A Publication of the American Translators Association

August 2004
Volume XXXIII
Number 8

in this issue:
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Features

11 Translating and Interpreting for the Entertainment Industry: A Professional Development Seminar
By Stephanie Tramdack Cash
Any attendees not stage-struck before they arrived at this seminar certainly were by the time they left!

15 Mission Impossible: Improve Quality, Time, and Speed at the Same Time Using SAE J2450
By Don Sirena
An emphasis on quality does not have to represent an additional step (and cost), but can be the gateway to simultaneous improvements in all aspects of the localization process.

19 Understanding the Power of a Medical Interpreter
By Zarita Araujo-Lane and Edited by Vonessa Phillips
Interpreters can come to terms with both the responsibilities and the ambiguities associated with the interpreting profession by exploring key concepts such as impartiality and transparency, as well as transference and countertransference in the triadic encounter.

23 Matters of Life and Death
By Rafael A. Rivera
Healthcare during the end of life is the most relevant, most talked about subject in medicine today. New questions bring about new solutions and, concurrently, new terminology and documents are now in use that medical translators and interpreters must be conversant with.

28 Translations with a Twist
By Yolanda France
Have you recently noticed a lack of truly tricky translations? Heterography offers a "funintelligible" challenge!

Columns and Departments

7 From the President
8 From the Executive Director
9 Profiles in Continuing Education
41 Certification Forum
44 The Onionskin
46 Dictionary Reviews
52 The Translation Inquirer
53 Humor and Translation
54 New ATA-certified members and Active Member Reviews
55 Guide to ATA Continuing Education Points
62 Marketplace
63 Directory of Language Services
63 ATA Certification Exam Information

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E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org
The ATA Chronicle Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

An Easy Reference To ATA Member Benefits

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

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...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.
29 Cultural Competency and Translation for Research
By Alejandra E. Koval
There’s more to translating research instruments than meets the eye. A translator must understand the cognitive and emotional processes of respondents, many of whom are unfamiliar with the documents they are filling out, before he can render a culturally sensitive translation.

38 Coded Terms: Landmines in Medical Translation
By Elena B. Sgarbossa
Medical language is replete with coded terms. Translators need to be familiar with their meaning in the source language and their precise equivalent in the target language.

Display Advertising Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>60</th>
<th>Arabic Language Services</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Terminotix Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.alsme.com">www.alsme.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.terminotix.com">www.terminotix.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>54</th>
<th>Institute of Translating and Interpreting</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>WordFinder Software</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.iti.org.uk/Events/ITI">www.iti.org.uk/Events/ITI</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.wordfinder.com">www.wordfinder.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Language Masters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.languagemasters.com">www.languagemasters.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PEN American Center Freedom-to-Write Campaign

Dear Translator,

In connection with ongoing advocacy to correct U.S. government restrictions on exchanges with authors in countries under U.S. trade sanctions, PEN American Center would like to be in touch with translators who have translated material originating in Cuba, Iran, North Korea, or the Sudan. Specifically, PEN would like to hear from translators whose projects have involved collaboration with the author of the original material, who have on their own or in collaboration with the author helped edit the material they are translating for U.S. publication, and from those who have encountered difficulty publishing material from those countries because they are under embargo.

If you’ve had any experiences of that nature, please contact Larry Siems, of PEN’s Freedom-to-Write Committee: lsiems@pen.org. We would be extremely grateful for your help.

Sincerely,

Esther Allen
Chair, PEN Translation Committee
www.pen.org
Zarita Araújo-Lane, LICSW, is the president of Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Inc. of Winchester, Massachusetts. She has over 20 years of experience working with cross-cultural populations in medical and mental healthcare organizations. She has designed, implemented, and supervised interpreter training programs in the Cambridge and North Shore areas, and was the director of the Health and Education Services mental health team for over 10 years. She has extensive experience presenting to medical providers on cultural competency models and working with interpreters. She has taught Portuguese medical interpretation at Bentley College and cross-cultural competency at Cambridge College in Massachusetts. She is currently the head of the creative team responsible for the authorship of The Art of Medical Interpretation manual series, and is a consultant to the three-year Health Care Interpreting Program at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. Contact: zaraujo_lane@cccsorg.com.

Stephanie Tramdack Cash is a French ↔ English freelance translator specializing in financial and maritime translation. She has an M.B.A. in finance from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and an A.B. in English from Bryn Mawr College. A Chartered Financial Analyst® (CFA), she has worked as a portfolio manager and strategist. She has a certificate in French translation from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and holds the Paris Chamber of Commerce’s Diplôme de français des affaires, premier degré. Contact: cashrs@comcast.net.

Yolanda France, B.A., was raised in Mexico and Colombia and attended college in California. She is grateful to have entered the all and sundry world of translation at Professional Translating Services, Inc. in Miami, where she learned her craft. Thereafter, 20 years were spent traversing ad copy, poetry, lengthy legalese, and myriad U.S.-Mexico border affairs in her freelance life as a translator and court and conference interpreter. She is now a staff interpreter with the U.S. District Court in San Diego, California. Contact: yolanda_france@casd.uscourts.gov.

Alejandra E. Koval holds a bachelor’s degree from the National Teachers’ Training College in Argentina, and an M.A. in Spanish translation from the Institute for Applied Linguistics at Kent State University. She has 13 years of experience in translation and interpreting. She worked as a full-time technical translator in the telecommunications industry for over seven years. Currently, she serves as a research associate at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine, concentrating on health issues among minority populations. Part of her work focuses on research instrument development and modification to meet culturally appropriate standards. She also freelances as a Spanish technical and semi-technical translator and as a conference and community interpreter. Contact: akoval@wfubmc.edu.

Vonessa Phillips is the director of the Cross Cultural Communication Institute at CCCS, Inc. She is a legal and medical interpreter trained at Bentley College in Massachusetts to work in the Portuguese ↔ English language pairs. She also coordinates translation services at Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Inc. She is a member of the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association and the American Translators Association, and has contributed articles to publications of both organizations. She has participated in the screening of Portuguese interpreters or interpreter program applicants at Cambridge College and Harvard Pilgrim. She currently teaches medical interpretation and travels nationwide to present on issues related to interpreting and cultural competency. She is part of the creative team responsible for the authorship of the The Art of Medical Interpretation manual series. Contact: vphillips@cccsorg.com.

Rafael A. Rivera, MD, FACP, is an experienced clinician and medical translator who teaches medical interpreting at Florida International University. He is board certified in internal medicine, gastroenterology, and psychiatry, with additional certification in medical management. His publications include articles in peer-reviewed medical journals as well as Médico Interamericano, Apuntes, Med Trad, and the newsletters of ATA’s Medical and Spanish Language Divisions. He currently serves as editor of Caduceus, the newsletter of ATA’s Medical Division. Contact: bukrak@bellsouth.net.

Elena Sgarbossa, MD, is a cardiologist who has worked as a physician in Argentina, Italy, and, for the past 14 years, in Cleveland, Chicago, and Weston (Florida). After passing the U.S. medical licensing examination, she became interested in comparative linguistics and medical semantics and their effects on physicians’ decisions. In 1994, she published an article with Dr. Eric Topol, “Semantic Ambiguity, the Non-Nosology and Myocardial Infarction,” in the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology. She has authored and coauthored over 50 scientific articles, reviews, and textbook chapters, serves as a medical reviewer for several journal editors (as a referee for submitted papers), and is the assistant editor for Caduceus (the newsletter of ATA’s Medical Division). She is also a freelance medical editor and translator (English ↔ Spanish; Italian ↔ English; Italian ↔ Spanish) for several companies and individual authors. Contact: esgarbossa@myacc.net.

Don Sirena is the business manager responsible for language translation within GM Service and Parts Operations North America. He has been with GM since 1986, and has primarily been involved in business operations and vendor management. He has been an active member of the J2450 task force for four years. His current assignment includes the continuous improvement of language translation relative to customer satisfaction and the regional consolidation of all GM North American language translation business activities. He is also the North American representative to the GM Global Translation Team, which includes GM Europe, GM Latin America, and GM Asia Pacific.
TA is wild and wooly. We have a long history of committed dialogue within the association. Sometimes our strong feelings on a range of issues have been the source of controversy. I hope we never lose that, since it is a sign we are healthy and growing. It shows there is much more holding us together than driving us apart. After all, ATA was founded as an association, not a dissociation.

This ongoing dialogue takes many forms: daily traffic on the listservs run by ATA language divisions; the Flefo forum (back in the day); e-mail messages to one another and the association’s officers, directors, and other volunteers; the ATA Forum in the Members Only section of ATA’s website; and face-to-face questions, answers, and discussion at meetings and events during ATA’s annual conference, professional development seminars, and regional meetings. ATA volunteers solicit member input through surveys and receive members’ views by e-mail and telephone.

By its nature, our association may face a special communication challenge. Our members speak a common language, but grew up in many different cultures. But my experience is that communication styles and expectations vary much more widely from person to person within a given culture than they do from culture to culture. One thing we all share is the belief that the work we do as translators and interpreters is important and dignified.

For me, the hallmarks of constructive dialogue are an intentional respect for different or opposing points of view and others’ right to hold them; the realization that someone who does not share my views can nevertheless be a conscientious man or woman of integrity; a commitment to express myself in a nonconfrontational way that generates more light than heat, to ask questions first and then not shoot later; and a willingness to think through issues from someone else’s perspective and continually question my own motivations.

On difficult issues, reasonable people can disagree reasonably. For dialogue to be constructive, I believe that participants must be very careful about ascribing motives to others. I can never know another’s inner self. When I think I know another’s motivation, there is no guarantee that I am right.

The benefits of constructive dialogue are substantial: an understanding and appreciation of differing perspectives; consensus on important issues; solutions that address multiple interests; innovation and new ideas; lasting partnerships on areas of common interest; and united action to make a difference in our professions and society at large.

Over the years that I have served on ATA’s Board, I have valued the passion and insights that colleagues have brought to the discussion of many issues. My wish for our association’s future is that we will continue to be able to engage in dialogue, knowing that no two people ever see a given situation in exactly the same way, but still committed to the constructive exchange of views that builds our common future.

**Attention Exhibitors**

**American Translators Association 45th Annual Conference**

Sheraton Centre • Toronto, Canada • October 13-16, 2004

Exhibiting at the ATA Annual Conference offers the best opportunity to market your products and services face-to-face to more than 1,200 translators in one location. Translators are consumers of computer hardware and software, technical publications and reference books, office products, and much more. Face-to-face selling, as you know, is the most effective and successful method of marketing. The ATA Annual Conference is the perfect venue, and you are assured of excellent visibility. Exhibit space is limited, so please reserve your space today. For additional information, please contact Drew MacFadyen, McNeill Group Inc.; dmcfadyen@mcneill-group.com; (215) 321-9662, ext. 37; Fax: (215) 321-9636.
From the Executive Director
Moustaches and Membership Directories

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

I shaved my moustache. For 27 years, it served me well. I did not make the decision to shave on the spur of the moment. You have to understand that I had relied on it to help me ponder and work through various issues and situations. I talked to a couple of people who had gone through the process and realized the time had come for a change. So why am I telling you this—because I think there are some parallels with ATA’s printed membership directory.

We have relied on a printed membership directory, from a simple list of members to this year’s 500-page behemoth, for over 40 years. The time has come for ATA to revisit the necessity of a printed directory. Technology allows us to have the membership information online, up-to-date, and with instantaneous search functions that would take much longer to manually work through in the printed directory. The online directory is in the Members Only section of ATA’s website. Please be sure to check it out when you have a chance.

The online membership directory is not to be confused with the online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services and Directory of Language Services Companies. Both of these have been extremely successful in marketing member services to the public. The other major distinction is the membership directory is strictly for internal communications and not distributed to non-members.

More information will be forthcoming on this issue. In addition, I am sure it will be discussed at the conference in an effort to get as much member feedback as possible.

So going back to my moustache, I did it to surprise Anne, my wife, at her birthday party. She loves the change. On the other side, my mom, who was at the same party, screamed, “Oh no, grow it back!” The difference for ATA is that if the directory is no longer printed, it will not be a surprise to members. The directory is not going away, but will just be available in a different format.

Candidates Announced

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2004 ATA Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada to elect four directors. The candidates’ statements will be published in the September ATA Chronicle.

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

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

**Director (three positions, three-year terms)**
Robert Croese
Nicholas Hartmann
Dorothee Racette
Tony Roder
Robert Sette

**Director (one position, one-year term)**
Beatriz Bonnet
Who: For the last 12 years Bob Taylor has been an ATA-certified, full-time Russian→English and Italian→English translator specializing in business and financial translations. Previously, he worked for 12 years as an international banker at British and American banks, serving the sophisticated and varied needs of large multinational customers. He earned his undergraduate degree in international relations at Stanford University, and his M.B.A., with a concentration in finance and marketing, at the University of Chicago. He uses his business experience and education to enhance his translations. He has also lived in both Italy and Russia, working in positions requiring language fluency.

Where: In the San Diego area, the primary source of opportunities for continuing education is the University of California at San Diego, which offers courses through an adult continuing education program in professional areas such as accounting, finance, proofreading, and editing techniques. One of Bob’s primary continuing education-related activities this year was teaching a course at the University of San Diego on comparative accounting, contrasting Italian and U.S. accounting standards.

How: A strong believer in the value of continuing education and its career-building power, Bob is a regular participant at ATA conferences and regional meetings in his area of expertise. He’s given presentations on topics related to Russian, Italian, and U.S. accounting practices at several ATA conferences and at the ATA Financial Translation Conference in New York. He finds sharing his own knowledge as a teacher or presenter to be particularly valuable, since it forces him to sharpen his skills and generates immediate feedback, which, in turn, inspires a greater appreciation of the subject matter, not to mention more learning.

Bob recommends that younger translators consider continuing education as an opportunity to identify and focus on an area of specialization, and to learn as much as possible about the field through industry-specific events and related translation presentations. In his experience, embracing a specific field of expertise has led not only to greater confidence, enjoyment, and satisfaction in his work, but also, though he admits it seems counterintuitive, more of it.
S. Edmund Berger Prize
In Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation

The ATA and the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI) invite nominations for the inaugural annual award of the S. Edmund Berger Prize.

The $1,000 prize is offered to recognize excellence in scientific and technical translation by a member of the ATA.

Individual translators or translation companies wishing to nominate a translator for this prestigious award may obtain a nomination form from the AFTI website (www.afti.org) or from AFTI at the following address:

AFTI
Columbia Plaza – Suite 101
350 East Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Nominations must be received by September 17, 2004, and will be judged by a three-member national jury. The recipient of the award will be announced during the 2004 ATA Conference in Toronto.

2004 Harvie Jordan Scholarship
ATA Spanish Language Division

Purpose: To promote, encourage, and support leadership and professional development of translators and interpreters within ATA’s Spanish Language Division and to honor Harvie Jordan’s lifetime contributions as a language professional.

Description of Award: Paid registration to the ATA Annual Conference or the SPD Annual Conference, as desired

Eligibility: Limited to ATA Spanish Language Division members in good standing with two or more years of membership

Deadline: September 17, 2004

Criteria for Selection
1. Demonstrated leadership skills and career goals
2. ATA Spanish Language Division involvement and commitment to service
3. Special contributions to translation and interpretation

Please limit your response to each of the selection criteria above to 100 words or less. Send your application via e-mail to AFTI at: aftiorg@aol.com.

Applications will be numbered, de-identified, and distributed to the Scholarship Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will consist of leaders of ATA’s Spanish Language Division.

All selections are final. The number of scholarships available will depend on the funds available. Scholarship winners will be asked to contribute an article to Intercambios, the SPD newsletter, reporting on the conference or a session they attended.

Call for Papers

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators
26th Annual Conference
May 13-15, 2005
Hotel Washington
Washington, DC

Send in your proposals now for NAJIT’s Annual Conference, May 13-15, 2005, in Washington, DC.

For more details, visit www.najit.org.

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Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators

September 10-12, 2004
Belmont University • Nashville, Tennessee
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For questions on the conference, call Claire Peterson, 615.292.1074 or e-mail: richard.a.peterson@vanderbilt.edu
Translating and Interpreting for the Entertainment Industry: A Professional Development Seminar

By Stephanie Tramdack Cash

Be on time. If you’re not 15 minutes early, you’re late. Smile. Looks don’t matter, but look professional. Breathe. You don’t have to have a nice voice, but it needs to be distinctive. Smile some more. Don’t be so quick to throw out those old voice demos on cassette tapes. Keep breathing. And never, never voice your opinion of a terrible product, campaign, or translation, no matter how bad it is. These and many more wise words were showered on eager participants during “Translating and Interpreting for the Entertainment Industry,” ATA’s professional development seminar (co-sponsored by the New York Circle of Translators), held May 22-23 at the Hilton Newark Gateway in Newark, New Jersey.

The seminar gave participants the opportunity to gain insight and training from experts who are actively translating and interpreting for the entertainment industry. Highlights included: hearing from an in-studio interpreter who interprets on-the-fly; learning the do’s and don’ts of voice-over technique from voice talent and directors of dubbing sessions; gaining an understanding of the art of interpreting for film and the performing arts; and discussing the unique translation skills required for subtitling. Several presenters focused on post-production work (the addition of subtitling or voice-over content to previously taped audio-visual material). Other topics ranged from planning and executing advertising campaigns for ethnic markets to the distinctive nature of interpretation for actors and directors. All the speakers raised the curtain on career opportunities that many of us had not previously considered.

Erick Derkatsch: The Role of the Producer: The Nuts and Bolts of the Post-Production Business

Saturday opened with breakfast, registration, and Erick Derkatsch’s presentation on the nuts and bolts of the post-production business. An ATA-certified (English<>German) translator, Derkatsch is the founder and president of InterNation, Inc. Multilingual Media Services (www.internationinc.com). He operates a state-of-the-art studio, specializing in voice replacement and subtitling for business, industrial, advertising, and documentary films. He shared with us the concerns of operating a studio and pricing a job, giving us rare insight into how we, as translators or voice talent, fit into the dollars and cents of the business.

“…Once you have the job, the crucial skill is taking direction and using criticism constructively…”

Derkatsch discussed the mechanics of various production techniques, their advantages and disadvantages, and the do’s and don’ts for making every recording a successful one. He introduced basic concepts, such as the difference between various voice replacement techniques (UN-style narration, lip sync narration, straight audio recording versus lock-to-picture recording, time codes, etc.) and the types of working environments best suited to each technique. Those in attendance soon realized that the so-called “UN-style voice-over” is more complicated than it would seem from watching the History Channel. Derkatsch explained that lip-synch is an appropriate technique for re-enactments, such as those used in some marketing videos. He then discussed the lock-to-picture recording used for lip-synch and some voice-overs. Requiring a tape and a time code, this type of recording keeps the audio track synchronized with the video. When you want to preserve the voice, emotion, and immediacy of the original, subtitles are the better choice. For instance, a corporate executive will more than likely want his or her voice to be recognized, so using subtitles would be the natural choice here. Subtitles appear on a screen at a rate of about 135 words per minute. Participants learned that, on average, there are 15 subtitles per minute, or one every four seconds. Therefore, a 10-minute piece will require 150 insertions.

Derkatsch then moved on to an overview of the producer’s role in a typical voice-over project, taking the audience step-by-step through the process of translating and recording a business video into a foreign language. He covered project flow, including budgeting and planning, selecting talent, booking the studio, and directing the actual recording itself. He explained that a detailed back-and-forth exchange with the client is paramount in getting the product and the pricing right. Questions to ask the client include:

- What is the subject matter and purpose of the video?
- Is a copy of the program available?
- Must there be tight synchronization between images and words, as in an instructional surgery video, or is it less necessary, as in a travel piece?
- Is the English script available in electronic form?
- Do graphics, titles, or credits need to be translated and edited? Do they fade in or fade out? Are they animated or static?
- Is there a generic master copy of the video available without subtitles? (Clients sometimes do not realize the need for this when...
presenting a video for translation. They also may take it for granted that the producer will create the graphics for titles and credits, when, in fact, as Derkatsch explained, creating graphics is considered a separate job.)

