualified, the position will probably be filled. The Translation Inquirer does not expect another language-related job advertisement to appear locally for many more years.

[Abbreviations used with this column: D—Dutch; E—English; F—French; G—German; I—Italian; N—Norwegian; Sp—Spanish; T—Tagalog.]

**New Queries**

(E-D 9-03/1) A Lantra-L member was working on a document from the oil and gas industry and was not sure of the two bold-print words in the quote below having to do with gas installations:

“Alle elementen die bestemd zijn of geïntegreerd worden om de activiteiten opgesomd in artikel 2, § 1, van de gaswet mogelijk te maken, worden als vervoersinstallatie beschouwd. Dit behelst niet alleen de stalen buizen, maar ook de ontspanstraten, de opwarmingsketels, de meetinstallaties, compressoren, afsluiters, schraapkolf installaties, ondergrondse- en LNG-opslag, ontzwavelinginstallaties, vergassingsinstallaties, mengers, transfo’s, meters, sturingen, kathodische bescherming, enz….” Only the two words in bold were troublesome.

(E-G 9-03/2) In the world of welding, the concept of dark density posed problems for a ProZ user. The text she was working on contained this context: Darker density lines, irregular in width and parallel to the edge of the weld.

(E-N 9-03/3) A ProZ subscriber tripped over flap slough in a list of possible complications from oral surgery. Others listed, which were not the subject of the query, were infection and perforation. What kind of slough can the poor oral patient possibly fall into, probably resulting in despondency?

(E-T 9-03/4) This unusual query, bringing Tagalog into this column for the first time since April 1993, is about the psychological and physiological term traumatized. The sentence asked about was, “When we first saw him, he was extremely traumatized.”

(F-E 9-03/5) This might not be French. The troublesome term is “in peto,” and the Lantra-L member who submitted it has seen it in German, Flemish, French, and an unspecified Slavic language, pointing to the possibility that it might be Latin. Anyway, here is some French context: “C’est après avoir honoré une ultime fois le mât, que le bâdi s’agenouille et prie. D’un coup, il laisse s’échapper de ses lèvres un sifflement strident, puis soumet son corps à un long balancement, imité in peto par l’entourage.” What is this two-word intruder?

(F-E 9-03/6) What in the world would a “brève” be in the world of journalism? A subscriber to Lantra-L was working on a guide for press interviews: do’s and don’ts and what to look out for. Here is how the troublesome word appeared in context: “Quel type d’article journaliste prépare-t-il? Une enquête de fond? Une interview? Un portrait? Une brève?” Someone step forward.

(G-E 9-03/7) Geography-related queries are always a delight. This one, from a denizen of Lantra-L, is to find out whether there is any commonly accepted English name for Bündner Oberland.

(I-E 9-03/8) This Italian metallurgical query is from a ProZ denizen: “Acciaio rapido intercarburato al tungsteno, molibdeno e cobalto è caratterizzato da ottima tenuta dei taglienti.” What is one to make of the word in bold print?

(Sp-E 9-03/9) A Lantra-L participant was working on a text that consisted of the medical records of a 23-year-old Colombian male with epilepsy, and the clinical notes of the neurologist contained “Esta validando bachillerato.” Even in the other places where merely “Esta validando” was written, she was stumped, but add the third word and it is really tough. What is the neurologist referring to?

**Replies to Old Queries**

(E-Sp 10-02/4) (The goal of this program is to ensure redundancy, etc.): Mario Valenti contends that Jaime Vargas’s answer, given on page 54 of the April 2003 issue, does not convey the right meaning, and proposes “El propósito de este programa es el de asegurar redundancia o suficiente repetición, etc.” Mario sees no reason not to use “redundancia” for redundancy, as it is a legitimate word in Spanish. He added “suficiente repetición” just in case to facilitate understanding for the uninitiated.

(E-Sp 6-03/3) (filing status): Joe Ketarkus says that the best he has found in Spanish for this is “estado civil para efectos de la declaración,” and claims that this is according to the IRS’s Spanish—English glossary of tax terms.
Mr. Jan Gibboney calls it “clasificación tributaria del contribuyente.” M. Graciela González contends that “clasificación del contribuyente” is best, if one consults the Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española. She also thinks that a taxpayer could simply be called “tributario.”

George Wayne Braun notes that IRS form 1040-PR, meant for use in Puerto Rico, simply has “estado civil” for this, and the various categories are as follows: “soltero(a)” for single; “casado(a) que radica una planilla conjunta” for married, filing jointly; and “casado(a) que radica una planilla por separado” for married, filing a separate return. “Forma de tributación” is the general term indicating how one is filing, but it does not communicate marital status. That would have to be expressed using additional words: “unidad familiar” would indicate that a taxpayer is a head of household. This could also be “cabeza de familia,” or in Puerto Rican Spanish, “jefe de familia.” More thoughts from George in October’s column.