• Will the client require studio services or use an in-house studio?
• Will it be possible to review the translation before recording? (This saves trouble at recording time.)
• Will the client be in the studio at the time of recording? (If so, add about 30% to the recording time.)
• Is the talent union or nonunion? (Union talent must negotiate with the client, and a finder’s fee is involved.)
• Will you do the casting? (If so, then a casting fee will be built in. An audition, if there is one, is a line item in the budget.)
• Does the client need any conversions, for instance, to SECAM (a videotaping system used widely outside the U.S.)?

All these factors, plus the time the engineer will spend cleaning up the tape, normalizing, balancing, altering voice levels, and mixing in music will go into the calculation of studio time and other costs. As a rule of thumb, Derkatsch says that five minutes of finished UN-style voice-over, or two to three minutes of lip-synch, will take about an hour to record.

Derkatsch, who frequently works as a German voice actor, also detailed the format he prefers when marking up a voice-over translation for a reading. For instance, number all the paragraphs (it helps the engineers). Do not hyphenate or run a sentence from one page to the next, and use the normal mixture of upper- and lower-case letters in a serif font. Double- or triple-space your translation. Ask the client whether units of measurement need to be converted, what should be done about abbreviations, and about the pronunciation of proper names. The translator also needs to read the script aloud to catch any tongue twisters.

From Derkatsch, and later from several other speakers, it became clear that the voice talent and audio/visual translation work that is available is mainly from English into other languages. However, that need not stop the native speaker of English from doing English-language studio voice-over work or from filling the post of a studio monitor, who is responsible for keeping a close eye on the script reading and stopping production to call attention to any mistakes or problems.

Another common theme during the course of the seminar was the multiplicity of needs in translating and voicing into other languages. For instance, studios like to have a voice-over talent whose speech accent matches the regional accent of the intended audience. Indeed, when choosing voice talent, the destination country is as crucial a matter as the language itself. All presenters on this topic agreed that the voice-over hopeful should stick to his or her own native accent, noting that foreign-accented English is also useful if the accent is not too strong. Using an accent that is not your own, unless your voice is indistinguishable from a native speaker’s, will only tear down your credibility.

Guylaine Laperrière: The Voice-Over Business: How To Get the Job and How To Keep It

The next speaker, Guylaine Laperrière, entered the translation field as an actress, singer, director, casting agent, and voice-over talent. A native speaker of Quebec French, she is the program coordinator for the Certificate in Translation Studies program at New York University and president of the New York Circle of Translators (www.nycranslators.org). During her high-energy talk she laid down concise rules for those contemplating entering the voice-over field.

Laperrière explained that getting into this field, especially for the native speaker of a language other than English, is not as hard as it seems (“There’s not that many of us”). You start by defining your type of voice. For instance, is it soothing? A middle-aged “corporate” voice? A “character” voice representing an ordinary person or cartoon character? Or is it a “regular” (or “narrator”) voice with good diction that would be suitable for training videos and language tapes? Laperrière covered the all-important minutiae of making a demo tape (although nowadays such a demo is more likely to be in the form of a CD, an MP3 file, or a voice component on your website). The ideal demo should include 30 to 45 seconds of a reading in each voice you do, for a total of two-and-a-half to three minutes. In your demo, state your name and the type of accent you will use for the reading. Most importantly, put your name and telephone number on the outside case of the tape or CD. Laperrière also discussed factors influencing one’s decision to join an actors’ union (it depends on how much work you do in the field).

Participants to the session received detailed advice concerning auditions, starting with the importance of arriving early and fully warmed up, with water, a pencil, and a businesslike attitude. Once you have the job, a few more key points apply: studio costs are high, everyone
is on the clock, and the microphone will record your growling stomach if you have not eaten. Your new best friends are the sound engineer and the monitor, and don’t ever touch that mike! If you’re fast, reliable, prepared, nice, and take direction well, they will call you back.

Laperrière then moved on to discuss microphone technique, including a mini-workshop on breathing. Interpreters, it turns out, need proper breathing techniques just as much as voice-over artists.

All attendees were thoughtfully provided with a booklet containing a rundown of the main points Laperrière addressed. The session was well received, and many attendees gathered up front after the session to inquire about a future class on this topic.

Ellen Sowchek: Invisible in the Spotlight: Interpreting for Film and Performing Artists

Ellen Sowchek’s workshop explored the unique world of interpreting for film and performing artists, including the special skills and qualities that the successful interpreter must have. Topics included: preliminaries (background preparation and research before the interpreting begins); interpreting in various settings (one-on-one and group interviews, panels, professional audiences, master classes, public screenings, and performances); interpreting for various media (working live, by telephone, or in a radio or television studio); and interpreting practicalities (everything a good interpreter should know before saying a word). Starting her discussion with a methodical look at the concepts and definitions of terms used in interpretation, she explained the difference between simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and explored the skills of listening, voice training (here, just as in voice-over, hiring a voice coach can pay dividends!), concentration, note-taking, and presentation.

An ATA-certified French→English translator and interpreter, Sowchek got her start in the field by translating legal documents for film companies. She went on to turn her lifelong love of the performing arts (she has studied ballet and ballroom dance extensively and teaches Argentine tango) into a career by translating scripts, dialogue treatments, press materials, and film credits. She works with well-known French choreographers, dancers, film directors, actors, and with audiences at festivals and theaters, as well as at interviews and meetings.

Attendees leaned forward in their seats as she described touchy moments in interpretation, including how to respond when the interpreter’s accuracy is challenged in a legal context (“If you know you are right, say, ‘The interpreter stands behind her interpretation.’”). Sowchek also furnished a valuable approach, grounded in common sense and experience, to the process of establishing an interpreting contract. When laying out a contract, lots of questions need to be answered to make sure that expectations are the same on both sides. By thinking beyond what is on paper, you can make things run more smoothly. Here are some things to consider:

- When will they need you? (It’s an obvious question, but schedules shift, so allow time on either side of the day or days named.)
- Are you to interpret only for certain meetings, or for other activities?
- Do you need to be paid for your “down time” between interviews?
- If your commuting time is substantial, will you be reimbursed?
- Is a tentative schedule available?
- Who will be paying you?
- Would you like to negotiate a flat fee for each day, or for the entire job?

Interestingly, Sowchek suggested offering the client the choice of a formal contract or simply a note confirming the arrangement. A relationship of trust and mutual understanding, developed when talking things through with the client, clearly counts more than trying to anticipate every possible contingency in writing.

Sowcheck explained that doing your homework before the job begins is also important. When interpreting for film, she recommends reading Le Film français (“the French equivalent of Variety”). Of course, you will want to see the film, obtain a press kit, and know the names of the producer, director, actors, and chief cinematographer. You will also want to know the venue for the interview, the audience, the time zone differences (if interviewing by telephone), and the location of the “cough button” (if interviewing on the radio). Talking ahead of time with the person for whom you are interpreting can create an easier and more productive relationship. On the day of the assignment, you should eat before the session, dress comfortably, and once at the venue, never lose your concentration. And at the end of the interview, be sure to thank everyone involved.

A useful glossary and a very generous listing of reference books and sites covering film and interpretation supplemented Sowchek’s presentation.

Jean-Luc Benayoun: Translating and Subtitling the News

Jean-Luc Benayoun’s presentation showcased a highly unusual

As Benayoun displayed excerpts from his subtitled news broadcasts, the challenges of the task became clearer. He explained that news is always being made and that facts continuously change. He mentioned that during his time at the studio, he had just a few hours in which to complete the subtitling for each day’s broadcast. This peek into the TV archives taught another lesson: a rapid-fire onslaught of problems inspires creativity in working out consistent and appropriate solutions (in this case, for each kind of story that was covered).

Benayoun indicated that the fundamental problem associated with this type of work is speed. Most news speech is rapid. The transcript has to be compressed into a couple of lines per screen (41 to 44 characters per line). The subtitle has to be left on the screen for at least three seconds. Furthermore, a line, part of a line, or an entire subtitling screen has to be occasionally left blank to avoid a cluttered look, which can make the viewer switch channels. The main question to ask is how can language be shortened without sacrificing meaning?

M. Heintz Montez: The Advertising Campaign: Challenges in Planning (Hispanic/Middle Eastern)

Working in domestic and international advertising as well as for the Associated Press, Montez has translated and written copy for television scripts and radio commercials, subtitling projects, and print ads. She records voice-overs and assists in studio direction for TV and radio, corporate video, language tapes, and business-to-business projects. The main point of her presentation was that advertising cannot simply be translated (it has to sell, and the translator’s golden words are “You will sell more if…”). Montez explained that when an ad must be rewritten, advertising translators usually get paid like copywriters, rather than at the lower rate for translation, due to the creative challenge this job presents.

Montez also covered the Hispanic and Middle Eastern markets, stating that they are anything but monolithic (here, a translator’s cultural knowledge is indispensable). Most Hispanics in the U.S. do not want all advertising material geared toward them to be in Spanish. Also, a marketing campaign designed for Latin America may require many different accents, even within a single country. Some countries, such as Argentina, require that only native talent be used to market products or services in the country. Montez also discussed degrees of conservatism in Middle Eastern markets. While all these markets are quite conservative by American standards, the degree of conservatism varies quite widely among countries. Montez explained that the effectiveness of advertising in markets is difficult to track.

Ed Zad: How To Make a Demo for Voice-Over Work and What To Do With It

The weekend concluded with an interactive presentation by Ed Zad. The audience had lots of questions, which Zad answered by drawing on his own experience. An accomplished musician, he is vice-president of Merrill Translations, where he directs and produces foreign-language audio/video materials, including large projects involving many languages. He also has extensive experience with casting, producing, and directing foreign-language radio and TV commercials.

Zad reinforced the advice given by Laperrière, with whom he often works: find out what kind of voice you have, be early, and don’t fake an accent. He explained that it is not a good idea to have one person serve as both the translator and voice talent—sorry, folks! The reason for this is that a voice talent who is also translating the script to be read tends to hear his own voice while translating, often to the detriment of the final translation.

If you have already done voice-over work, try to get a copy of the voice recording to use as your demo. You can also make your own “radio spot” by simply reading a newspaper ad with background music (if you have a narrator’s voice) and recording this onto a CD. You may also get to produce a demo as part of a studio voice-over class (such classes are widely advertised in trade publications such as Backstage and Variety). Zad recommends contacting a smaller studio about making your demo. Ask to hear samples of their work and negotiate a flat fee.

He offered a few opinions about packaging demos. A picture and a detailed list of the contents of a CD adds up to too much information for him. (No doubt this is a valuable revelation to translators, with our love of thoroughness and for giving out plenty of information.) He prefers to see the person’s name, the language

Continued on p.18
Mission Impossible: Improve Quality, Time, and Speed at the Same Time Using SAE J2450

By Don Sirena


It is the accepted wisdom of the translation world that translation quality, speed, and cost are all locked in some sort of zero sum game. Any improvement in one comes at the expense of one or both of the others. If you need to improve quality, translation takes longer and is more expensive due to extra quality assurance steps. If you need quick turnaround, you pay a premium, and if you want cheap, you might as well throw quality and speed out the window. This so-called “quality-speed-cost triangle” is a staple of books on translation and is taught to students of translation around the world.

Based on the triangle, one would expect that implementing a quality assurance (QA) process would improve quality, but raise costs and turnaround time, since it represents an additional process that translation suppliers must carry out. General Motors (GM), however, has found that stressing quality and implementing QA steps as an integral part of the translation process leads not only to significant improvement in quality, but also to dramatic improvements in cost and turnaround time. In this article, GM’s Don Sirena, language translation manager in GM’s North American Services and Parts Operations division, reports on how GM utilized the SAE J2450 quality metric to help reduce translation errors by 90%, reduce turnaround time from weeks to days, and lower costs tremendously.

Don first reported on this initiative in his presentation at the 2001 LISA Forum in Chicago. This article is an update on that project that shows even more dramatic results than Don predicted three years ago.

Founded in 1908, General Motors (GM) manufactures vehicles in 32 countries and has a sales presence in 192 countries, making GM a truly global company. This global presence makes globalization, internationalization, localization, and translation (GILT) an important public-facing part of GM’s business strategy. GILT services represent an area where potentially large cost savings could be realized, but where quality must be maintained if GM’s reputation and sales are not to be adversely affected. Conventional wisdom in the translation world holds that improving quality and improving cost and time are antithetical goals. If a company improves quality it will only be through increased cost or longer turnaround, since quality assurance is an added process that takes time to complete.

What this traditional understanding misses, however, is that almost any process will have inefficiencies that can be corrected to gain improvements at essentially no cost. The problem is in identifying these inefficiencies. While some may be obvious, such as the manual processing of files that could be easily automated, not all problems are immediately obvious, and some may be so deeply rooted in a process that they cannot be seen at all without careful examination of the entire translation process.

GM has found that quality assurance (QA) metrics, like the Society of Automotive Engineers’ (SAE) J2450, can not only assure quality, but can also isolate problem points in the translation process and aid in vendor selection, even before translation has begun. The ability to properly utilize quality metrics throughout the translation process can help identify points of error or inefficiency, and can lead to simultaneous substantial improvements in quality, speed, and price.

SAE J2450: A Brief History

Measuring translation quality has historically been highly subjective and nonstandardized, since there was no way of gauging quality except based on a gut feel for whether the translation was good or not, and such an approach tends to focus more on issues of style than on the accurate conveyance of information. Needless to say, evaluations of quality would vary widely among individuals and often had as much or more to do with their like or dislike of the source document as with the actual translation of the document.

Because of this difficulty, SAE established its J2450 task force in 1997 under the direction of Kurt Godden of GM, with the goal of establishing a standard quality metric for the automotive industry that could be used to provide an objective measure of linguistic quality for automotive service information, regardless of language or process. The metric became an...
SAE Recommended Practice in October 2001, and is now progressing toward the level of a SAE Standard. In 2001, a European task force was formed to expand usage of J2450 in Europe and to assist in the development of training materials and statistical testing.

J2450’s approach to quality assurance is quite straightforward. It bases quality scores on seven types of errors:

- Wrong Term
- Syntactic Error
- Omission
- Word Structure or Agreement Error
- Misspelling
- Punctuation Error
- Miscellaneous Error

Errors in each category can be classified as either major or minor, with a numeric score attached to each error and severity level. The composite score is the weighted sum of the errors normalized by the number of words in the text. This simple statistical approach makes comparison of the quality figures of different texts simple, while examination of the errors in specific categories can assist in the identification of particular problem areas.

J2450 is not a stand-alone QA process. Its scope is limited to linguistic/translation errors (not to other problems, such as formatting or presentation errors) that might cause a project to be unacceptable to end-users. Thus, J2450 must be part of an overall quality process, and is not a substitute for additional quality processes. However, when properly applied, J2450 provides a way to evaluate the quality of one of the most important components of any multilingual project.

As can be seen, none of the error categories focus on stylistics, but rather on problems that can affect the ability of users to understand the information contained in a document. This focus on the information content of text reduces the endless wrangling over translation quality that plagues more subjective measures of quality assessment. (Both SAE J2450 and LISA’s QA Model 3.0 share the same focus on quantifiable measures of quality, although LISA’s model is more focused on the entire localization process, rather than being primarily a translation quality metric.) Because of the focus on measurable error rates, J2450 can also serve both as a basis for client-supplier discussions about problems and as neutral ground for the evaluation of performance: the problems reported either exist or they do not, and the scores reflect real problems rather than perceived subjective problems. In addition, the J2450 metric can be applied to source documents as well as translated ones, helping identify authoring problems that have downstream effects.

**GM’s Experience with J2450**

Beginning in June 2000, GM Service Operations North America adopted J2450 to aid in the assessment of translations of service manuals, and in 2001, one of GM’s translation suppliers began assessment of GM service bulletins using J2450. So far, in the assessment of over 1,000,000 words (randomly chosen from over 20,000,000 words translated into seven languages), J2450 has helped bring about significant improvement for GM’s translations. Since adoption of J2450, GM’s translations have experienced a 90% reduction in translation errors, a 75% improvement in translation turnaround time, and an 80% cost reduction in overall translation costs. GM’s results have been consistent among the languages, individuals, and processes with which they work, and J2450 is an essential element in GM’s translation process, helping to generate predictable and successful results.

How did GM achieve these results? While the connection of J2450 to the dramatic improvements in quality is obvious, the link to improved speed and cost is not immediately obvious. The key is the systematic application of J2450 to help identify problems and inefficiencies in the translation process and to correct them before they create other problems. Such evaluation might, for example, reveal that many errors are being introduced because of problems in translation memory (TM) usage—matched segments might not be found, or matches might be returning out-of-date material that should have been purged from the TM database during maintenance—and allow corrective steps to be taken before errors compound during other processes.

One of the most dramatic results of using J2450 was that it allowed GM to essentially eliminate time-consuming post-translation review processes. As shown in Figure 1 on page 17, initial error rates for raw (unedited) projects were typically much higher than the customer satisfaction threshold, and projects required substantial editing to meet quality targets. Using J2450 throughout the process, however, led to a decrease in raw error rates, to the point that they began to converge with the rates for edited projects and were below the customer satisfaction threshold. At that point, there is no reason to include a final editing step, and it can be safely left out of the process, substantially decreasing turnaround time and costs since a labor-intensive manual step is no longer needed. Such results, however, are not achieved overnight, and require
consistent dedication and effort. It took GM three years to reach this point, but it now receives consistent benefit from a focus on quality. Simply defining a standard and requiring its use is not enough to achieve these results, however, since standards must be understood, interpreted, and applied correctly. If a supplier implements a quality standard incorrectly, the results will obviously not be optimal, and may conceal major problems, even as they reassure the client that the results are of high quality. Because of the very real potential for misapplication of any quality metric, GM found it very useful to test suppliers’ capability to use the J2450 standard prior to commencement of work.

In order to validate potential suppliers’ use of J2450, the GM language management team prepared a test consisting of 10 sample files (between 325 and 350 words each) in Canadian French, plus GM’s terminology glossary. This information was sent to seven GILT suppliers and each supplier was asked to assess the sample files against the glossary file according to J2450. Each supplier was to calculate its own scores and return the results, along with assessment “mark-ups,” to GM purchasing.

Because GM had produced the source files, the language management team knew what scores to expect. Three of the suppliers (plus the two existing suppliers) achieved benchmark scores that indicated correct application of J2450, while two did not. An examination of the two companies that failed to properly implement J2450 revealed critical issues in two areas:

1. **Failure to effectively compare sample text files to the GM glossary.** Suppliers incorrectly indicated a “wrong term” error to terms that were, in fact, found in the GM glossary. This means that the potential supplier’s tools and techniques were not able to correctly identify exact matches between the sample text and the glossary. This problem indicates that the supplier would not make effective use of translation memory. Since the supplier’s tools would not find previously-translated exact matches, GM would end up paying for the retranslation of materials that should have been reused from the TM database.

2. **Excessive use of the “miscellaneous” error category to mark stylistic issues.** J2450 explicitly excludes stylistic issues from the scope of the metric, but vendors might misuse the miscellaneous error category to mark stylistic issues that should not be considered errors. Such use would seriously skew the results of application of J2450 and indicate nonexistent quality problems.

GM’s trials were able to identify issues concerning how potential suppliers were able to use J2450. In addition, results of the trials were found to be indicative of overall quality, production time, and cost to GM. For the first time GM was able to use a proven and object measure for evaluation of translation quality, timing, and cost.

GM’s experience has convinced the company of the appropriateness of SAE J2450 as a valid tool for measuring translation quality. The tests used to evaluate vendors were both fair and accurate, and the use of such tests in the bid process helps determine capability early on. Such tests do not unfairly disadvantage any individual supplier, especially since the purpose of the test and the interpretation standards are made known before the actual tests are carried out.

**Conclusion**

QA has traditionally been seen as an add-on step at the end of the translation process, but this view ignores the real potential for QA to improve...
the entire translation process. When QA is seen as central to translation and localization efforts, SAE J2450 (and other metrics, like LISA’s QA Model 3.0) can deliver benefits that far exceed improvements in quality. Quality metrics can serve to improve every step of the translation process, from supplier selection to final delivery.

SAE J2450 is based heavily on terminological considerations, and would not be suitable as a quality metric for all vertical industries, nor does it address non-translation quality aspects of the localization process. However, any “terminology-rich” industry, such as medical systems, industrial equipment, or manufacturing, should be able to benefit from the use of J2450 in ways similar to what GM has experienced, and other industries could benefit from other quality metrics, such as LISA’s QA Model, that may be more suited to their particular needs. The point is that an emphasis on quality does not have to represent an additional step (and cost), but can be the gateway to simultaneous improvements in all aspects of the localization process.

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Translating and Interpreting for the Entertainment Industry: A Professional Development Seminar Continued from page 14

used, and a telephone number on the outside case and on the CD itself. That’s all. He suggests including not more than 10 or 15 tracks, each under 60 seconds. Tracks may be labeled, but keep it simple (“narration,” “character voice,” or, if submitting previous work, write the title of the voice-over spot).

Zad recommends sending your demo to translation agencies and companies like his, casting agents (specific to certain genres), talent agents (but don’t sign with one exclusively), advertising agencies, and large multinational corporations that produce materials in-house for various purposes. He also spent some time discussing English-language demos. Your competition in this area will be famous voices, so it is tougher to break in, though easier to get an agent.

Zad briefly discussed auditions for foreign languages. Open-call auditions are few, but they are listed in show business publications. He recommends joining an actors’ union if you are getting enough work to justify it. On the other hand, many industrial training videos are nonunion, and Zad prefers to establish a fair flat rate for these. He also spoke of the tremendous amount of work involved with recording voice prompts, a difficult and very disciplined area. Voice work is growing especially fast in the game and toy industry, which is great if you can do cartoon or character voices.

Once you have the job, the crucial skill is taking direction and using criticism constructively. You might be told, “Read it taller!” or to repeat a section many times for just the right tone. Knowing what you are reading and where it will go will help you to get it right. For your own part, steer clear of criticizing the translation. If something really does not work, a diplomatic way of communicating this is to say, “This is a real tongue twister in my language.” Zad is always looking for new voices. Why not send him yours?

A Job Well Done

We are all indebted to ATA President-elect and Professional Development Committee Chair Marian Greenfield, to ATA Administrative Coordinator and Meeting Planner Teresa Kelly, and to New York Circle of Translators President Guylaine Laperrière for putting together this forum. Any attendees not stage-struck before they arrived certainly were by the time they left.

Attendees should note that Saturday’s session conferred seven ATA Continuing Education Points, and Sunday’s earned four. Saturday’s sessions will also be submitted for CIMCE credit in California and Washington.

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Getting Started:
A Newcomer’s Guide to Translation and Interpretation

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Interpreters live in a dichotomous world. On one end, they are struggling to be viewed as professionals by healthcare providers and institutions. On the opposite end, the communities they serve often perceive them as medical providers. In this article, we aim to help interpreters come to terms with the responsibilities and ambiguities associated with the interpreting profession by exploring key concepts, such as impartiality and transparency in the triadic encounter.

Through a series of true-to-life examples, we will coach interpreters on how to handle complex ethical issues, including: Is it ever possible to be completely impartial in the triadic encounter?

Impartiality Versus Transparency in Cultural Coaching

“The medical interpreter will maintain impartiality.”
(Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association Standards of Practice, 1996)

Since the beginning, a precept of the interpreter movement towards professionalization has been that interpreters must be impartial. The intent of this rule was for interpreters to realize they cannot take sides or impose their own ideas in a session, even if they personally believe that they are helping a patient or a provider.

But the concept of impartiality has often been taken to extremes. Many interpreters would argue that the very act of cultural brokering is a violation of impartiality, since the cultural broker, by necessity, imposes a personal perception on the triadic encounter. Thus, some interpreters have refrained from acting as cultural brokers for the sake of maintaining the mainstream concept of impartiality.

So the question remains: Is it possible to act as a cultural broker while remaining truly impartial?

Cultural brokering is an accepted part of the interpreter’s function. While some interpreters might resist the concept of informing a provider of the possibility of a culture clash before a session begins, such action is supported by section B-2 of the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA) Standards of Practice, which states, as an indicator of mastery, that the professional interpreter’s duty is to share cultural information that may be relevant and help clarify a problem. However, the interpreter should be sure to preface any cultural coaching with a tactful comment such as, “It may not be the case in this particular situation, but in my experience this … (type of reaction, belief, value, practice, etc.) is common among members of (a certain) community, and you may want to check in with the patient on this issue.”

Just how far can an interpreter go as a cultural broker? While the answer varies with each case, the MMIA Standards of Practice states that the interpreter, in order to fully accomplish his or her work, must “pick up on verbal and nonverbal cues that may indicate the listener is confused or does not understand,” and intervene accordingly. Hence, we see the need for some action, and perhaps a certain measure of assertiveness, on the part of the interpreter. Thus, impartiality is not synonymous with inaction, and the interpreter who sticks to the role of conduit to maintain impartiality will hinder, and not help, a session.

Yes, impartiality is a difficult concept for a human being to grasp. Even professionals with many years of experience in the triadic encounter struggle with living up to this standard of practice. It can be especially difficult when the interpreter knows there are high stakes involved, such as the patient’s mental and physical well being, as well as a possibly adverse community reaction to an interpreter who does not follow “proper” cultural etiquette or religious norms.

The act of acknowledging the struggle with impartiality, paired with the ability to manage personal discomfort in the triadic encounter, is called transparency. In transparency, it is understood that the interpreter may not impose personal feelings on a session. In mental health, the imposition of personal feelings on a session can be referred to as transference, and can sometimes be defined as unconscious feelings that are related to the ways in which relationships with family and connection to culture influence one’s behavior as a cultural broker. A transparent interpreter, rather than omitting information, would acknowledge a perceived cultural conflict in a private conversation with the provider and collaborate in the provider’s search for healthy alternatives.

For example, abortion is one of various treatment choices offered by providers in cases of high-risk...
Understanding the Power of a Medical Interpreter Continued

pregnancy. An interpreter may strongly believe that a patient from a certain ethnic or religious group will walk away from a session as soon as the word “abortion” is mentioned. Or the interpreter may predict an adverse reaction to clinical suggestions and a subsequent failure to return for follow-up treatment. The interpreter, under pressure, might make the deliberate decision not to interpret the provider’s comments on abortion. Clearly, this would be the wrong professional choice and an abuse of power. And yet the number of interpreter service coordinators who get calls from medical providers and support staffs that suspect an interpreter has deliberately omitted vital information is astounding.

If it becomes evident that the patient might harbor a deep distrust of the American medical system, perhaps due to a perceived cultural or religious lapse on the part of the provider, the transparent interpreter should address this possibility privately with the provider. Instead of making generalizations to promote stereotypes, the interpreter might preface the cultural coaching with the clarifying phrases “it seems to me” or “it is my understanding.” The interpreter must take care not to lump entire ethnic or religious groups together, as such rigidity is detrimental to the triadic relationship and can steer a provider in the wrong direction.

The challenge in cultural coaching is that an interpreter must determine whether the perceived conflict stems from the patient, or if it is, in reality, a personal issue for the interpreter. Even professionals of the highest caliber sometimes experience countertransference issues in the triadic encounter. Countertransference is the interpreter’s conscious or unconscious emotional response to the patient or provider. In countertransference, the conflict perceived by the interpreter may not initially have been an issue for the patient, but could easily be carried by the interpreter to the point of becoming an impediment to successful triadic communication.

Interpreters who have not been coached on how to approach controversial issues such as abortion often attempt to manage difficult sessions by “shutting down” or repressing feelings of discomfort, rather than working them out. When personal conflict is ignored, the result is often impulsive behavior, such as the failure to interpret information shared in a session.

Hence, as interpreter trainers and program coordinators reexamine the concept of impartiality, they begin to look closely at how other healthcare professions deal with similar issues, and it becomes clear that interpreters must be trained in transparency, rather than in cold impartiality. In transparency, the fact remains that interpreters cannot impose their own ideas or take sides in a session, but there is a deeper understanding, namely: interpreters are human beings and, as such, cannot be entirely impartial when dealing with certain situations, events, and beliefs.

Transparent interpreters are encouraged to identify, explore, and work through personal biases that could potentially affect their performance in the triadic encounter. Simultaneously, they are trained to discern the potential for cultural misunderstanding in a session. When they sense a breakdown in intercultural communication, they control the impulse to “fix” or to “explain,” and, instead of imposing doubt and acting as providers, they wait for the right moment to provide the necessary coaching.

The transparent interpreter chooses to inform the provider of the possibility of the existence of cultural or religious beliefs that may affect the patient’s reaction to a specific treatment plan, and may suggest to the provider culturally appropriate ways of approaching controversial issues. This brief intervention should be done in a non-imposing way, and the interpreter should suggest that the provider explain to the patient that a potentially sensitive topic is about to be discussed. In the above-mentioned example, the interpreter might have suggested to the provider, in a private discussion outside the exam room, the use of a synonym for the term “abortion,” such as “terminating the pregnancy” or “ending the pregnancy.” If the provider were to agree, the interpreter would simply interpret, and both parties would wait to see the patient’s reaction to the clinical recommendations.

In an abortion case, standard close-ended questioning may prove useless to the provider. For example, the provider may inform the patient of her choices and the patient may answer “yes” without really meaning it, which could lead the provider to believe that the patient had indeed agreed to the abortion. Close-ended questions often do not work well for patients who do not feel comfortable challenging authority, and the interpreter, familiar with this aspect of the patient’s culture, may suspect that the patient’s answer was just a formality. Rather than asking the patient about her choice of whether or not to have an abortion, the interpreter could first ask the provider to step outside. Privately, the interpreter could suggest that the provider use the explanatory model, in which he or she begins to “explain” the reason for a consideration of “the termination” or “the ending” of the pregnancy, perhaps in a story form.

To summarize, there are extreme cases in which a provider may believe that a mother’s survival depends on her decision to go ahead with an abortion.
On the other hand, a mother’s personal belief system may prohibit even the discussion of abortion as an option. But as a result of the transparent interpreter’s cultural coaching, both provider and patient will have the opportunity to hear each other’s views through unobstructed cross-cultural communication. The interpreter’s intervention will result in the patient’s awareness of her clinical options, and in the provider’s greater understanding of that patient’s beliefs. The patient will make the decision, and the transparent interpreter will leave the session with the freedom of a good conscience, knowing that he or she did not Withhold any information from the patient or provider or influence the decision-making process through omission. Of course, if the interpreter does not feel that he or she can objectively interpret in cases involving abortion or other sensitive matters, it is permissible for the interpreter to reject the assignment. A future article will further address this issue.

However, if the interpreter had acted merely as a conduit, interpreting spoken words while ignoring their underlying cultural and religious implications, the patient might have left the session to never return for follow-up care, possibly suffering complications and even death. It is clear, then, that by explaining to the provider the possible harmful outcome of the use of the term “abortion,” the interpreter may actually have contributed to a positive outcome in a triadic relationship where respect and trust are preserved.

Should an interpreter address the provider or the patient when performing the non-conduit aspects of medical interpretation?

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

A patient refuses to take his medication, so that he can keep drinking his daily glass of wine. The interpreter, familiar with this culturally influenced custom, fears that the patient will not tell the provider about neglecting the treatment, so she tells the patient that since he’s not an alcoholic, it’s all right to drink the one glass, as long as he is aware of the adverse reaction between alcohol and the medication. When the patient sees the doctor at a follow-up visit, it appears that alcohol is a major issue in the healing process. The patient has a history of alcoholism.

A young patient is pregnant. She insists on having a caesarian, a common practice in her country of origin. As both the interpreter and the patient leave the session to schedule a follow-up appointment, the patient complains to the interpreter that doctors in the U.S. are not as friendly as doctors in her country. The interpreter attempts to correct this perceived misunderstanding and tells the patient that in the U.S., caesarians are not recommended unless the delivery is considered high risk. At a subsequent visit, the provider, unaware of the patient’s feelings and conversation with the interpreter, finds the patient resistant to treatment suggestions and that she voices multiple complaints regarding her pregnancy. He begins to order more tests.

In all these cases, the interpreters stepped outside the boundaries of their profession and became, for just a moment, medical providers. By practicing cultural coaching with patients, 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 by promoting an environment in which the boundaries between interpreting and medical practice are blurred. And their advice could kill.

Do interpreters really have “power” over patients? Well, to the patient, the interpreter is the one who 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, “and the interpreter is my friend.”

Understandably, patients may initially relish the thought of having a friend or ally in the triadic encounter. It is up to the interpreter, then, to balance the distribution of power in a medical session. In the above-mentioned cases, the interpreter would have done well to hold a pre-session and/or post-session with the provider, or at the very least, to pull the provider aside to discuss the cultural issues that could potentially influence the session. Once informed of the cultural issues involved, the provider could then take the initiative to address the subject with the patient. After all, the ultimate goal of an interpreting session is that the patient and provider develop a therapeutic alliance. And a large part of the healing process stems from a patient’s trust in a provider.
In conclusion, culture shapes meaning, and interpreters have the power to “save lives” when they accurately convey the meaning of the message. But interpreters can also “kill” patients through inaccurate interpretation due to a poor understanding of self (transference and countertransference). May we all strive to be transparent interpreters and to fully accomplish our work, thus securing the success of cross-cultural communication in the triadic encounter!

References
Matters of Life and Death

By Rafael A. Rivera

On April 15, 1975, Karen Ann Quinlan, a 21 year-old female with an unremarkable medical history, was taken to an emergency room after lapsing into a coma while under the influence of alcohol and drugs. She was placed on life support and given a reasonable expectation of recovery, but never regained consciousness. The evolution of this case opened a new era in modern medicine, raising questions not only of a medical nature, but also introducing a number of challenging social and juridical dilemmas, as well as a distinct new terminology.

Karen’s clinical status persisted indefinitely, hallmarked by the continuing presence of a minimal amount of cerebral electrical activity, which was entirely inconsequential and discernible only by means of sensitive monitors. From a clinical standpoint, Karen’s life had ended. Nevertheless, the persistent trace of cerebral electrical activity forced the doctors to conclude that a cerebral death had not yet taken place. Consequently, she was considered “still alive” and, as such, ongoing life support measures/efforts were still prescribed. The case gave rise to the term “persistent vegetative state (PVS)” to describe this clinical picture.

Once Karen’s parents were made aware of their daughter’s predicament and the highly unlikely expectation of recovery, they requested the removal of all life support equipment. This was denied as matter of course under state law—which stated that removing life support would be tantamount to assisted homicide. The Quinlans took the case to court, where, under the doctrine of substituted judgment, they demanded that their daughter be removal from the ventilator and that all forms of life support be discontinued. It took 10 long years before the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey granted the parents their wish. All life support efforts were finally stopped and Karen eventually died a natural death.

The medical community had not yet recovered from the Quinlans’ legal saga when another young woman, Nancy Cruzan, repeated history when she entered a PVS as a result of a car accident. From that moment on, the medico-legal panorama in North America was definitely transformed. The case of Cruzan vs. Missouri Department of Health rapidly coursed through our national juridical system up to our Federal Supreme Court, where, for the first time in history, the Court recognized the right to refuse treatment as a constitutional privilege.

It ruled that such a right is equally applicable before or after the initiation of any treatment. On the surface, this may not appear to be a significant issue, yet it has always been a serious headache for clinical decision making at the bedside. Simultaneously, the Supreme Court imposed the requirement to show clear and convincing evidence that such a refusal does indeed represent the expressed wishes of the patient. The Supreme Court’s requirement can be met by means of a legal document called a living will, a term first coined by the New Jersey courts during the Quinlan case, and later reinforced in Cruzan vs. Missouri.

“…Even when all the appropriate documentation is obtained, carrying out the expressed wishes of the patient fails much too often…”

The latest unfortunate case to enter the national scene is that of Terri Schiavo, a nurse who has been in a PVS for the last 13 years. She did not leave a living will. Therefore, on the basis of the substituted judgment of her husband, her feeding tube was finally removed following the order of a Florida circuit court judge. Outraged Right To Life protestors and Terri’s parents, who expressed a desire to care for their daughter indefinitely, claimed that such an order was the equivalent of legalized murder. The state governor intervened, following which the Florida legislature enacted emergency legislation (now known as Terri’s Law) that reversed the local federal magistrate. The aggregate national opinion of neurological experts who examined the patient and medical ethicists familiar with the case, as well as legal observers at large, has been one of great surprise. They conclude that the State of Florida’s actions undermines the authority of the local circuit court judge and, by extension, the legal system, including Supreme Court opinions that carefully created the roadmap to deal with these complex and highly emotional cases. The Florida Supreme Court has recently agreed to hear the Schiavo case.

There are currently approximately 35,000 similar cases in the U.S. Unfortunately, many will find themselves at the center of such multidimensional battles. This writer is in complete agreement with Dr. Joseph Fins, medical ethicist at New...
York Weill Medical Center, who said: “You can be sure that one wish Terri Schiavo would have is that her family wouldn’t have fallen into this dispute at a time when she can’t speak for herself” (Ref. 1). The inscription on Nancy Cruzan’s tombstone poignantly puts it all in context:

**Born July 25, 1957**  
**Departed Jan. 11, 1983**  
**At Peace Dec. 26, 1990**

For those patients who suffer serious illnesses or find themselves in the terminal stages of an illness who have already stated their end-of-life wishes through a living will, it is still necessary to fulfill another requirement: to designate another person to whom the patient transfers his or her decision-making powers. This power of attorney designee ensures that the wishes of the patient (the power giver) are fulfilled as planned and set in motion whenever the patient loses his or her mental capacity. This designation is known as a **durable power of attorney for healthcare/medical decision-making**; the designee is known as an **attorney for healthcare or healthcare surrogate/agent or proxy**. The set of documents comprising the living will and the durable power of attorney for healthcare decision-making is called the **advanced directives**. The terms “advanced directives” and “living will” are often erroneously used interchangeably. In some cases, these advanced directives include instructions for the donation of organs and other special dispositions.

All the requirements mentioned above—set in motion by the Federal Supreme Court and subsequently converted into local state versions—obtained legislative recognition during the 1990 Congress as the **Patient Self Determination Act**.

It should also be noted that even when all the appropriate documentation is obtained, carrying out the expressed wishes of the patient fails much too often. The communication and coordination between patients, family members, attending physicians, consulting physicians, and hospital personnel should be perfect, but usually isn’t. After a long and detailed study concerning the medical mindset of physicians during the management of 9,000 terminally ill patients under excellent medical care at five nationally renowned U.S. medical centers, it was concluded that: “to keep the patient alive, under conditions obviously impossible to alter and against legally expressed wishes, is the behavior of the typical physician with the typical patient under terminal conditions” (Refs. 2, 3, 4).

There are multiple reasons for persevering to keep patients alive despite overwhelming odds, but space limitations do not permit detailed elaboration. A prominent factor is the fighting disposition that is characteristic of the American clinical physician. This is an attitude rooted in our Heroic Period of Medicine (1780-1850), when an aggressive approach to saving lives justified all efforts. Such an attitude has remained with us as a penetrating gene that reverberates in our modern clinical focus, and is expressed clearly in our vocabulary. For instance: we must **combat** the disease, **attack** the virus; we have ongoing **wars against cancer, drugs**; we speak of **aggressive therapies**, **invasive procedures**, **lifesaving surgery**; and are proud of our **therapeutic armamentarium** (Ref. 5). Emergency medicine is also at its high point in daily practice, and is a popular subject of television programming. At the same time, we are under extraordinary legal scrutiny, a telescopic sight whose net effect is for us to do more rather than less. All in all, the average clinician is not likely to “give up,” expressed wishes notwithstanding, until his level of futility reaches far beyond that of everybody else.