(G-E 6-03/6) (“Aufheizung, Abheizung”): Denzel Dyer says that this apparently is heating rate and cooling rate, though the statement needs some rearranging in English. Here is his rendering of the text as it appeared in the original query on page 49 of the June 2003 edition: The holding time at the maximum treatment temperature may be nearly zero if the melting points and/or softening points of the principal phases differ very widely, and the heating and cooling rates allow the filler to melt out at the vicinity of the maximum temperature.

Andrea-Ingrid Schneider claims that “Aufheizung” is heating and “Abheizung” is cooling back down from the elevated temperature. The reason for using “Abheizung” rather than “Kühlung” is primarily because the settings of the oven or furnace are changed, but the equipment is still temperature controlled to a temperature above room temperature. Thus, “Aufheizgeschwindigkeit” would be heating rate and “Abheizgeschwindigkeit” cooling rate. In some situations, like with tires, “Abheizung” is actually heating in the process of vulcanization or cross-linking.

(G-E 7-03/7) (“a.p. Ansicht”): Sharlee Bradley says that this appears to be an anterior-posterior view of an x-ray of the spine.

Thanks to all who contributed to this column!

For complete conference information, visit www.atanet.org/conf2003 today!
I have received additional responses to my request for words including the names of consonants in their pronunciations but excluding the consonants from their spellings. Since the new responses included non-English as well as English words, and English words were fairly well covered in the July column, only non-English words are given here.

Mark Colucci submitted the following French words: passé (C), Josèphe (F), Jérôme (G), Gigi (J), carré (K), cuvée (Q), Lutèce (S), WC [usually pronounced “vay-say"] (V), and dictionnaire (X).

Arthur MacRae submitted words in several languages, including French: sémait (C), jésuite (G), gitane (J), car (K), and culotte (Q); Spanish: sé (C), bajé (G), caber (K), and cubo (Q); Latin: canis (K) and culpa (Q); Italian: cucina (Q); Rumanian: cap (K); Papiamentu: seguro (C), yena (J), and kurpa (Q); Portuguese: senhor (C), agastar (H), and chichiar (X); Catalan: segle (C), acord (H), camp (K), and cura (Q).

Alex Schwartz, who submitted English consonantal words published in July 2003, has also sent in more information regarding the Say What! column of May 2003. He writes:

that there is a word frequently used by aficionados for aural miscomprehensions of the “Harold be thy Name” kind. The word is “mondegreen,” from a magazine article by Sylvia Wright published in the 1950s, “The Death of Lady Mondegreen.” She told of hearing an old Scottish ballad containing the lines

Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands, 
Oh where hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl Amurray 
And Lady Mondegreen. 

She cherished a romantic mental image of the Earl’s true love, Lady Mondegreen, bravely staying by his side even unto death while the Countess Amurray remained far away, caring nothing about her husband’s danger. It was a sad disappointment to Sylvia Wright when she learned that the slayers of the Earl of Murray had in fact “laid him on the green.” In addition to “Harold be thy Name,” the article mentions a number of other mondegreens, including “I pledge the legions,” which struck a responsive chord with me because when I was an 11-year-old newcomer to America, I thought I heard exactly that in the Pledge after seeing a movie about the American Legion. It also took me a long time to understand what “intervisible” meant.

Your reference to the Umpire State Building recalls Hendrik Willem Van Loon’s use of “umpire” not as a mondegreen, but as a deliberate pun. In The Story of Mankind, discussing the spread of Roman power to the whole of the Mediterranean world, he mentions the wars between the earlier petty kingdoms of the area and says, “They needed an umpire.” You can find many “mondegreen” references on Google.com or other search engines.

Simultaneous Interpreting

Continued from page 48

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.

More Consonants and Mondegreens

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.

Simultaneous Interpreting

Continued from page 48

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ATA Accreditation Exam Information

Upcoming Exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
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<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>October 11, 2003</td>
<td>September 26, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Boulder</td>
<td>September 13, 2003</td>
<td>August 29, 2003</td>
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<td>October 19, 2003</td>
<td>October 5, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>September 7, 2003</td>
<td>August 22, 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference Registration Fees</th>
<th>ATA Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
<th>Student Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>$245</td>
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<td>$380</td>
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Note: Students and one-day participants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings. All speakers must register for the conference.

Hotel Accommodations

The 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.

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- 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) $195

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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.

Issues include an examination of the cost in lives due to lack of qualified interpreters,

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.

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