At the moment, the trajectory is going from the refusal of treatment to permit a natural death towards the search for active medical help to end life expeditiously in situations where it is agreed upon that there is nothing else to be done but remain in a state of permanent misery until natural death supervenes. A special situation where life-saving measures would be continued despite the prognosis is where a pregnant woman in a PVS or with a terminal illness is excluded from the legal dispositions of a living will so long as the fetus is capable of growth and development. However, the fact still remains that ending life in a PVS while on life support in a hospital setting is a mosaic of desolation. It’s an accelerated sensitivity course in human dignity; an eye opening experience any observer will never forget.

The State of Oregon was the first to enact a **physician-aid-in-dying** possibility (as a **death with dignity law**) that permits, under rigidly defined circumstances, a **physician-assisted suicide**. In June 1997, the U.S. Supreme Court, after considering concrete cases from Washington and New York, determined that there is no constitutional right to a physician-assisted suicide. However, the court also added that there is no impediment in the Constitution that would prohibit the state to permit such assistance to the dying. Such assistance is considered a crime in the majority of our states. On a subsequent general vote asking citizens to repeal the Act, Oregon residents chose to maintain it by a 60% to 40% margin. Finally, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft has tried to
block the law, however, the Death With Dignity Law has been recently upheld once more by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In general, there is a veritable word salad when it comes to medico-legal constructs trying to overcome the criminal umbrella that overshadows humane assistance for a patient who is certifiably only capable of suffering physically and psychologically to the end.

Finally, the last voices to be heard belong to those who are completely incapacitated, in an irreversible and unalterable process towards death, who are not in a terminal stage of illness and who are in full control of their mental capacities. These folks are quite capable of discerning their options and expressing their wish to be helped in finalizing a life considered to be a total ruin: physically, psychologically, and financially. The classic example of this group is ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gherig’s Disease). This is the area in which Dr. Jack Kevorkian intervened actively before his incarceration by the State of Michigan. Dr. Sherwin Nuland, retired Harvard Medical School Professor of Surgery and author of bestselling books such as How We Die (Ref. 6), spoke concisely and accurately in an editorial entitled “Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia in Practice,” published in the renowned medical journal, The New England Journal of Medicine (Ref. 7):

“Is it really conceivable that human beings facing death, weakened to the extreme by their terminal state—with all the physical and emotional anguish that such a situation entails—be rejected irrevocably in their efforts to receive medical help to end their lives. Is it possible to witness such a death and believe such a thing? … Physicians are not prepared to end life. Should we accept that responsibility, we need the necessary training… It is just a matter of time before institutionalized medicine recognizes the need to support those physicians who feel a moral obligation to provide such a help … preferably sooner than later… Those physicians who agree with the right of a person to choose death when their agony can not be relieved should be ruled by their conscience on deciding whether to help or not. Once the decision to intervene has been made the goal should be to insure for the patient the most compassionate and peaceful death possible.

References
1. TIME Magazine. October 27, 2003, p. 44.

End-of-Life Glossary (English → Spanish)
1. advance directives: instrucciones / directrices / disposiciones // adelantadas // por adelantado // instrucciones en caso de incapacidad // instrucciones sobre mi tratamiento en caso de incapacidad
2. assisted suicide: suicidio asistido / ayudado // por un médico
3. attending physician: médico de cabecera // en EE.UU es el médico responsable de todos los aspectos del cuidado de un paciente hospitalizado. En España el médico de cabecera es el médico que atiende a las necesidades generales de la familia. Tal médico se conoce en los EE.UU como PCP, primary care physician, médico de cuidados primarios (siguiendo la terminología del managed care / cuidados administrados); generalista
4. attorney for health care: apoderado legal / representante // para la atención médica/ cuidados médicos
beating heart cadaver: cadaver con/de corazón latiente // estado en el cual se mantienen las funciones cardiopulmonares artificialmente para dos propósitos específicos: la donación de órganos o una mujer embarazada con un feto viable

brain death: muerte cerebral...el cese de toda función cerebral determinada por un trazado electroencefalográfico (EEG). Cuando no hay actividad eléctrica en la corteza cerebral (funciones cognitivas), el paciente en estado vegetativo persistente se considera legalmente vivo; sólo cuando también se pierde actividad eléctrica en el área medular (responsable de reflejos primitivos, funciones vegetativas, e.g., toser, tragar, respirar etc.) se considera que la persona ha incurrido una muerte cerebral i.e., una muerte total. Whole Brain Death (WBD) (Presidential Commission, 1983)

clear and convincing evidence: prueba clara y convincente

coma: coma // pérdida de conocimiento y capacidad de responder a estímulos (unconsciousness and unresponsiveness). Causas múltiples

consulting physician: médico consultor

DNR/Do Not Resuscitate: No resucitar / No se resucite...la orden médica –escrita y firmada por un médico – necesaria para no intervenir en caso de paro cardíaco o respiratorio. Se puede expedir esta orden para evitar la resuscitación / reanimación fuera del hospital (carta al paciente) para el posible caso en que el paciente en estado terminal se encuentre en circunstancias donde es normal resucitar automáticamente a menos que se haya prescrito lo contrario

clinical death = heart-lung death. muerte clínica / muerte cardiopulmonar // forma tradicional de expresar la muerte usual: primero cesa el corazón y poco después los pulmones.

legal death: muerte legal o jurídica // muerte que usualmente no requiere una investigación policial: muerte en el campo de batalla, muerte como cumplimiento de pena capital, aborto, suicidio (bajo circunstancias sospechosas los últimos dos provocan una investigación). La palabra abortion / aborto es un término tradicional médico que significa: terminación prematura del embarazo – espontáneo o terapéutico. Las voces coloquiales miscarriage / pérdida, son contemporáneas, como lo son las connotaciones sociales, jurídicas y éticas del aborto

non-natural deaths: muertes no naturales // muerte por causas ‘no naturales’: homicidio, suicidio, envenenamiento, actos de violencia

natural death: muerte natural // para propósitos prácticos y estadísticos, toda muerte causada por o relacionada a una / varias enfermedades y/o complicaciones

Death With Dignity Act: Ley / Edicto para la muerte digna

durable power of attorney for health care: poder notarial duradero para la atención médica / cuidados médicos. Algunos consideran que la palabra duradero es una redundancia ya que todo poder notarial es, por definición, revocable en cualquier momento

euthanasia: eutanasia // muerte tranquila e indolora fue la acepción original que todavía es la principal. A través del tiempo, mercy killing...muerte piadosa ha ganado uso común; esto significa inducir, deliberadamente, tal muerte en condiciones de agonía intolerable, el equivalente de eutanasia activa

active eu: eutanasia activa // inducir la muerte mediante la prescripción o administración de medicamentos o drogas

passive eu: eutanasia pasiva // aligerar la muerte mediante la interrupción de tratamientos o métodos de sostén de vida

health care surrogate/proxy/agent: representante / sustituto /suplente/subrogado/ágen te para atención médica

health care provider: proveedor de servicios médicos... inicialmente se refería sóloamente al médico, hoy el uso incluye a
enfermeras, técnicos y otros miembros del health care team .. equipo médico

18. hospice: hospicio...// en los EE.UU hospicio no es el nombre dado a una residencia de cuidados, sino un concepto de cuidados paliativos para pacientes en estado terminal y sus familiares hasta el fin de vida. Los cuidados se ofrecen en cualquier entorno, preferiblemente el hogar o domicilio primario, aunque también el hospital, residencias de cuidado, hasta las prisiones; en suma, donde quiera. La unidad de cuidados / the unit of care consiste del paciente y su familia o allegados; es una preparación multidimensional para la muerte

19. life sustaining treatments/methods: tratamientos/métodos para el sostén de vida // intervenciones médicas que reemplazan funciones vitales básicas necesarias para vivir. El termino support traduce mejor como sostén, apoyo, mantenimiento, ayuda y no como soporte

20. living will: testamento vital / última declaración voluntaria en vida / declaración de voluntad en vida / disposición ante notario para no prolongar la vida en caso de enfermedad terminal. Testamento vital es la frase con mayor vigencia en los EE.UU, Puerto Rico, Mejico

21. natural death: muerte natural // en sentido tradicional significa una muerte causada por enfermedad conocida o presunta, así sirve el propósito estadístico. Hoy en día se refiere también a la muerte que ocurre sin intervenciones artificiales. En algunos estados de la nación la legislación precedente al testamento vital se conoce como “la ley de muerte natural”

22. palliative care: cuidados paliativos // intervenciones provistas por un equipo diverso (médicos, enfermeras, personal religioso y social) destinadas al alivio sintomático sin intención de curar o alterar el curso de la enfermedad. Se ha creado recientemente una nueva rama de la medicina llamada Medicina Paliativa

23. palliative medicine: medicina paliativa..., ibid palliative care... y además incluye interés en las areas de pediatría y geriatría con atención al contexto cultural del paciente

24. persistent vegetative state (PVS): estado vegetativo persistente (EVP) // un estado de coma profundo y sostenido causado por daño cerebral extenso atribuible a multiples causas; las más comunes son el traumatismo craneano accidentes, armas de fuego) y la combinación de isquemia(pobre circulación) y anoxia (falta de oxígeno). No existe tratamiento específico y el pronóstico es, con raras excepciones, fatal. Este estado se define a base de la presencia de actividad eléctrica sólo en el área medular del cerebro, la responsable de las funciones vegetativas del cuerpo humano (tragar, toser, respirar, parpadear, movimientos involuntarios)


26. physician: médico...////...en los EE.UU se refiere, en términos legales, solo a doctores en medicina alopática u osteopatía – los únicos autorizados por ley a, entre otras cosas, prescribir medicamentos y drogas controladas y certificar nacimientos o defunciones. Existen otros ‘physicians’ como chiropractic physician, naturopathic physician, homeopathic physician y otros, proveedores de esclulas que hoy se consideran fuera del círculo de la medicina convencional o alopática, también llamada ortodoxa–la que ha predominado en la medicina norteamericana contemporánea por los últimos 100 años. Estos otros physicians no tienen entrenamiento, certificación o reconocimiento jurídico equivalente al médico recién graduado y luego adiestrado en alguna especialidad de la medicina i.e., medicina interna, cirugía, etc. Sólo ocasionalmente se otorgan privilegios para ejercer la profesión quiropráctica a nivel de hospital

Los médicos graduados de facultades / escuelas de medicina en los EE.UU y Canadá - los que llevan las iniciales M.D. (medicinae doctors) después del nombre - son alópatas / allopathic physicians. Allopathic Medicine = Conventional Medicine = Orthodox Medicine = Western Medicine, todos son equivalentes

27. physician-aid-in-dying: ayuda/ atención/assistencia médica para morir

28. physician-assisted suicide: suicidio asistido/ ayudado por un médico

29. right to refuse medical treatment: derecho al rechazo de
By Yolanda France

According to research at an English University, it doesn’t matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter are in the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole, and the brain figures it out anyway.

Matt Davis, a researcher at the Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit at Cambridge University, says that the preceding paragraph touches on a keenly debated issue in psychology: When we read, does the mind process individual letters or whole words?

He explains that what “Aoccdrnig to rscheearch” says is often true, but not always. For example, the paragraph in question is understandable because the jumbled words did not become other words, as would occur with “salt” and “slat.” The paragraph also has many short words; two- and three-letter words don’t change at all, and four-letter words are easy to figure out. Function words such as “be” and “can” remain the same, which allows the reader to make meaningful connections. And finally, the words have not been jumbled to cause the most confusion (e.g., porblem for problem, instead of pborlem, and toatl for total, instead of taol).

“...When we read, does the mind process individual letters or whole words?...”

On the other hand, whereas “A dooer has ainitied to magltheuansr of a tageene pintaat aetfr a hatospil durg blendur” can be deciphered, Davis maintains that sentences with long scrambled words do become unintelligible to the human mind at some point.

As for readers of other languages, can they also play this jumble game? Obstacles exist. For example, vowels tend to be omitted in Semitic languages, languages such as Finnish have extremely long words, and Thai eliminates spaces between words. However, since “Aoccdrnig to rscheearch” began circulating on the Internet in September of 2003, Davis can account for its appearance in Spanish, French, Dutch, Danish, German, Portuguese, Swedish, Bahasa Indonesia, Russian, Albanian, Hungarian, Italian, Gaelic, Polish, Czech, and Icelandic (See www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/personal/matt.davis/Cmabrigde).

Whether the mind reads by the letter or by the word, this much is clear: people can have fun in many languages with word jumbles, and some translators have begun to do the tsiw.

Translations with a Twist

Understanding the Power of a Medical Interpreter Continued from page 22

Cultural Competency and Translation for Research

By Alejandra E. Koval

There’s more to translating research instruments than meets the eye. The translation of surveys and forms into Spanish presents additional challenges above and beyond the translation of other types of documents, such as information and educational brochures (which are also used for research purposes). A translator must understand the cognitive and emotional processes of the respondents, many of whom are unfamiliar with the documents they are filling out, before he can render a culturally sensitive translation. Through a case study involving the development of a medical survey for Latinos in North Carolina, this article will discuss some issues that need to be considered when translating for research.

Latinos in North Carolina: Healthcare and Research

North Carolina has the fastest growing Latino population in the country. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Latino population in North Carolina has grown 394%, from 76,726 (1990) to 378,963 (2000). Most of the Latino immigrants (65.1%) are of Mexican origin (Ref. 4). New arrivals are mainly from the rural areas of Mexico, such as the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, where access to healthcare services is limited. They come initially as migrant workers, generally finding employment on one of the state’s many tobacco farms. From there, immigrants are then able to get more permanent jobs in construction, the furniture industry, and in poultry plants. The average level of education of Hispanics/Latinos who immigrate to the area is the fifth grade (for most, reading is not a regular activity nor a pastime).

More than one quarter (27.4%) of the Latino population lives in poverty, and most of those who have recently arrived are uninsured (Ref. 3). As such, Latinos make up a growing percentage of the population who receive healthcare, or have the potential to receive it, regardless of their insurance or immigration status. This is a fact that has major implications for public health. Because of this, many research efforts focusing on healthcare issues are being targeted to this population.

“…Cultural competence in research instrument development entails being sensitive to the users’ needs, cognitive style, and literacy background…”

Although a good amount of paper-work (in-take questionnaires, forms, instructions, educational brochures, etc.) is available in Spanish, many of the translations of research instruments designed to be completed by the Latino community are alarmingly substandard. Many of these documents have probably been “translated” by under-qualified individuals. For example, a perusal of some of these survey materials revealed the following inaccuracies: “tender” (sore) translated as “tierno”; “Advance Directives” translated as “Cuidados en Avance”; and “living will” translated as “testamento vivo.” However, even if these materials are translated into grammatically correct Spanish, when it comes to research interventions, there is still no guarantee that they will receive a positive response from the Latino population. It has been demonstrated time and time again that addressing the needs of underserved immigrant groups from a mainstream perspective is ineffective.

A lack of cultural appropriateness in research causes study subjects to be apprehensive and distrustful. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a “culturally competent” approach to documents for interventions.

A pediatrician consortium recently expressed their concern over this issue by stating that: “Lack of suitable, valid research instruments for Latino children is recognized as a concern by all consortium members. Such instruments rarely are designed with Latino children in mind or in consultation with Latino researchers, and so are unsuitable for Latino children because they are not culturally or linguistically appropriate. For example, initial Spanish translations were too awkward, culturally inappropriate, insufficiently idiomatic, frequently lacking in conceptual equivalence, and at an inappropriately high reading level for the target population” (Ref. 1, my emphasis).

It is essential to understand not only the characteristics of the target population being studied, but also how they operate when faced with a written survey. When designing materials for research, researchers and translators need to ask many questions, including:

• What is a culturally competent approach, and how do we accomplish it?
• Should we design instruments (surveys, tests, etc.) to be read or to be listened to?

The case study described here attempts to illustrate the importance of being culturally sensitive when developing a questionnaire. It will provide insight into some cognitive aspects of answering surveys, as well as make a few recommendations for translators who aid healthcare researchers.
Case Study: Pediatric Project

From December 2001 to June 2002, I participated in a pediatric study, both as a researcher and translator. The study, an intervention in violence prevention and safety matters, focused on four domains: media, discipline, guns, and family/peer arguments. It was conducted at doctors’ offices and targeted to over 3,500 participants (parents of children 2-11 years of age, some of whom were underserved and disadvantaged) all over the country, 20% of whom were Latino. One of the goals of the study was to evaluate if this intervention has different effects in different cultures or ethnicities.

If the parent agreed to enroll his or her child in the study, she or he completed a survey prior to seeing the doctor. The survey consisted of about eight pages and contained questions on the four domains being studied. The questions were designed to test how much information parents had and what they thought about discipline, the media, firearms, and violence. During the doctor’s visit, the physician addressed issues pertaining to the four domains in relation to the participating child.

Towards the end of the visit, the doctor provided “tangible tools” as needed: a timer and/or a cable lock and/or a community referral and a recommendation guide. The study also included a post-visit survey, a one-month follow-up telephone survey, and a six-month telephone survey.

Examples from the survey provided in this article are illustrated in English, except when it is relevant to present the Spanish rendering.

Stage 1

I joined the study team during the pilot stage to pre-test the Spanish instrument and to collect follow-up data via telephone interviews. The survey had already been translated into Spanish. The translation with which I started working contained many instances of inaccurate Spanish renderings, as illustrated below:

A) Lexico-semantic and spelling problems:

Survey item: “Me preocupa que mi hijo es más agresivo que otros jóvenes de su edad.”
Respondent’s comment: “¿Jóvenes? No tengo hijos grandes.”

Survey item: “Yo tengo intenciones de usar el medidor de tiempo para hacer tiempos de enfriamiento” for “I intend to use the timer for cool-down periods.”

Survey item: “Yo tengo intenciones de usar el medidor de tiempo para hacer el seguimiento de la referencia comunitaria” for “I intend to use the timer to follow-up on the community referral.”

“[Guardian]” was translated as guardián and guardian.

B) Terminology used was inconsistent and not culturally appropriate:

“[Spanking]” was translated as zurra, tunda, palizada, paliza, and nalgada. Some Mexicans found the term zurra taboo. The most commonly used word reported was nalgada.

C) Notation problems:
iño/a, hijo/a, and 2a.: gender options and numbering system were difficult to understand.

D) Convoluted and lengthy translations and high-register terms:

“Cuando usted era niño/a, ¿era la televisión la actividad y el entretenimiento principal o más usual para la familia?” for “When you were a child, was television the main form of family entertainment?”

“Cuántas veces le explicó usted alguna escena o cuestión que el menor vio en TV para aclararle la diferencia entre como son las cosas en la TV y como son en la realidad?” for “How often did you explain [to your child] what something on TV really meant?”

High-register terms included treguas for “time-outs,” el menor for “the child,” and salvaguardar for “to store.”

E) Some items were not translated.

First Testing Round

I began testing the instrument by conducting cognitive interviews. This is a qualitative method of assessing how people respond to questions, what they are thinking while they answer, what thoughts are triggered by the questions, and what hindrances to comprehension they encounter. The interviewer is not supposed to provide answers, but makes notes of the questions, comments, remarks, and body language of the respondent, and notes any signs of confusion. The interviewer also times respondents.

I conducted interviews in doctors’ offices, stores, and at a health fair in a mall. I interviewed individuals from different Latin American countries in order to test how well the linguistic variants were understood by respondents. I administered the survey to equal numbers of men and women, although our team was aware that most of the participants in the study would be mothers and female caregivers. I emphasized to the respondents that I was not interested in reading their answers, so as to assure them that they could answer candidly.
On average, it took 30 minutes to complete the survey, which was technically designed to take 15 minutes. It was a painstaking and exhausting experience, and many participants (40%) gave up halfway through the process. Some individuals found the topic very interesting, and decided to keep the survey so that they could read it again at their leisure. The main difficulties I observed were: poor comprehension of the text, inability to understand the format, lack of experience with filling out surveys, and the cultural inappropriateness of the instrument.

A) Poor comprehension of the instrument due to:

- Very low reading level of the subjects (they actually read aloud, grappling through the words).
- Complexity, lack of clarity, and length of the questions. Some questions were not clearly written in English and were poorly translated. (Example: “My friend and family think I should watch TV with my kids.” One mom asked, “What does the question mean, that I should do it; that I should do it with them?”)
- Terminology issues. For example, the following were not understood across the board: referencia comunitaria (a poor translation for “community referral”); tundas, zurras, and paliza (for spanking); and penitencias (for “punishment”).

B) Inability to navigate the survey:

The first survey was printed on a teleform (a form that can be scanned to enter data). This created “sight flow” issues (i.e., respondents did not realize that the categories for response were on the right and that the circles underneath the categories were to be marked). Their eyes would not move to the right side of the sheet, and they were confused when they couldn’t find the place to answer. In addition, every other row was shadowed, which created more confusion. For example, see Figure 1.

Respondents also encountered the following problems:

- Questions were broken up. The first part of the question was typed as the header for a few questions and the remainder of the question was typed on different lines.
- Notation issues (“2a.” format for question numbering).
- Lack of consistency between the heading and the questions asked.

For example, see Figure 2.

Figure 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over the past month…</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.) How often did you discipline your child by using time-outs?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.) How often did you discipline your child by taking away privileges?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

“Some kids watch a lot of TV and some kids a little. We are interested in how many hours your child watches television.”

During the WEEKDAYS, when your child is at home, about how many hours does he/she:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before noon/before school</th>
<th>Watch TV/Videos</th>
<th>Play computer games/Gameboy</th>
<th>Play outside</th>
<th>Read/someone reads to child</th>
<th>Structured activities (ex. dance, sports)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hrs</td>
<td>hrs</td>
<td>hrs</td>
<td>hrs</td>
<td>hrs</td>
<td>hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Noon-5pm/after school | hrs | hrs | hrs | hrs | hrs |

| After 5pm/before bedtime | hrs | hrs | hrs | hrs | hrs |
The grid required information on other activities aside from watching TV. Some respondents filled out the information for the TV/videos column and ignored the rest, moving on to the next question. In addition, the introductory paragraph forced respondents to do a lot of reading.

- Skip patterns (refers to the instruction given to the respondent to skip certain questions, depending on his or her previous answer). See Figure 3 for an example. Skip patterns were seldom understood.

C) **Lack of experience with surveys:**

Latino individuals who speak little or no English have either lived in the U.S. for a short period of time or have simply not acculturated fully. Reading is not a common activity in their cognitive inventory, let alone responding to an eight-page written survey.

D) **Cultural inappropriateness of the instrument:**

The instrument was not culturally appropriate for the reasons explained above. It was time-consuming and labor intensive. In addition to writing their answers, respondents were also required to read fluently. Introductions to the various sections of the survey were included in an attempt to make respondents feel at ease. Unfortunately, however, reading these sections considerably increased the length of time required to fill out the survey, and so they became more of a hindrance to the process. Also, some questions did not reflect the nature of the target culture.

**Example 1:**

“In the past month, when your child watched TV/videos/computer games, how often did you help the child understand what s/he saw on TV?” (One mom responded that her children were the ones who helped her understand what she saw on TV.)

**Example 2:**

The survey included salary information. Items with annual figures are not good choices for this population. Almost every respondent had difficulty answering the family income question, and it became clear that
important changes had to be made to the Spanish survey. Two major stages of change followed as we continued pre-testing the instrument. Many questions underwent numerous modifications (minor and otherwise), and we produced several “transitional” iterations of the survey between the second and third designs. The survey format was also modified.

Stage 2: Development of a Tutorial

The tutorial was developed with the intent of making it easier to complete the survey. The tutorial explained the four types of questions and provided examples of how to answer them (See Figure 4).

Second Survey Design

The second survey design was intended to resolve issues pertaining to terminology, navigation, format, and the complexity of the language used. We used complete sentences for each question, eliminating the header (split question) format, and used grids and arrows instead of the teleform. We also divided the survey into sections with titles; You; Your Child; Discipline in the Home; TV, Videos, Media and Other Activities; etc. Some of the changes were made only to the Spanish version. See Figure 5.

In an attempt to cover as much ground as possible, we also replaced “bedroom” with “where your child sleeps.” This is because many Latinos live in extended families and their children may not have a bedroom of their own, perhaps sleeping in the living room.

Figure 5

| II. La televisión, los videos, los juegos de computadora y otras actividades |

7. Durante los DÍAS DE SEMANA, cuando su hijo está en casa, cuántas horas por día se dedica el niño a: (marque las columnas que sean necesarias)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV/ Vídeos</th>
<th>Juegos de computadora o de video</th>
<th>Jugar afuera</th>
<th>Leer o escuchar lecturas</th>
<th>Actividades organizadas (danza, deportes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Por la mañana (antes de la escuela)</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Por la tarde (después de la escuela)</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Después de las 5pm (antes de dormir)</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
<td>___ horas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6

El niño, ¿tiene un televisor donde duerme? (marque una)

☐ Sí
☐ No

Categories in the scales were assigned numbers and respondents were requested to circle them. Questions were complete in each box. We underlined words for emphasis and provided clarification in parentheses (See Figure 7).

Figure 7

| III. La disciplina en su casa |

Responda cada pregunta marcando un número:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nunca</th>
<th>Casi nunca</th>
<th>A veces</th>
<th>Bastante seguido</th>
<th>Siempre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5a. En las últimas cuatro semanas, ¿qué tan seguido le ha dado tundas o nalgadas al niño porque se portó mal?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. En las últimas cuatro semanas, ¿qué tan seguido le ha quitado ciertos privilegios (cosas que le gusten)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We devised a graphic solution to ensure that respondents would follow the skip patterns (See Figure 8).

The formats of the questions pertaining to salary information were also changed as a result of the feedback we received during the first testing round. Respondents within the Latino population we were targeting (those who were monolingual and those more comfortable reading in Spanish) tended to have low paying, seasonal jobs, so it was more likely that they would receive weekly wages. Once modified, this question became very easy to answer.

Second Testing Round

I administered the tutorial by placing it on top of the survey. I mentioned that it was a brief set of instructions for answering the survey. I then let the respondents answer the questions.

The responses to the tutorial varied. In some cases, the subjects read the tutorial and started answering the questions that were given as examples. When I told them that they didn’t need to do that they replied: “It says that I should answer the question!” Some respondents expressed surprise when they saw that the questions given as examples had already been answered. In yet other cases, individuals ignored the tutorial altogether and started answering the questions, even though they were not familiar with how to fill out the survey. The tutorial barely met its intended purpose, probably because it was administered in the same medium as the survey (the written word), which is not in line with the way Hispanics learn. Cognitive style theories claim that Hispanics learn more easily by hands-on experience and by listening to instructions or information rather than by reading them. In addition, they tend to communicate orally more often than in writing.

Although it became easier to complete the survey and the time respondents needed to finish decreased by four to eight minutes, there were still several difficulties observed at this testing stage. They included:

A) Reading/navigation problems:

- Instructions were either not read or not understood. Some questions said to choose all the responses that apply and others to choose only one. Some subjects filled out every answer where they only had to choose one.

- Some questions were “not noticed” and left unanswered. When the respondents had finished, I asked why they had left answers blank. They replied that they “had not seen them.”

- Respondents did not understand that every question needed an answer. “I’m leaving it blank because there are no fights at home.” Questions regarding weekend activities were left blank because, “it is almost the same [as during the week].”

- Skip patterns were still not always understood.

B) Length of the survey:

- Subjects complained that the survey was too long.

Stage Three

The third survey design was the result of a two-day discussion by team members. Based on the findings from the two previous testing rounds and a change of approach to the study, the third version of the instrument now included the following modifications: bolded and bigger letter size and the use of italics and underlining for clarity purposes; definitions; and clarification of terms. Grids and arrows were eliminated from most of the questions to avoid a “congested” look. Boxes and numbers were inserted in the response field. Figure 10 gives an example of the definitions given, with clarifications to the text appearing in parentheses.
The version shown in Figures 11 and 12 also contains a “mixed” pattern of scales. One of the questions has an added choice.

As for the salary information, the final decision was to use the format illustrated in Figure 13, since surveys administered for previous research had used this format. This was definitely not a step forward.

As stated earlier, skip patterns were a problem that we noted at all three test stages. The examples in Figure 14 illustrate how we tried to make this clear to participants.

During this third stage, the majority of respondents agreed that the survey addressed very important issues. They also indicated that most of the questions were very well formulated and easy to understand. A few had difficulty recalling information from the past four weeks, and suggested that we ask about the
last two weeks instead. Most respondents still complained that the survey was too long. Reading and writing difficulties persisted. Some comments included: “I found some of the questions difficult to answer because you wrote almost the same thing,” and “How do you write ‘half an hour’?”

Cultural Competence and Conceptual Congruence

Cultural competence in research instrument development entails being sensitive to the users’ needs, cognitive style, and literacy background. Many researchers stress the importance of producing a Spanish translation that will bear a one-on-one relation with the original (otherwise, they claim you are testing different instruments). However, this is virtually impossible. The goal should be to achieve conceptual congruence; that is, when the meaning of the construct, as defined by the instrument, accurately reflects the meaning of the construct within the target culture (Ref. 2). Researchers need to accept the notion that the Spanish instrument is a different instrument, yet the same, as conceptual congruence across languages may not always be possible.

These are some of the problems of conceptual congruence I encountered:

**Example 1:**
**Original rendering:** “How effective do you think your discipline approach is with your children?”

This statement is very high in register, and the term “approach” may be beyond the comprehension of the target audience. The solutions I suggested were: a) *Su forma de disciplina con el niño es…*; and b) *¿Qué hace cuando el niño se porta mal?*

**Example 2:**
*Penitencias* was one of the terms that presented some difficulty. In a few cases, it was interpreted as religious penitence. In order to better reflect the meaning of “time-outs,” we had to resort to a lengthy and not very satisfactory solution: *poner a su niño solo en un lugar silencioso y por poco tiempo como castigo.*

**Recommendations**

Research instruments need to be centered around the respondents. If researchers prefer to develop self-administered surveys, they need to be based on the suggestions made by the respondents and reflect their reading skills. The length of the survey needs to be in line with the attention span of an average Latino who has completed the fifth grade, and questions need to be as explicit as possible. Also, using a larger font size helps.

The following guidelines may be helpful to researchers, bilingual instrument testers, and translators:

- Always test an instrument as many times as possible.
- Observe body language. Do respondents get tired, frustrated, or embarrassed?
- Listen to what respondents have to say about the instrument. Their feedback is vital.
- If possible, adjust the regional variant to the target population.
- Think of a rendering that will allow researchers to collect the most data. (Two short questions may collect more information than a long one. Recast sentences by splitting them into shorter ones, lower the register, or use shorter words). The more at ease respondents feel, the more willing they will be to provide information.
- Encourage researchers to simplify the language they use and to adopt a user-friendly format for the instrument.
- As a translator or tester, provide feedback to researchers. Your comments will be invaluable.
- Remember that the goal is to obtain complete survey data. If the instrument is too long or too difficult you may get partial, distorted, or no data at all. Make a point of stressing to the researchers that less data (through a shorter survey) may be better than none at all. For some risk behaviors and for certain diseases, Latinos rank very high. We cannot afford to miss data!!

Dr. Flores and his colleagues are fully aware of these recommendations. In their 2002 report, they state: “The consortium thus recommends that child health research instruments at
least be validated in Spanish-speaking families, poor and low-literacy populations, communities with substantial proportions of non-citizens, and all relevant Latino subgroups (such as those of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American, and South American extraction). Failure to perform such validity tests may result in distorted study results…” (Ref. 1, emphasis is mine).

Conclusion
Responding to a survey is a highly complex experience for individuals with poor reading skills. It is even more complex for immigrants who have never or almost never been exposed to answering one. Data collection methods need to be re-evaluated when dealing with underserved, (semi) illiterate populations. For example, we may consider reading the surveys to the participants instead of having them complete the instruments.

Translators today have yet a new role to play. They can advise researchers how to design their instruments to make them more culturally appropriate. For that, they need to understand how each project is designed to be able to capture the goals of the study. The task ahead of translators is to educate researchers, who should be able to distinguish between a professional translator and someone who just speaks the target language. Finally, researchers need to understand the value of making the right choice. This observation is not new, and should come as no surprise.

References

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XVII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators

“Rights On!”
August 4-7, 2005
Tampere, Finland
Coded Terms: Landmines in Medical Translation

By Elena B. Sgarbossa

The translator’s first task is to conciliate words with meanings (Ref. 1). This goal can be challenging for most technical languages. Many medical terms can only be accurately conveyed in the target language when: 1) their specific medical meaning in the source language is deciphered by the translator; and 2) the equivalent term rendition (or its closest equivalent) in the target language is available to the translator. Such terms are referred to as medical jargon or, more widely, coded terms (Ref. 2).

Coded terms in medical translation can be likened to landmines. If the translator fails to locate and defuse them, the passage may lose its meaning completely. To illustrate this subject, I present here some examples of “real life” peer consultations and mistranslations involving coded terms.

Difficulties Involving Coded Terms in Medicine

Spanish into English: modelo de beneficencia. A member of an online discussion list for translators requested help to render the Spanish phrase “modelo de beneficencia” into English. The phrase appeared in a text from Spain: “…los poderes públicos comenzaron a asumir responsabilidades en el terreno de la higiene pública y la asistencia sanitaria para dar respuesta…, en el marco del modelo de beneficencia.”

Thus, the context referred to public health and prevention. The word “modelo” in medicine usually translates as model. “Beneficncia” may be translated differently depending on the context. One dictionary definition of “beneficencia” is beneficence. A translator from the discussion list proposed beneficence model. Beneficence model, however, is a type of moral analysis related to the first principle of ethics. In public health, “modelo de beneficencia” translates as welfare model.

English into Spanish: dry weight blood pressure. In a translation I was editing recently, the phrase dry weight blood pressure had been rendered into Spanish as “presión arterial de peso seco.” Blood pressure does translate as “presión arterial.” Dry weight (literally, “peso seco”) refers to the patient’s weight after excess fluid has been removed (i.e., post-dialysis). The dry weight is estimated from the difference between the post-dialysis weight and the pre-dialysis weight (or wet weight). In Spanish, writing “peso seco” to mean dry weight makes no more sense than writing “peso mojado” to mean wet weight (or “estatura seca” to mean dry height, for that matter). Dry weight blood pressure must be translated as “presión arterial post-dialisis” (literally, post-dialysis blood pressure).

“…Coded terms in medical translation can be likened to landmines…fail to locate and defuse them, and the passage may lose its meaning completely…”

The Idioms of Medical Language: Metaterms

If an idiomatic phrase, such as “to get one’s feet wet,” were to be translated into another language, the translator would first have to decide if the phrase in English is meant literally or as an idiom. If the phrase is indeed meant as an idiom, the translator’s second task is to decide whether the target language provides an equivalent idiom or if the English idiom will have to be rendered in an explanatory manner (i.e., to get involved, to try something so as to gain experience).

Similarly, many terms in medical documents have both a patent everyday meaning (or literal meaning) and an embedded medical meaning (or idiomatic meaning). Such terms act as metaterms (where the prefix meta carries the meaning first recorded in the 19th century of “going beyond or higher; transcending”). Metaterms, if unrecognized, pose a danger to the accuracy of any medical translation. As an example, consider the role of both
the noun shock and the participle shocked in the following sentences: 1) He was in shock; and 2) He was shocked. In everyday English, these two sentences may well be interchangeable and mean he was stunned or horrified. In medical language, however, the two sentences may convey two different messages, each strikingly unrelated to the message conveyed in everyday English. He was in shock means that the person was in a critical state of hemodynamic failure and required emergent medical attention. He was shocked means that the person received a therapeutic electrical shock either from an external cardioverter (administered by healthcare personnel), or from his own implantable defibrillator (ICD) after it had detected a dangerous cardiac arrhythmia. Thus, in most cases, the words shock and shocked need to be translated in a certain way for everyday language, and in a different way within medical contexts. In this regard, shock and shocked are both metaterms.

Another example of a metaterm is the word clearance (Ref. 3). In everyday English, clearance means authorization (for a check), sale, cleaning away, or discard. In a medical context, clearance specifically alludes to the volume of human plasma that is freed of a substance per minute. Clearance is frequently preceded by the word renal, but renal clearance does not imply removing the kidneys. Renal clearance is a measure of renal function. When kidneys do need to be removed (because of tumors or disease, or when they are donated for transplants), the procedure is called kidney/renal ablation, removal, or resection.

Thus, a metaterm is a special kind of coded term. More often than not, what needs to be rendered into the target language from metaterms is their embedded, coded meaning. This can only be accomplished by being keenly aware of the presence of such a coded meaning in the source term. Often the most accurate manner to translate a metaterm is to use the pertinent coded term in the target language as well. Here are some examples of “real life” peer consultations featuring metaterms.

Spanish into English: úlceras en relieve. A translator requested online advice to render the term en relieve into English. The context: “úlceras en relieve” (en un gráfico de Amebiasis intestinal, E. Histolytica).

Ulcers are craters in the GI mucosa. Here, “en relieve” means “raised,” which is probably why one translator proposed “in relief” as the English rendition. One dictionary definition of “relief” is “sharpness of outline due to contrast.” This was the basis for another translator’s proposal: “ulcers (shown) enhanced in the graph (i.e., made to stand out).” She also commented: “embossed is more of a technical term (paintings, carpentry, etc.).” However, both “relief” and “enhanced in the graph” are inaccurate translations. They allude to the definition of relief that pertains to images (i.e., a quality of the foreground against the background).

“Úlcera en relieve” alludes to the relative position of the ulcer atop an edematous, swollen area. The coded translation for “úlcera en relieve” is collar-button ulcer. Collar-button ulcers appear in several inflammatory bowel diseases, such as amebiasis. They are rarely seen in the U.S. nowadays.

Spanish into English: negligencia. Again on an online discussion list, someone requested help with the English translation of “negligencia.” The context was a medical report that read: “negligencia visual.…Lectura con negligencia izquierda.” Thus, the context alluded to vision.

The first rendition offered (based on a dictionary definition) was negligence (i.e., failure to provide care). However, in ophthalmology, “negligencia” refers to the suppression of a visual area by the occipital cortex. Patients with “negligencia visual” ignore objects located in the affected half of their visual field. This condition is not negligence, but visual neglect.

Metaterms from Clinical Trials or Biostatistics

The terminology inherent in clinical research and biostatistics is highly coded. For example, consider a recent online consultation in which a translator requested advice to render the phrase [are] adequately powered into Spanish. The context: The clinical package provided with this application is robust and the clinical studies are well-designed, adequately powered, and...

The renditions proposed included: “los estudios clínicos están adecuadamente autorizados” (the clinical studies are duly authorized); “cuentan con la autoridad adecuada” (have the necessary authority); “[están] adecuadamente promovidos” (are duly promoted) [clarified the translator], in the sense of moving forward, fostering, developing; and “[son] estadísticamente significativos” (are statistically significant). Within a clinical study, power has a precise statistical meaning that differs from statistical significance. Power is the probability that if the tested hypothesis is true, the hypothesis will be supported by the results of the study. Power is operationally defined as the probability of not making a type II error, or error beta. It equals 1-beta (the probability of rejecting the
Coded Terms: Landmines in Medical Translation Continued

null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is false). To be able to reject a false null hypothesis, a study must have a sample size that is adequately large. (Otherwise, negative results may derive not from rejecting the null hypothesis, but from an insufficient number of subjects studied). This is the concept inherent in adequately powered. Power makes no allusion to rank (authority) or to furthering (promotion). In Spanish, then, are adequately powered is “tienen el poder estadístico requerido / tienen suficiente poder estadístico.”

A problematic phrase that triggers recurrent peer consultations is intention-to-treat. A recent online example was “By [intention-to-treat] analysis, the proportion of patients achieving a plasma HIV RNA level below 50 copies/ml was 77%.” The online correspondent requested the Spanish translation of intention-to-treat.

For this and previous similar consultations, the responses provided have included: “Por análisis previo a tratamiento” (literally: by analysis preceding treatment); “tratamiento tentativo” (attempted treatment); and “intento de tratamiento” (attempt to treating). Intention-to-treat (or intention-to-treat) refers to a special type of analysis conducted in clinical trials on therapies. Let’s assume that in a randomized clinical study two arms of treatment are being compared to determine which is the most effective. Patients in arm A receive medication A, and patients in arm B receive medication B. However, a patient in arm A may receive medication A only for a brief period of time. One reason could be that the patient is deemed to need medication B, in which case, the patient is then crossed over to arm B. Or, a patient in arm A may never start receiving the study medication because (s)he dies unexpectedly. These and other reasons for not completing the assigned treatment need to be corrected in the final analysis of the study to prevent biased results. To ensure that the study arms are comparable, one must analyze all patients who started in arm A as having taken medication A for the complete duration of the study (regardless of whether they actually did or not), and vice versa for patients in arm B. This technique assesses outcomes according to the initial intention of the study, which is why it is called intention-to-treat. It is called “intención de tratar” in Spanish. Intention-to-treat makes no allusion whatsoever to the intended goals of the physician responsible for the treatment. (The flip side of intention-to-treat was posted on an online forum last year. A translator requested help to render the Spanish phrase “por intención de tratar” into English. A proposed translation was on the intended treatment, with the explanation “At first, there was an attempt to make an analysis of information on the intended treatment, but…."

Conclusion

Medical language harbors a plethora of words and phrases that are highly dependent on a precise rendition. These are coded terms. Their translation is almost never intuitive. The meaning of a coded term must first be correctly “decoded” or deciphered, then reproduced into the target language in such a way as to be readily understood by the target reader, usually a physician or someone versed in medicine. If either the coded meaning or the coded rendition is ignored, misunderstandings arise. Coded terms that hide within everyday terms can be called metaterms. They may particularly jeopardize a translation when their everyday meaning is the only one detected. For example, any physician who reads a report from a Latin American clinical study which has been analyzed on the intended treatment will not understand (at least immediately) that the study was analyzed by “intención de tratar” (i.e., intention-to-treat).

Having a background in the medical sciences (or a broad, intensive schooling in medical translation) gives the translator an unquestionable advantage: that of being a “native” speaker for both the source and the target languages. A dual native fluency allows one to recognize typos and idioms in the source text, and then render them masterfully in the target language. Similarly, the deft medical translator can immediately identify and defuse the “landmines” posed by coded terms and metaterms in order to represent them accurately.

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

References


Certification Forum:  
What Candidates Should Know Before Taking ATA’s Certification Exam (English→German)  

By Jutta Diel-Dominique and Susanne Lauscher, English→German graders

Since 1973, ATA has offered exams to test translation skills. With a passing rate below 20%, the exam appears as an insurmountable hurdle to many. Candidates often feel insecure because they do not know how to prepare for the exam. Many believe that the pass or fail verdict is arbitrary, and is dependant on the graders’ personal expectations and preferences, or even on their mood.

The following article primarily addresses candidates who are interested in obtaining certification from English into German, but it contains suggestions that may be useful for all candidates. Our goal is to help you prepare for the exam and dissipate some of the anxiety and myths by examining the character and purpose of the exam in general and by discussing some frequent mistakes.

Character and Purpose of the Exam

Certification is a voluntary credential open to ATA members who offer proof that they meet the eligibility requirements. It stands for a translator’s commitment to quality standards and continuing education (Hanlen 2004; for detailed information on the certification exam, see www.atanet.org/bin/view.pl/285.html). While the exam itself is meant to test a candidate’s translation skills, a failed exam does not block access to the profession.

1.) The certification exam is a professional exam. Most importantly, candidates need to keep in mind that the certification exam is a professional exam for people with the relevant background and experience in translation. Candidates who have done little translation in a professional context have a high chance of failing. The practice test allows candidates to familiarize themselves with the types of texts to be translated, with the time constraints involved, and with the grading practices. Depending on the results of the practice test, you can develop strategies to improve skills or to maximize the chances of passing the actual exam.

2.) The certification exam tests professional translation skills. Professional translation takes place within a certain context. In most cases, translated texts communicate specific content or information to an audience of a different language and culture. Professional translation is different from translation in foreign language teaching, where it is mostly used to help students internalize the structure of another language.

Professional translation requires professional translation skills. ATA defines those skills as follows:

a.) Comprehension of the source text
b.) Knowledge of translation techniques (transfer skills)
c.) Writing in the target language

All three skill sets are considered equally important, and they are all related to a specific translation context. In the German→English exam, this context is specified in the translation instructions at the beginning of each text.1 The translation instructions usually specify the source of the text, the purpose of the target text, and the audience of the target text. Sometimes they indicate the translation of a specific term in the source text.

The translation instructions help limit possible meanings of the source text. The instructions may also help you decide on the appropriate register and style, on how technical the translation of a term should be, and so forth. Read those instructions carefully and keep them in mind while you translate and proofread.

a. Comprehension of the Source Text

First, take the time to read the entire source text carefully. Do not start translating immediately. A thorough reading of the source text allows you to understand the overall meaning of the text and to identify any difficulties. A phrase or sentence that seems incomprehensible as an isolated unit may become clear after you have read the whole text.

During the translation process, take the time to analyze complex sentences and semantic units. A frequent mistake is the incorrect interpretation of “compressed grammar structures” in English, as in “sublicensed software support.” In German, a preposition is required to clearly define the semantic relation. The phrase would translate as “Support/Unterstützung für sublicenzierte Software.” Even though a sentence or phrase seems perfectly clear, read it to yourself and try to separate it into semantic units. This helps you avoid serious mistakes caused by mis-construing the original meaning.

b. Knowledge of Translation Techniques (Transfer Skills)

One of the most widespread misconceptions about the exam is that graders expect a literal translation. In fact, graders expect a functional translation; that is, a translation suitable for the type of translation context (the purpose, the target audience, and the target medium) specified in the translation instructions.

In order to produce a functional target text, you may need to deviate from the wording of the source text. This is especially true for the correct rendition of metaphors (which may be unsuitable in German) or the translation of colloquialisms. You may not always have to replace metaphors or colloquialisms, but you do need to think about their appropriateness.

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with regard to the type of target text (e.g., a scientific article) and the German target audience.

A frequent mistake, somewhat related to the literal versus free translation issue, is the use of Anglicisms. Be aware of the exact meaning and connotations of Anglicisms in German! Often, the original English term changes its meaning when rendered into German. For example, the term “event” has a general and broad meaning in English, but a restricted meaning in German, where it is used for public, social, and mostly cultural events only. Also, leaving an English term in the German text when a German term exists may change the register of the entire text.

Example: The system includes a hard drive, CD-ROM and a display. Correct translation: Das System umfasst eine Festplatte, ein CD-ROM-Laufwerk und eine Anzeige (or: einen Bildschirm).

Inappropriate/incorrect translation: Das System umfasst eine Festplatte, ein CD-ROM-Laufwerk und eine Display.

It is quite likely that a layperson who is reading instructions to set up a new PC would misunderstand the more technical term (which, in general, refers to small screens in German).

False cognates (words that have very similar or identical forms but different meanings, at least in some contexts) present a similar problem. These often concern terms that have entered both English and German from another language, such as Latin. For example, “Procession” in English refers to an orderly movement, while the German “Prozession” is restricted to a religious context.

Example: procession of the troops (military context)
Correct translation: (im) Zug der Truppen

Inappropriate/incorrect translation: Prozession der Truppen

Double-check the correct meaning and usage with monolingual dictionaries to avoid these mistakes! Graders recommend the latest edition of Duden Deutsches Universalwörterbuch and Duden Vol. 9 Richtiges und gutes Deutsch.

Another translation technique tested in the exam is the ability to use dictionaries appropriately and efficiently. Many times your dictionary may provide two, three, or more possible translations for a source term or phrase—and even dictionaries contain mistakes. A rendition is not correct merely because it is listed in a dictionary. It must relate to what is expressed in the source text and fit the target text. Think about the context; ask yourself if the translation makes sense. Double-check the term in a monolingual dictionary. Mistakes in this category can be quite serious.

In general, translation requires knowledge about different linguistic and cultural conventions. These include differences in meaning, stylistic conventions, grammar, punctuation, and the like. Testing translation techniques means testing a candidate’s ability to recognize these differences and to handle them appropriately according to German conventions and the translation instructions.

c. Writing in the Target Language

This translation skill refers to a candidate’s ability to write a text in German according to the translation instructions. If the translation instructions specify that the target text is meant for publication (i.e., in a magazine, as part of a manual, etc.), then the translation must fulfill certain minimum criteria:

The grammar must be correct
- Appropriate declinations and conjugations: This is mainly an issue for people who are more familiar with the spoken language, where these endings are not always clearly enunciated. Make sure that the endings are correct based on the gender of the noun and the grammatical function of the noun within the sentence structure.

- Correct use of prepositions: Graders have noticed an increase in mistakes in this area because of literal translations. Duden Vol. 9 provides valuable information in case of doubt.

Spelling and punctuation have to be correct
- New and old German spelling conventions: Double-check with the current Duden Vol. 1 to make sure that the spelling is correct and consistent with either the old German spelling rules or the revised (new) German spelling. ATA graders are instructed to accept either the traditional or the new German spelling and punctuation, provided one or the other is applied consistently. If “ss” is written instead of “ß” after a short vowel (for example, dass), the passage will be graded according to the new system. The inconsistent use of either spelling convention results in each violation being penalized as an individual error.

- Take time to reread your translation to make sure that you did not inadvertently use the incorrect spelling of homophones (words that sound the same, but are different in meaning and spelling). These avoidable mistakes can accrue error points fast (Example: daß / dass / das).
• Many German punctuation rules differ from their English counterparts. For example, there is never a comma in front of the last item in an enumeration (when connected by “und” or “oder”), even though this may have been done in the English source text. You also need to observe German comma rules for relative clauses (beginning and end).

Example: Thousands of people get sick and hundreds die each year from drinking contaminated water—even in the U.S. (In this case, the German translation would require a comma, not a dash, to separate “selbst in den USA” from the rest of the sentence. Note that German uses far fewer em-dashes than English.)

• Correct punctuation also requires consistent hyphenation. If you choose to hyphenate compounds like “Hardware-Fehler” and “Hardware-Bedingung,” then you should also hyphenate “Software-Anwendung.” The use of “Software-anwendung,” for example, would be counted as an error. Refer to Duden Vol. 1 for complete rules, guidelines, and conventions.

• Correct paragraph marking: Candidates frequently do not adhere to the paragraph structure in the source text. If the source text uses a blank line to mark a new paragraph, the target text needs to reflect this formatting (or some indication thereof) as well. You are, therefore, expected to either leave a blank line between two paragraphs or mark the paragraph with the respective symbol or other recognized convention. Failure to do so will be penalized with one error point.

While grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes rarely constitute serious mistakes, they quickly add up and can lead to a failing grade.

The register and style of the translation must conform to the translation instructions. Style decisions are often considered particularly subjective. However, by specifying the text type, the audience, and the medium of the target text, graders try to provide a framework for stylistic choices and minimize subjectivity. If you are unsure about what terms to choose, refer to the translation instructions and ask yourself what is appropriate. Be consistent: for example, avoid mixing terms with different registers (e.g., “Rechner” and “Computer”). As with grammar and spelling, stylistic errors are rarely serious mistakes, but they may make the difference between a passing or failing grade.

Before you submit your exam, take the time to read through your translations carefully. Is the text legible and complete? Does it match the translation instructions? Does it flow well and sound natural? Double-check all numbers and names. Did you copy them correctly into the target language text? Do not make last-minute changes unless you are sure you have caught a mistake. Usually, your first instincts lead you down the correct path, and frantic last-minute changes may yield unnecessary errors.

A Word on Fairness

Any evaluation is subjective to some extent. The ATA grading teams, though aware of this subjectivity, try to reduce it to a minimum. Graders are carefully selected and trained. They translate all the exam passages and correct each other’s translations. They discuss possible errors and establish guidelines on how to assess them before the first exams come in. Two graders mark each exam. If they do not agree about the overall outcome, a third grader evaluates the passages over which they disagree. Graders are aware that writing an exam by hand is different from typing a translation into the computer and that candidates have limited access to secondary sources during the exam sitting. They do not expect a picture-perfect text, and they respect different translation styles. In other words, graders try to evaluate exams with a maximum of fairness.

References:
On the exam:
www.atanet.org/bin/view.pl/285.html (Certification Home Page)
www.atanet.org/acc/Eligibility_Requirements.pdf
www.atanet.org/acc/Article_Bohannon.html


Recommended dictionaries:
Duden Deutsches Universalwörterbuch (latest edition)
Duden Vol. 1 Die deutsche Rechtschreibung (latest edition)
Duden Vol. 9 Richtiges und gutes Deutsch (latest edition)

Notes
1. As of January 1, 2004, ATA allows graders to indicate the purpose of the target text, the target audience, and the medium in which the target text will be printed. Not all graders choose to do so for every passage (www.atanet.org/acc/Article_Bohannon.html).
Over 250 people are rescued from the depths of the Grand Canyon each year, says the U.S. National Park Service, which explains why officials go out of their way to provide tips on “hiking smart” in park literature. Stay hydrated, avoid hiking in the heat of the day, and eat and rest often are recommendations that all make good sense.

Trilingual signs at strategic trailheads relay the same message to English-speaking visitors, as seen in the photo snapped by an Onionskin reader who visited this stunning national park’s South Rim, some 7,000 feet above sea level. But French and German tourists are treated to a hybrid jumble of misprints and phonetic spelling—so haphazard, in fact, that much-criticized computer translation is clearly not the prime culprit. Recreating equivalent errors is impossible, yet the French visitor’s sign-reading experience evokes not a national park service alert, but spelling-challenged, text-messaging grief: “Hiking alone is not recommended.”

So whodunit and howuzzit done? Our investigation took us to a helpful Grand Canyon spokeswoman, who walked us through the park’s existing quality control procedure. Translations are obtained through Harper’s Ferry Design Center, she said, which produces signs and roadside exhibits for national parks and sites throughout the U.S. Back at the Grand Canyon, officials run the texts past “people we have on our staff who were born and raised in foreign countries.” These individuals enter any changes they feel are necessary. At this point, said our contact, “we double-check that version against a computer program to make sure the sign is absolutely correct.” The physical signs are then produced.

To a non-linguist, a three-step quality control procedure may seem reassuring. But here the steps themselves are seriously flawed. Thus, even if high-quality texts were produced by translators working with Harper’s Ferry (where our contact, curiously, assured us that only “U.S. State Department certified translators” are used), by the time these had been fiddled with by well-meaning nonprofessionals and—crowning glory/mis-take—run through a computer at the end for an accuracy check, they had become seriously muddled.

The reasons are simple. For a start, native speaker status on its own is simply not a guarantee of high-quality written work, as professional translators regularly remind their clients. Reviewing snapshots of the German signs, an interpreter in Frankfurt notes, “I’ve seen former Germans write like this when they’ve been in the States for 30 years.” Similarly, the spelling mistakes in the French version suggest that the sign-maker was working from a handwritten text produced by someone who had long since lost his or her written fluency.

At Harper’s Ferry Design Center, Visual Information Specialist Robert Clark told us he was reasonably sure that the Center had produced neither the layouts nor these particular signs, since the type and symbols do not match new National Park Service sign guidelines. A new manual setting out these guidelines runs over several hundred pages, and while very strict on graphics, contains nary a paragraph on translation or multilingual texts. “We leave that up to each park and their suppliers,” said Mr. Clark optimistically. Uh-oh, said The Onionskin.

For the issue here is image as much as safety. Sure, foreign visitors will be able to decipher the general “hike smart” messages. The signs may even give them a humorous photo of their trip to America to show friends back home. And earnest safety officials assured us that there were no strikingly French or German ethnic names among the park’s fatalities in 2003, so the problem is not dehydrated Europeans falling over cliffs or collapsing in dried-out streambeds. But why produce flawed signs that make you look silly or illiterate—especially when they cost a lot? Budgets being what they are, the more expensive a sign, the more likely it is to stay in place for a long time, reinforcing the message that this organization, while seeking to reach out to foreign visitors, failed to follow through.

As usual, The Onionskin is convinced that the well-meaning teams at the National Park Service headed...
off track because linguists have not been good at client education.

So for the NPS and other sign-makers and commissioners, here are our “translate smart” pointers:

• Start by fine-tuning your message in your own language. It should be clear in your mind exactly what you expect the person reading your sign to do—and how strongly you want to urge any given action. Top marks here to the National Park Service: its English-language messages could not be clearer.

• Make the context as clear as possible to the translator. For directional signs, for example, specify the environment, the target readers and where they are coming from, any problem the sign is supposed to clear up, etc. Be sure to indicate if the sign is part of a series. Digital photos can be very helpful.

• For sign layout and design, it’s best to group each language together, since readers’ eyes will tend to rest on what is in their language. If they have to jump all over the place, they will miss bits. The NPS design: excellent.

• Budget (1): even the simplest project will cost more than you think because of the skills involved. Remember, professional translators work only into their native language—which means translating a five-word sign into five languages involves five different people at the very least.

• Budget (2): ...but that’s nothing compared with the cost of redoing signs if you mess up. Park officials at Grand Canyon confirm that rehabilitating trailhead kiosks runs a whopping $12,000. Wayside exhibit panels cost about $100 per square foot, and the signs referred to in this article measure 3’ x 4’. As already observed, the more expensive a sign, the longer it tends to stay up (see “cost”)—and the longer the “these-well-meaning-people-don’t-know-what-they-are-doing” message is projected to your target readers. If basic safety information is incomprehensible, human life may be at stake—and your liability unlimited.

• Use professional talent. Multilingual signs are an area where good translation companies come into their own, since they usually have the required translation, editing, and proofreading skills under one roof.

• Native speaker status on its own is an unreliable indicator, especially when the natives are not professional writers and have been away from their home country for a near-life-time. Think of all the silly signs you have seen in fractured English when travelling abroad: is that the image you want to project to your clients?

• Do not use computer software to translate signs. True, you can’t get much cheaper than free. But the results are terribly unreliable. Example: in the parking lot of a French superstore, a poster announces *Nous prions notre aimable clientele de bien vouloir se prévenir d’un chariot avant de pénétrer dans le magasin.* A free online translation package serves up a Poirot-esque “We request our pleasant customers to agree to secure d’un carriage before penetrating in the store.” A professional human translator proposes “Please take a cart.” We rest our case.

• Use digital files: manual re-entry of information inevitably leads to errors. This is probably the second major source of mistakes in the Grand Canyon signs.

• Respect foreign-language conventions for punctuation, accent marks, and capitalization. Those little squiggles are not just decoration.

• Have your laid-out sign proofread by a literate native speaker before starting to etch it on those giant, expensive Plexiglas sheets or embossing it on costly metal sheets, or ordering a print run of full-color posters.

• Finally, check again before pouring the concrete base to make sure your message is right side up. This is especially important for non-Roman languages. Local residents confirm that the Japanese version of a cheery “Welcome to St. Louis!” sign hung upside down for months on the highway leading from that city’s international airport into town.

German high court rules on Krieger vs. Bonnier (Piper Verlag)

Onionskin readers will recall a series of articles—starting in 1999—on a lawsuit in Germany pitting literary translator Karin Krieger against Piper Verlag. Krieger had produced highly acclaimed and commercially successful translations of Italian novelist
**Dictionary Reviews**  Compiled by Boris Silversteyn

Silversteyn is chair of the ATA Dictionary Review Committee.

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**TM SYSTEMS TranStation™: The digital solution to language translation, subtitling, and dubbing**

**Publisher:**
TM SYSTEMS, Inc.

**Publication date:**
1998-2004, Version 2.3,368

**ISBN:**
N/A

**Price:**
$1,795*

*After reading a preliminary draft of this review, TM Systems™ surprised me with the following special offer for ATA Chronicle readers. For 60 days following the publication of this review, ATA members can purchase this software at the special promotional price of $1,200, payable in 12 months, with no interest or charges.

**Available from:**
TM SYSTEMS, Inc. (818) 508-3400 and TM SYSTEMS offices in Sao Paolo (Brazil), Caracas (Venezuela), and Toronto (Canada); via e-mail at info@TM-Systems.com; or www.TM-Systems.com

**Reviewed by:**
Françoise Herrmann

 tranStation™ is for all translators who have received videos in the mail for script transcriptions or the combined “skip the transcriber” transcription-translations. TranStation™ is for all translators who have spent long hours pressing the fast-forward and rewind buttons on their VCRs for each segment of the video, zeroing in on a particular frame, freezing screens to pick up counter time reference points, rewinding to insert speaker names, switching from monitor to TV screen, and from mouse and keyboard to remote control. The TranStation™ component of TM SYSTEMS is a fantastic new way of revisiting transcription and translation, without the VCR.

 TranStation™ software is at the heart of a four-component award-winning system for language localization of all video-mediated materials in the fields of marketing, television, or feature film production. Using this system, videotapes and VCRs become obsolete as the whole process, from production to dubbing and subtitling, is transformed from analog to digital. Accordingly, the Prime Time 2002 Emmy Award for Technical Achievement that TM SYSTEMS, Inc. received is only awarded to innovators who dramatically improve or permanently change the face of television broadcasting. For translators, who work midway in the process between production and dubbing or subtitling, this also means revolutionary changes, not the least of which subsumes that the tedious process of manipulating both a computer and a VCR has been eliminated. Normally, the estimated time for the transcription of a script is “video run time times 5.” Factor in translation, either in combination with transcription or post-transcription, and the result is a time-consuming process, which perhaps would only matter in terms of costs inasmuch as you are paid for every minute times five of the video or audio material. The problem, however, is that beyond time and cost, the process of transcribing scripts is unusually tedious. Switching screens from VCR to computer, switching controls from keyboard to remote, switching gazes—all of this tends to tax short-term memory more than usual. The result is lots of rewinding and fast-forwarding, sometimes just to transcribe or translate one phrase, not to mention constant interruptions to the flow of the translation. In comes TranStation™, and you will look back on your previous experiences in transcribing and translating as some dinosaur era or sweat lodge.

 Like all exceptionally well-designed electronic tools in support of work practices, TranStation™ eliminates the redundancy of repetitive tasks by automating them, creates new possibilities, and supplies the combination of ease, speed, and immediacy of access that are the hallmarks of digital media-tion. This is also a really user-friendly program in terms of installation and learning investment, which requires only practice with hand-to-eye and –ear coordination for perfect results. TranStation™ also comes with an excellent 51-page user manual, reminiscent in clarity and detail of the original print manuals of the early 1990s.

 The TM SYSTEMS TranStation™ package includes one CD-ROM and a dainty high-tech design dongle (a security key containing licensee information) that plugs into the USB (Universal Serial Bus) port of your computer and lights up. The USB port is an altogether different port from the parallel (printer) port you may use for the TRADOS dongle. Thus, you do not have to worry about port shortages or the stackability of dongles, as you can use up to 127 devices on a USB port (with USB hubs), including several TM SYSTEMS dongles (and the TRADOS dongle when it is USB-based). Additionally, the TranStation™ dongle contains its own driver program, designed for activation of the TranStation™ license you purchased or for remote control extension of the license, so that you do not have to insert any additional disc containing
the driver. This means you just plug it in and it works.

TranStation™ is currently only compatible with all versions of Microsoft Windows from v. 95 to XP. The program requires: a 200 MHz processor or higher multimedia PC; storage discs for media files (IDE recommended); a CD-ROM drive; a mid-level video adapter with 4 MB video memory; and a SoundBlaster™ compatible sound card. The recommended screen resolution is 1024x768 pixels.

Installation happens in a snap with the Installation Wizard as soon as you have loaded the program CD in your CD-ROM drive. The program can be stored on your computer and is then accessible via the Start menu after you have rebooted your computer.

Once launched, the TranStation™ software appears on the upper right-hand corner of your screen just like a media player. (See Figure 1, page 48.) However, TranStation™ is much more than a media player on several counts. First, because this is a media player that provides increased and specialized control for manipulating video files. Secondly, because the TranStation™ media player creates new possibilities that did not previously exist with the VCR, which allow you to view your dubbed text or subtitles running on the screen with the video! (See Figure 2, page 49.)

Once you have translated the script and the video, which at the same point in between with a scroll bar. Beyond the most compelling feature that consists in eliminating the need for your VCR, the media player functions of TranStation™ afford you far more control over the manipulation of the motion picture. You can move backward or forward in several set increments of seconds. You can set the rate of the motion to slower or faster. You can access any frame discretely per hh:mm:ss or by using a special scroll bar that follows the motion in lieu of freezing it. And you can listen to the right or left audio sound track, and view the picture with or without sound (in mute mode). With this increased control over the motion picture, you now have immediate click access to any speech segment, which you can listen to for clarity, for sound field length and position, or for correlation with visual cue and body language—without the VCR, and all the subsumed juggling between multiple devices and control buttons.

Beyond increased control over the manipulation of video images, the TranStation™ media player is also linked to MS Word through a series of two-way functions that support, expand, and dramatically perfect your activity of transcribing and translating for subtitling or dubbing. In general, this means that once TranStation™ is launched, all you need to do to start working is to open an MS Word document in any language that you use—almost as you usually do—since there is lots more you can do that invisibly correlates with the media functions. First, for dubbing or scripting, you can cue dubbing blocks, automatically using the spacebar and a single definition for each of the various characters. This means that you no longer have to identify or type in the time codes and characters as a separate task for each segment of transcribed or translated text. It also means that you can play back the DUB blocks (functioning invisibly as video markers) of your translated or transcribed text on the media player in a simulated mode to verify your transcription or translation according to duration, lip sync, and timing. Simulation in the DUB mode runs as closed caption, so you can really see word-by-word how the dubbed text correlates with the action on the video screen. Seeing your dubbed text running in closed caption with the video is not possible with the VCR, which means that TranStation™ not only replaces the VCR, it expands the functional possibilities, and in this case, supports a dramatic improvement in the accuracy and quality of dubbing or scripting, and it saves time as well.

Similarly, in the subtitle mode, the connection of TranStation™ to MS Word allows you to actually see your subtitles running on the screen with the video! (See Figure 2, page 49.) Once you have translated the script (and if you haven’t already done a DUBbing file that you can automatically convert to a SUBLtitling file), you simply highlight an intuitive subtitle text in your MS Word document and select “Timing” in the subtitling menu of the media player, which launches the video and inserts your text in the media player. Then using the spacebar, you spot the video, which at the same time marks subtitling blocks in the MS Word document that indicate time in and out of the subtitle. Perhaps the only difficulty you will encounter is the hand-to-ear and -eye coordination, as you must hit the
spacebar on the dot, although it is easy to correct any missed cues by either re-timing or manually editing. In an assisted subtitling mode, the program automatically cues time out based on the number of characters per subtitle and the rate of reading. In an interactive subtitling mode, you mark and spot your own time out cue. Finally, as for dubbing, in the simulation mode you will be able to verify both timing and readability of your subtitles on-screen with the video images. The debug program that runs prior to simulation supplies perfect assistance for any conflicting in-and-out cues or syntax errors when you have edited the cues. Seeing your subtitles running with the video and how they actually work is both invaluable and simply not possible with the VCR. Thus, TranStation™ not only replaces the VCR, enhancing, improving, and simplifying tape-viewing functions, it also creates new possibilities that truly transform and improve the practice.

Figure 1: The TranStation™ media player

First, the price of the software will undoubtedly be prohibitive for many translators. It is hoped, however, that this “star price,” commensurate with the glamour of the Hollywood supply chain, will perhaps be offset with increased demands for transcriptions and translations, the combined decrease in costs and turnaround time for clients, and the expanded fee structure for translations that include ready-to-use subtitling, closed caption, or dubbing files.

Secondly, in an imperfect world that is still analog, it is also quite possible that you will still be receiving source files on videotape, especially since not all of your clients in the supply chain will have already converted to digital production using other TM SYSTEMS components. A fortiori, considering the costs of the remaining TM SYSTEMS components. TM SYSTEMS components range in price from $7,000 to a mind-boggling $32,000 for all of the components that production agencies use. However, you will be pleased to know that for an additional, and affordable, investment of time and money, you will not be forced to revert back to the dinosaur era, pre-TranStation™. You will be able to use your TranStation™ regardless of whether you receive a videotape or an MPEG-1 source file, since you can always convert analog videotape data into digital data on CD-ROM or DVD.

There are currently several ways to convert analog videotape data into digital computer-mediated data or MPEG-1 files for motion pictures. First, there are companies whose business it is to convert VHS videotapes and other analog media to digital media. You will find lists online and in the Yellow Pages when you search for...
VHS-to-digital video conversion. The companies charge between $15 to $20 per videotape of one or two hours, with a one to two business-day turnaround, depending on the vendor. Providing that your deadline is not too constricting and your client or agency is willing to cover the cost of the conversion, this is definitely the easiest option.

Another option is to purchase an analog-to-digital media conversion device. For a laptop, the analog-to-digital conversion device is external. For a desktop, the analog-to-digital conversion device is an internal PCI card that includes the sockets for plugging in your VCR. Since these products convert all kinds of analog data, this also means, for example, that you can use them for watching and storing TV or video camera data directly on your PC. TM SYSTEMS recommended Dazzle products, the pioneers in the domain, among many that are now competing in this corner of the market. Incidentally, as of April 2004, Dazzle has been sold to a company called Pinnacle, so that Dazzle products are now called Pinnacle PCTV Deluxe ($189), corresponding to an external laptop-compatible conversion device, and Pinnacle PCTV Pro ($89), corresponding to the internal PCI card compatible with desktops. Depending on your analog-to-digital conversion needs and the demands you receive for videotape translations, you may elect to purchase these products. For testing purposes herein, I simply opted for the service option at $19 for a one-hour videotape.

When the new TM SYSTEMS website becomes fully functional, you will find that there are some interesting features contained on this site. For example, there is a plan for hosting a discussion forum for TM SYSTEMS users, including a one-hour period dedicated to direct communication with the CTO of the company, Carlos Contreras, which promises many interesting sessions. Beyond support via e-mail, this feature appears as an innovative and welcome bonus, since it is a gateway to participation in the design conversation and to updated versions that will correlate even more closely with your needs. Another feature includes provisions for a special translator section which will offer the ability for TM SYSTEMS TranStation™ users to list their individual language pairs and specialties to reach the worldwide user group of dubbing and subtitling vendors, including BIG production agencies.

Except for the unfairness of the out-of-reach price, TM SYSTEMS TranStation™ appears as vital a tool as TRADOS or TERMINIUM for translators who do scripts. It deserves a befitting “two thumbs up” for being so much fun to use, and for quietly transforming, expanding, and perfecting our practices. Get it! (Even if it means bringing up the issue of financing on the TM SYSTEMS forum.) And Enjoy! You will never want to use
your VCR again for translation.

Note:
1. Read my Lips artistic video clip of President Bush and Prime Minister Blair available upon request in MPEG-1 format, with TranStation™ French subtitle file.

Elsevier’s Dictionary of Nuclear Engineering
Authors: M. Rosenberg and S. Bobryakov
Publisher: Elsevier
Publication date: 2003
Number of pages: 732 (Russian-English); 936 (English-Russian)
ISBNs: 0444510311 (for the set of both English-Russian and Russian-English dictionaries) 0444510312 (Russian-English) 0444510314 (English-Russian)
Price: $325 (for the set of both volumes)
Available from: amazon.com; Barnes & Noble (www.bn.com); alibris; abebooks.com; Blackwells, and, undoubtedly, other sources (at prices that range from $260 to list)

Reviewed by: Alex Lane

Soon after receiving the Dictionary of Nuclear Engineering, I began to review it and found myself behaving like a faulty old-fashioned vinyl record that gets to a certain point and then skips back one groove, unable to move ahead (to the great consternation of my editor). You see, I wanted to like this book, for a variety of reasons (including my having worked with one of the coauthors, Milton Rosenberg, a few years ago), but various things about this book kept getting in the way. I did most of my review work with the Russian–English version of the dictionary. The English–Russian version appears to contain the same information, arranged in the “other” direction, naturally, plus a fairly extensive section at the end of the book with English abbreviations (which largely accounts for the 200-page greater size of the English–Russian volume).

Physically, the book is solid, has a nice heft, and is visually appealing. Inside, I found the display font to be a little on the small side, but certainly readable. A side benefit of the layout is that the pages have ample margins, which can be quite useful for penciling in additional terms, notes, or what have you. Personally, I also applaud the decision to print entire entries instead of reverting to the use of abbreviations or tildes to save space.

However, I found the large margin at the tops of the pages troublesome, as there are no guide words. Given that the headwords for entries and subentries are printed in the same bold font (though the latter are indented slightly) and that numerous subentries may exist for an entry (nearly 18 pages of them for “реактор”), the lack of guide words will, in my opinion, cause the reader to work harder to use the book. Since looking at the first entry on a page didn’t necessarily help with navigation, I ended up scanning columns, looking for unindented entries to help me figure out where I was.

If you open the book to page 588, for example, the first unindented entry (“стержневой”) is near the bottom of the second column; how fast you get to it will depend on your visual acuity and scanning skills. The alternative is to read an entry or two at the top of the page and figure out the common term (e.g., on page 602: “стержневой твэл по состоянию на конец кампании” and “стержневой твэл с грунированным топливом”). The experienced translator will make the connection easily, perhaps even after reading only the first entry. Less experienced translators may find the going a bit rougher.

I also found it difficult to get used to the arrangement of subentries. Under the main entry (“реактор” as an example) is a list that starts with subentries (if any) that use the entry word as part of a phrase or idiom (in this case, “внеш реактор” and “расположенный под реактором”). Then there follows an alphabetical list of entries that start with the entry word, followed by modifiers (“реактор атомной станции тепловой,” “реактор атомной теплоцентралы,” and so on). Finally, there follows an alphabetical list of entries where the modifiers precede the entry word (“аварийный ядерный реактор,” etc.).

The practical effect of this is having to keep in mind the possibility of looking things up in two places, and it not always being clear what the two places are. For example, if you...
are faced with looking up “реактор с тяжеловодным замедлителем” or “ядерный реактор с тяжеловодным замедлителем,” you’re in luck, as both entries exist (albeit the latter is more extensive). If you are looking for “реактор типа ГCR,” however, you won’t find it among the “реактор типа xxx” entries (where xxx are reactor types), but will have to look under “ядерный реактор типа ГCR.”

There were times I was puzzled by the level of detail given for entries. For example, on page 321, “смотровое окно” offers an embarrassment of riches, with all of the over 20 alternatives being very similar variations, in my opinion, of “observation window.” At the other extreme, anyone looking up “двор.” on the page opposite would do well to let their eye wander up one entry, as “озорнич” provides a richer choice than the lone “to approbate” given for the verb.

I also felt there to be an uncomfortably large number of simple word combinations scattered in among the advertised 50,000 entries. For example, I look at subentries such as “искусственный радионуклид” (under “радионуклид,” p. 451) and wonder if anything other than “artificial radionuclide” will fit the bill. A large number of entries under “перенос” (page 366) also fall into this category, in my opinion.

Finally, as the title implies, the main emphasis of the terms in the book is engineering, which is not where the main thrust of nuclear activity is today (at least not in my experience, which has involved mostly disarmament-related themes). In my opinion, this places some inherent limitations on the usefulness of the dictionary.

In the end, between the missing guide words, the organization of subentries, and the presence of what I consider to be extraneous entries, I found that this dictionary requires the reader to expend of a lot more effort than I have become used to investing when using a paper dictionary, especially one with such a price tag.

Alex Lane is the principal translator and interpreter at Galexi Wordsmiths, LLC. He is ATA-certified (Russian–English), and is currently serving as administrator of ATAs Slavic Languages Division. He lives in Colorado and is a licensed professional engineer. Contact: words@galexi.com.

**Note:** On page 45 of the June issue, the name of the publisher of the *Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry* (Volume 1: English-German, Volume 2: German-English)/*Wörterbuch der Psychologie und Psychiatrie* (Band 1: Deutsch-Englisch, Band 2: Englisch-Deutsch), by Roland Haas, is spelled incorrectly. The correct name is Hogrefe & Huber Publishers. Office locations: 875 Massachusetts Avenue, 7th floor, Cambridge, MA 02139 and Rohnsweg 25, D-37085 Göttingen, Germany.
The Translation Inquirer  By John Decker

Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: jdecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the 25th of each month to be included in the next issue. Generous assistance from Per Dohler, proofreader, is gratefully acknowledged.

The Translation Inquirer regards the following as a very sure sign that Spanish has made it big-time in mainstream U.S. culture: he was in Atlantic Bookstore in coastal Delaware in June, and saw on the shelf a large-print edition of a Spanish-English dictionary published by Random House. You who are reading this column: glance up and look at your reference shelf. Don’t you find that you typically have the opposite problem? That some of your reference dictionaries, especially your specialized ones, send you scurrying to find your magnifying glass? Many of mine do!

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

New Queries

(D-E 8-04/1) This has to do with a Belgian “rijbewijs” (driver’s license) that is 10 years old. The front is clear enough, but on the back, “recht tot sturen” caused problems for a Lantra-l user. It was part of a sentence that read: “Periodes van de vervallenverklaringen van het recht tot sturen en afgelegde examens.” What to make of this? Of what words?

(E-F 8-04/2) What on earth is shopability and how would one render it into French? Here’s what’s being spoken of: To enhance customer awareness and shopability, we will send all stores a laminated card with application sizes and corresponding product numbers. This may someday become a shopworn term, but is not so now!

(E-F 8-04/3) This Lantra-l denizen wants to know whether real French speakers ever say “feu de flash” for flash fire. Or do they tend to use “incendie instante” or “deflagration.”


(F-E 8-04/5) In the context of communication of data by a gas analyzer by means of a computer bus, a Lantra-l member had trouble with “du mot mesure.” Can anyone help?

(F-E 8-04/6) Let’s look at the manufacturing process itself. An odd phrase, “en bon pour execution,” appeared stamped on drawings received by a Lantra-l member on a job that included drawings sent to a company’s manufacturing division. Some sentences where it also appeared: “Le responsable du bureau d’études se charge d’obtenir les différents BPE;” and “Il autorise la transmission des documents bon pour execution en fabrication.” Is it some sort of approval?

(G-E 8-04/7) This is for building or construction engineers. Presumably the translator understood that she was getting a pharmaceutical text, but stuff about buildings crept in, especially “Festpunkt.” Here are some examples: “Das 5-geschossige Gebäude besteht aus zwei Festpunkten und einem Betriebsteil.” “Das Gebäude YY besteht aus dem sechsgeschossigen Festpunkt West (Stahlbetonbau), dem siebengeschossigen Festpunkt Ost (Stahlbetonbau) und dem dazwischen angeordneten fünfgeschossigen Betriebsteil, welcher als Stahlskelettbau ausgeführt wurde.” Elsewhere these are referred to as equivalent to “Trabanten.” What are they?

(N-E 8-04/8) Excuse the relative lack of context, but a ProZ user found this as part of a diagnosis, with no other explanation: “kilereseksjon ve.underlapp.” What kind of procedure might be mentioned here?

(Pt-E 8-04/9) The phrase below (in bold print) is still a problem even after it was rendered into English as always searching for a pole to park their car. Here’s more context: “Ou morreu atropelado! É o destino de qualquer pessoa ou bicho que passa a vida nas ruas, com esses condutores de agora que imitam aos cães, sempre à procura de um poste onde poisar uma roda do carro.” What could this be about?

(Sp-E 8-04/10) The nationality of the speaker who used this slang verb on a transcribed tape might be Colombian or Venezuelan. Try to provide a notion of what “forronciao” means, if you can: “La vaina es que yo no quiero forronciao como la ultima vez. Usted no vio la vaina esa.”

(Sw-E 8-04/11) Admitting that he had little context (the material being a list of messages displayed by a computer program in the area of banking and debts), a ProZ user wondered about “utgirering” in the phrase “en utgirering av överinbetalning.” Presumably the word “ingirering” also exists. Any ideas?

Replies to Old Queries

(E-F 2-04/1) (staging): Paul Hopper believes that staging would be the act of assigning a tumor to a particular stage: upstaging would be reassigning it to a more serious stage, and downstaging to a less serious one. “Bilan” might be the French equivalent of this, but Paul was not able to find separate French terms for upstaging or downstaging, since the websites he...
Ahfooz Jafry, an interpreter from Bangldesh who was giving a deposition about an accident at a law firm in Manhattan. Her husband sat next to her and, although he was supposed to remain silent, she repeatedly turned her face towards him and/or asked him to reply. The lawyers warned her not to do it several times and then said, “No, no, you cannot ask him the reply, just ignore him as you ignore him at home.”

So much for domesticity.

As most of you know, Victorian translators frequently deleted references to sex from their translations, sometimes indicating that they had done so by inserting asterisks in place of the offending words. Such censorship persisted well into the twentieth century, and nowhere more so than in the genre of opera. Several famous operas are concerned with sex to the point of obsession, and several operatic protagonists are women or men who are either sexually rapacious, like Carmen or Don Giovanni, or courtesans, like Violetta in La traviata. The censored English translations ensured that many English-speaking opera-goers had only a hazy impression of what the operas they were seeing were in fact about.

Most of the censorship is simply silly, especially when the censored material is only indirectly about sex. For example, in Giacomo Puccini’s La bohème, Mimi remarks that Musetta is well dressed, prompting Rodolfo’s statement that “angels go naked” [Gli angeli vanno nudi.]. Ruth and Thomas Martin (1954) muted the exchange into “But her dress is lovely.” “Angels must do without them.” Joseph Machlis (1958) censored the line completely: “Is her dress not pretty?” “Someone has paid most dearly!”

Censorship of direct references to sex persisted even longer. As recently as 1976, Andrew Porter translated “So bult nun im Finstern, feuchtes Gezück!” [Now have illicit sexual intercourse in the dark, you dump race!], from Richard Wagner’s (Der Ring des Nibelungen, Das Rheingold) as “Then laugh in the darkness, nymphs of the waves!”

The Translation Inquirer Continued from page 52

Consulted used the English terms. Incidentally, Paul found that a trend now exists away from staging to meaningful description (0, I, II, III, IVA, IVb, IVc; or, T for extent of primary tumor; N for regional lymph node metastasis; and M for distant metastasis).

(F-E 4-04/3) (sentence on p. 43, April Chronicle): For Alan Berson, the proper English was: The family, the school, and the community, in responding to the basic needs of young people, help them to develop and smooth their path to adulthood.

(F-E 5-04/5) (“ligne naturelle des hautes eaux”): This, according to Jane Dumsha, is best translated as watermark. Examples in English include high water mark, specifying the highest point reached by the water during a particular event like the Johnstown Flood. In contrast, water line refers to the hull of a boat.

(F-E 6-04/5) (“publiereportage”): Paul Hopper thinks it might be something like an adversorial. He found another French equivalent in a Google search: “publi-information.”

(I-E 2-03/10) (“ostensioni”): This, says Don Var Green, is usually a solemn display of a religious object such as the Shroud of Turin, but can also simply mean teaching, as it does in this particular case. The two professors mentioned on page 51 of the February Chronicle were responsible for the botanical garden and for giving lessons to the students, probably using the botanical garden to back up their theories and explanations.

(Pi-E 5-04/12) (“ombroclima”): Alex Schwartz believes it to be climate as regards rainfall. In Greek, “ombros” meant a rain shower, a form that became “imber” in Latin. In contrast, “pluvia” means heavy or pelting rain. Both the Concise Oxford and the Funk & Wagnalls give “ombro-” as a prefix and define it as rain.

(R-E 6-04/12) (посточный контроль, выборочный контроль): Jim Shipp believes the terms are used to distinguish item-by-item inspection for a spot check. He would avoid the English piece because of its tendency to make an item seem as if it consisted of pieces, besides being a piece in the broader sense.

(R-E 6-04/13) (смотреть как баран на новые ворота): For Jim Shipp, the perfect equivalent is to look like a deer caught in headlights.

(Sp-E 4-04/9) (“seguridad de suministro”): This, believes our old friend Alan Berson of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, is security (or reliability) of supply.

Thanks to all our contributors!
New Certified Members

Congratulations! The following people have successfully passed ATA’s certification exam.

**Arabic into English**
Alexander E. Dalati
Redwood City, CA

**Dutch into English**
Geoffrey S. Koby
Kent, OH

**French into English**
Maria M. Edstrom
Chicago, IL

**German into English**
Neil Blackadder
Galesburg, IL

**Polish into English**
Christine Pawlowski
Meadville, PA

**Portuguese into English**
Michael J. O’Shea
Peoria, AZ

**English into Chinese**
Fang Sheng
Scarborough, Ontario, Canada

**English into German**
Beate M. Boudro
Albuquerque, NM

**English into Spanish**
Mercedes Y. De la Rosa
Kentwood, MI

**Active Member Reviews**

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

**Active**
Michelle D. LeSourd
Seattle, WA

Marcia Parron
San Diego, CA

**Corresponding**
MariCarmen Pizarro
Lima, Peru

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A product of the Japanese Language Division, this handbook, which specifically addresses Japanese↔English translation, features useful information regarding the patent process and patent-related documents.

$25. Members
$40. Nonmembers
Order online atanet.org or call 703.683.6100.

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The 2004 ITI Annual Conference will be held in Lille, this year’s European City of Culture.

A wide variety of conference sessions, panel discussions and workshops will be taking place during the weekend.

**Conference Delegate Fees**
(excl. accommodation & VAT):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITI Member (inc. ATA/BDU/SFT)</th>
<th>Non-ITI</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 Days: £190</td>
<td>3 Days: £220</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Day: £140</td>
<td>1 Day: £175</td>
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**Accommodation**: Details of local hotels in Lille close to the conference venue can be found on ITI’s website. Prompt bookings are strongly recommended.

**Travel**: return Eurostar train to Lille from London. £65 per person. Depart 30/09/04 return 03/10/04. Tickets can be booked through ITI. Lille is only an hour by train from Paris.

The current provisional programme, Lille booking form and more information is available at www.iti.org.uk / Events / ITI.

Further information on Lille can be found at www.lille2004.com
If you are now certified, your first 3-year reporting period ends on January 1, 2007. If you become ATA-certified after January 1, 2004, your first reporting period ends 3 years after the certification date.

You can begin accruing continuing education points on January 1, 2004, or as soon as you become certified. ATA-certified translators who will be 60 and older on the date their reporting period ends are exempt from continuing education requirements. All others must provide evidence of their continuing education activities as described here.

Keep track of your continuing education points and supporting documentation: this is your responsibility. Use the forms on pages 59 and 60 to request approval, if required, either before or after the event. ATA Headquarters will notify you and provide materials for reporting your continuing education points, when due.

You must earn 1 continuing education point on the ethics of translation and interpreting during your first 3-year reporting period. You may choose between attending an ethics workshop at the ATA Annual Conference or taking a self-directed course available online and in print. The self-directed course is expected to be available by mid-2004. The Continuing Education Requirements Committee may approve other ethics classes.

A. Translation/interpreting courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences
   
   **Points:** 1 point per hour for attending translation/interpreting seminars, workshops, and conferences (up to 10 points per event); 1 point per hour for college and university courses (up to 5 points per course); 2 points per hour for teaching/presenting classes, seminars, workshops, and conference sessions.
   
   **Maximum:** Up to 10 points in any given year.
   
   **No approval required:** ATA annual/regional conferences, preconference seminars, and professional development seminars: ATA chapter and division seminars, conferences, and workshops. Courses, seminars, and conferences offered by nationally accredited university translation/interpreting programs in the United States. ATA Certification Program grader training.
   
   **Approval required (before or after the event):** Translation/interpreting courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences offered by other translation/interpreting associations in the United States or abroad, or by university translation/interpreting programs abroad. Privately offered seminars on translation/interpreting.
   
   **Approval process:** While no approval is required, ATA chapters, divisions, and nationally accredited translation/interpreting programs in the United States are encouraged to submit an approval request to ATA Headquarters for record keeping prior to their classes, seminars, and conferences. For other events, use the forms on pages 57 and 58 to submit instructor credentials and a session abstract, course description, syllabus, conference proceedings, or other supporting documentation to the Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters for approval, either before or after the event.
   
   **Examples:** ATA Spanish Division Mid-Year Conference; NYU Translation Program online courses; Kent State University’s Terminology Summer Academy; conferences organized by the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators.

B. Other courses and seminars
   
   **Points:** 1 point per hour for attending, 2 points per hour for teaching/presenting (up to 2 points per course or seminar).
   
   **Maximum:** Up to 5 points in a 3-year period.
   
   **No approval required:** Courses, seminars, and workshops in your area of specialization, such as law, medicine, finance, or technical fields. ATA translation/interpreting ethics workshop. Target-language grammar and writing courses. Seminars and workshops on translation-support software and other tools of the trade.
   
   **Approval required (before or after the event):** Seminars and workshops on running your business.
   
   **Approval process:** You will be asked to provide a statement at reporting time attesting that each course, seminar, or workshop relates to your specialization. You can claim the ATA ethics workshop only once.
   
   For seminars and workshops on running your business, use the forms on pages 59 and 60 to submit instructor credentials and a session abstract, course description, syllabus, conference proceedings, or other supporting documentation to the Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters for approval, either before or after the event.
   
   **Examples:** Financial Accounting course at the University of Vermont; California Bar Association online legal continuing education; training sessions on TRADOS, Déjà Vu, Star, Transit, and other translation-support tools; Pharmaceutical Update at the Georgetown School of Nursing and Health Studies.
C. Memberships in professional associations

Points: 1 point for each current membership in a professional association of each type: translation/interpreting or specialization-specific.

Maximum: Up to 2 points per 3-year period.

No approval required: Membership in a translation/interpreting professional association.

Approval required: Membership in a specialization-specific professional association.

Approval process: You will be asked to provide evidence of membership at reporting time. For specialization-specific professional associations, you will be asked to provide a description of the association and how it relates to your translation work.

Examples: ATA and ATA local chapters; National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators; International Association of Conference Interpreters; Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association; Société Française des Traducteurs; Society for Technical Communication; Society of Automotive Engineers; European Society of Clinical Pharmacy.

D. Mentors, mentees, and ATA Certification Program graders

Points: 1 point for each activity per year.

Maximum: Up to 6 points per 3-year period.

Approval required: ATA certification exam grading. ATA certification exam passage selection. Participating as a mentor or mentee in the ATA Mentoring Program.

Approval process: ATA Certification Program graders must have graded exams or selected passages during the year for which they claim points. Mentors and mentees must provide a statement from the Mentoring Committee Chair at reporting time.

E. New certifications and accreditations

Points: 1 point for each new certification or accreditation acquired from an approved professional organization or government agency.

Maximum: Up to 3 points per 3-year period.

No approval required: National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, Federal Court, and foreign sworn translator credentials.

Approval required: Other credentials.

Approval process: National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, Federal Court, and foreign sworn translator credentials are pre-approved, but proof must be provided. For other credentials, a description of the criteria for conferring the credential must be submitted to the Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters for approval. Attach a copy of the certificate awarded to your approval request.

F. Authoring articles or books

Points: 4 points for each new book published; 2 points for each new article published.

Maximum: Up to 4 points during the 3-year period.

Approval required: Published book on translation/interpreting. Published article on translation/interpreting in a professional journal/publication. (Translating a book or article is not counted as authoring a book or article.)

Approval process: Submit a copy of the title page of the book or article with the author’s name.
## Approval Request Form

### ATA Continuing Education Points (Individuals)

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

Refer to CE Guidelines in print or online at [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org) for further information!

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Daytime Phone:</th>
<th>ATA Membership Number:</th>
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<td>5. Speaker’s name &amp; title:</td>
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<td>9. Signature of requesting individual:</td>
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### For ATA Use Only

| Points approved: | Comments: |
| Reviewed by: | |
| Date: | |

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The ATA Chronicle | August 2004 | 57
### Approval Request Form

**ATA Continuing Education Points (Groups)**

Refer to CE Guidelines in print or online at www.atanet.org for further information!

<table>
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<td>❑ Other*: ____________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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<td>*Approval for non-ATA-sponsored activities must be sought by either the sponsor or the individual attending the activity</td>
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<td>2. Event/presentation:</td>
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<td>8. Signature of requesting individual: Title: Date:</td>
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**For ATA Use Only**

| Points approved: Comments: |
| Reviewed by: Date: |

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The ATA Chronicle | August 2004
Instructions for Completing ATA Continuing Education Approval Request Forms

**General Information:**
- ATA maintains a database of approved events at which ATA-certified members may earn continuing education points (CEPs).
- For events not listed, an ATA approval request form must be completed and submitted to ATA Headquarters.
- Approval may be requested either prior to an event or after an event, with the understanding that the approval may be denied if documentation is insufficient or if the educational content does not meet ATA criteria.
- Individuals and groups requesting CEPs will be notified by ATA Headquarters that the event has been approved for a particular number of CEPs or that approval is denied.
- Individuals must keep track of their earned CEPs and report them to ATA Headquarters every three years upon request.

Select one of the following forms to complete:
1. If you represent a chapter, regional group, organization, institution, or other sponsor of activities, complete the Approval Request Form for Groups (page 60).
2. If you are an individual, complete the Approval Request Form for Individuals (page 59).

### CEP Request Form for Groups
1) Provide the name and contact information for the group sponsoring the event.
   a) Check the appropriate box for your group and provide the group’s name.
   b) “Other” can include affiliated groups, international translation organizations, and universities.

   **All ATA chapter educational events are automatically eligible for continuing education points. Events not sponsored by ATA or ATA chapters must be approved individually. Approval may be denied if documentation is insufficient or if the educational content does not meet ATA criteria.**

2) Provide the name of the event or presentation.
3) Provide a brief description of the content of the event or presentation—two or three sentences should be sufficient.
4) Provide the speaker’s name and title.
   a) If this is a single session, one name and descriptive title are sufficient.
   b) If this is a conference or multi-day event, provide all names and titles on a separate page.
5) Provide the date(s) of the event.
6) Provide the starting and ending times.
   a) If this is a conference or multi-day event, provide the number of session hours for each day of the event. Session hours do not include breaks or meals.
7) Provide the number of CEPs you are requesting for your attendees—one hour of creditworthy activity equals one CEP—no partial hours can be counted.
8) The form must be signed and dated by the individual recommending the presentation or event for CEP approval.

### CEP Request Form for Individuals
1) The individual requesting the CEPs must provide his/her ATA membership number and sign and date the form.
2) Provide the name and contact information for the group sponsoring the event.

   **All ATA chapter educational events are automatically eligible for continuing education points. Events not sponsored by ATA or ATA chapters must be approved individually. Approval may be denied if documentation is insufficient or if the educational content does not meet ATA criteria.**

3) Provide the name of the event or presentation.
4) Provide a brief description of the content of the event or presentation—two or three sentences should be sufficient.
5) Provide the speaker’s name and title.
   a) If this is a single session, one name and descriptive title are sufficient.
   b) If this is a conference or multi-day event, provide all names and titles on a separate page.
6) Provide the date(s) of the event.
7) Provide the starting and ending times.
   a) If this is a conference or multi-day event, provide the number of session-hours for each day of the event—session hours do not include breaks or meals.
8) Provide the number of CEPs you are requesting—one hour of creditworthy activity equals one CEP.

**REMINDER**
- ATA offers 1 CEP per hour for approved seminars, workshops, conferences, and presentations based on full hours (not including meals and breaks), up to a maximum of 10 CEPs per event. No partial hours will be counted.
- ATA offers a maximum of 5 CEPs for an approved college, university, or other course regardless of its length.
- The requesting group or individual will be notified if ATA does not approve the number of points requested.
- When reporting points, an ATA member is allowed a maximum of 10 CEPs for any given year.
Alessandro Baricco’s works, among them *Seta* (“Silk” in English).

The original dispute arose when Ms. Krieger applied for royalties under Germany’s so-called “best-seller clause.” Many literary translators are paid a simple per-book fee for their texts, but under German law they can collect a share of the royalties when a book becomes an unexpected bestseller. After an initial standoff, Piper agreed and made a first payment. Yet days later they did an about-face, removing Krieger’s versions from bookstores without warning. The books were replaced with hastily commissioned retranslations by a more amenable translator (read: no royalties). The covers and ISBN numbers were identical, although many critics insisted the new translations were inferior. In what seemed a particularly Machiavellian move—which Piper described as a simple error at the time—critics’ glowing praise for Krieger’s prose was recycled in advertising promoting the second translation.

Translators’ associations were quick to condemn what they called “punishment” for Krieger’s insistence on claiming her share of a reward they said was her legal right. Peter Bush of the British Centre for Literary Translation called Piper’s actions “cultural vandalism,” while the European Council of Literary Translators Associations denounced a “feudal exercise of power, dictated purely by cynicism and financial greed.” Ms. Krieger lamented the destruction of her work for what appeared to be purely commercial reasons.

Against this backdrop, translators in Germany and elsewhere welcomed the June 18 ruling of Germany’s Bundesgerichtshof, or Federal Court of Justice—the country’s highest court of civil and criminal law. The court upheld Krieger’s claims on seven out of eight points, requiring the publisher to keep both translations in print. Readers fluent in German can get the full story at www.bundesgerichtshof.de (click on “Presse/Infos” and then on “Pressemitteilungen” for Bundesgerichtshof stärkt Rechte der Übersetzer).

For Karin Krieger, the ruling ends a six-year struggle. “I am delighted,” she told The Onionskin. “It’s not the money, but the confirmation that Piper can’t simply destroy my work and ride roughshod over translators’ rights in general.”

The German literary translators’ association VdÜ put its full weight behind Krieger as the suit wended its way through lower courts. And VdÜ President Helga Pfetsch echoed Krieger’s elation: “It’s a great day for German translators. The decision of the Supreme Court strengthens our position by confirming that translators are real authors, not just revisers. The verdict clearly sets limits on arbitrary actions by publishing houses.”

With thanks to Bob Blake, Graham Cross, Steve Dyson, Dick Lodge, Alison Quayle, and Werner Richter.
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